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THE
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OF
THE REV. ISAAC WATTS, D.D.
IN
NINE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

CONTAINING

**TWELVE SERMONS ON VARIOUS
SUBJECTS.
EVANGELICAL DISCOURSES;
DEATH AND HEAVEN;**

**DOCTRINE OF THE PASSIONS;
OF THE LOVE OF GOD, AND THE USE
AND ABUSE OF THE PASSIONS.**

LEEDS:

PRINTED BY EDWARD BAINES;

**FOR WILLIAM BAYNES, PATERNOSTER-ROW; THOMAS WILLIAMS AND SON,
STATIONERS'-COURT; THOMAS HAMILTON, PATERNOSTER-ROW; AND
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SERMONS.

SERMON XLIV.

The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Use of it.

EPH. ii. 18. Through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

THERE is hardly another text in the bible, of so short an extent that contains in it so much of the substance and glory of our holy religion. Here we have,—I. The doctrine of the blessed Trinity plainly represented. The Father and the Holy Spirit are expressly named, and the little word, “him,” most evidently refers to Christ the Son of God, who is mentioned before, ver. 13.—II. We read also in this verse, the important use of this great doctrine: We must have access to God the Father, through the mediation of his Son, by the aids of the Holy Spirit: And.—III. There is the union of all nations, and the harmony of all the true worshippers of God, held forth in the words, *We both have access.* This is the common and universal method of approach to God, for it is provided for the whole world, which is here distinguished into Jews and Gentiles. *We both have access to the Father by one Spirit, through one Lord Jesus.*

These three shall be the chief divisions of my discourse, and I shall consider each of them distinctly.

First, The doctrine of the blessed Trinity is here represented to us, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: And in order to set this article of our faith in the most plain and easy light, for the use of common christians, I would draw it out, as far as scripture evidently leads the way, into several propositions. But here let it be observed, that I am not going to present you with any of those particular schemes of explication of this

doctrine, which have divided the Trinitarian writers, but nakedly to represent it according to its most obvious appearances in scripture, and yet in such a manner as almost all our divines have received, and delivered it, who may differ in particular schemes of explication.

Proposition I. God is a Spirit, all-wise, and almighty, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, and incomprehensible by any creature; the first, the greatest, and the best of Beings.

Since the word of God assures us that *he is a Spirit*; John iv. 24. since men are called his offspring; Acts xvii. 28. since man is *the image of God*; 1 Cor. xi. 7. it is evident, that God teaches us to conceive of himself, in a way of resemblance to our own souls, which are spirits. We are therefore to conceive of him as a Being, which has understanding, or consciousness and knowledge, which has a free will, and power of operation; for these are the clearest and best notions that we have of a spirit: And the scripture itself frequently applies them all to God, and speaks of his understanding, will, and power.

Yet still let us remember, that we must conceive of these things in God, in the highest and greatest perfection possible; removing always, from our idea of God, every thing that is imperfect, and raising this idea infinitely above every power and quality that is in our own souls. He hath infinite wisdom, or understanding, to know, contrive, and decree all his works, and infinite power, to execute and effect his decrees. Every thing in God transcends the highest conceptions of man.

II. There is but one only, the living, and the true God. There is but one godhead, one divinity; for since God is the first, the greatest, and the best of Beings, there can be but one that is the very first, the very greatest, and the very best.

Besides, God is a self-sufficient Being, and can want nothing from another; Acts xvii. 25. He is an all-sufficient Being, and can do every thing of himself; Job xlii. 2. and therefore, he cannot possibly stand in need of any other being beside himself. Within himself the one God possesses all possible perfection. Two such all-sufficient Beings could do no more than one could do, either with regard to their own blessedness, or with regard to creatures; for if two could make each other more blessed, or do any thing more toward creatures, than one could do, then each of them alone could not be self-sufficient, nor all-sufficient; each of them could not be a God, if they could want any help from another. Thence it follows, that there cannot be two Gods; for since each of them must be self-sufficient, that is, sufficient for himself, and all-sufficient, that is, sufficient for all other

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proposes whatsoever, one of these two Gods would be utterly needless and useless : But it is absurd to imagine, that a God is needless, or needless Being ; therefore there can be no other God but one.

This is the great and universal dictate of the light of nature, and this is the constant doctrine of scripture in the Old and New Testament : And indeed, this unity of the godhead, is a peculiar glory of all the religions, that God hath given to men, and hereby they are distinguished, from the false religions of the heathen nations, who did generally profess more gods than one. God hath always taken care, to secure to himself an unrivalled glory and majesty, in all his dispensations. This is the language of God by Moses, *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the Lord* ; Deut. vi. 4. And Christ confirms this doctrine, most abundantly, in the New Testament, and that in the very same words ; Mark xii. 29. And he commends the tribe for affirming, "There is one God, and there is none other but he." This is the foundation and basis of all that can be called true religion, in every nation and in every age since the world began. And when a multitude of nations had lost this doctrine of the one God, and fell into the worship of many, whom they called gods, it was one great design of christianity, to destroy polytheism, or the doctrine of many gods, among the nations of the world, and to reduce them more universally to that ancient and eternal truth which some of their own philosophers professed, viz. that there is but one true God.

Hence it follows, by plain consequence, from these two propositions, that since God is a Spirit, eternal, all-wise, and mighty, &c. and since there cannot be more gods than one, there cannot be more than one eternal, all-wise, and almighty spirit ; there can be but one eternal and almighty Being. Let us then be fixed as an unchangeable truth.

III. This one God hath revealed himself by the light of nature, as well as by scripture, to be the first cause of all things in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, the Creator and Governor, the original Possessor, and the sovereign Lord of all other beings whatsoever. And as he is the original Lord of all, he requires the worship and homage of all his intelligent creatures : He demands holy obedience to his laws, and humble submission to his providences ; and upon this account, even the ancients, by the light of nature, have called him, *Author of all*.

IV. The great God hath more clearly made himself known by his word, under the personal and relative character of a Father ;

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

that is, as a person bearing the relation of a Father, and that not only to angels and men, who are called the sons of God: but he is a Father also to our Lord Jesus Christ himself, though in a far more excellent and superior way, for Christ is *the only begotten Son*. Yet it may be noted that God is never called the Father of the Holy Ghost.

Under this personal character of the Father, the great God appears in scripture, as the prime Agent and Ruler in all the kingdoms of nature, and grace, and glory: the Father is eminently Lord of heaven and earth, as Christ himself calls him*. He sustains the dignity and majesty of godhead, and maintains the divine rights and prerogatives of it in heaven, earth, and hell. It is under this personal character that he appears in my text, as that God and Father, who receives the homage and worship of sinful men, returning and approaching to him through Jesus Christ his Son, and by his Holy Spirit.

V. God the Father is revealed in scripture, as transacting his affairs that relate to his creatures through Jesus Christ his Son, and by his Holy Spirit. It is by his Son *he made the world*; Heb. i. 2. It is by his Spirit he *formed the host of heaven*; Ps. xxxiii. 6. It is by his Spirit he *renews the face of the earth, and covers it with living creatures*; Ps. civ. 30. It is by his Son he redeems sinful mankind from hell, and by his Spirit he sanctifies them, and makes them fit for heaven. Note, The Son of God is sometimes called *the Word of God*, and God is said to act by his word, as well as by his Son, in several places of scripture†.

These are the blessed Three, who, by the christian church, for many ages, have been called the holy Trinity. The clear and distinct revelation of them, and their various offices to us in the gospel, is the chief glory of the christian religion, and therefore we are initiated or admitted into the profession of this religion, by being baptised into the name of the sacred Three, *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*.

Having surveyed the scriptural representations of God the Father, in the foregoing propositions, let us now consider what is the first, the most plain and obvious manner, wherein the scripture represents to us the Son of God, and the Spirit of God, and,

* Mat. xi. 25. *Jesus said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth verse 27. All things are delivered to me of my Father.*

† I do not here assert any thing, or make any enquiries, whether, or how far the idea of the Word of God, may differ from the idea of the Son of God, because this has been controverted among orthodox writers. It is very plain and certain that both these names belong to Jesus Christ, the second person in the sacred Trinity; and this is sufficient for my present purpose, since I design to avoid all particular controversies about modes of explication in this place.

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degrees, rise up to the several and more complete descriptions of them in the bible.

VI. The Son of God is spoken of generally, in the New Testament, as a very glorious Person, an immortal spiritual being who was some way begotten of the Father, that is, derived from God the Father, or hath some special relation to him as *an only begotten Son*; John i. 18. as *the first begotten of God*, Job i. 6. as *the first-born of every creature*; Col. i. 15. who was with God, and *had glory with the Father, before the world was*; John i. 1. xvii. 5. *By whom God made the worlds, and created things, visible and invisible*; Col. i. 16. Heb. i. 2, 3. *Who came forth from the Father, and came into this world*; John i. 1. who took flesh and blood upon him seventeen hundred years ago; Heb. ii. 14. and thus became a complete man: He was *de of a woman*; Gal. iv. 4. *was born of the virgin Mary, in an extraordinary manner, without an earthly father*; Luke i. 35. He was for this reason also called the Son of God. He lived above thirty years a man among men, taught divine doctrine here on earth, and wrought various divine wonders to confirm it, was crucified by the Jews and Romans, rose again from the dead, *left this world, and ascended to his Father, and our Father, to his God and our God*; John xx. 17. even where he was before he appeared in flesh;—vi. 62.

VII. As this description raises Jesus Christ far above the dignity of angels, and carries something divine in it, so there are several express ascriptions of true and proper divinity or godhead to him. This glorious person, Jesus the Son of God, hath divine names, titles, attributes, operations and worship ascribed to him, even such whereby God the Father himself is known and distinguished to be the true God, &c.

Is the Father called the Lord our God often in scripture? So Thomas calls Christ, *My Lord, and my God*; John xx. 28. as the Father called, "the First and the Last;" Is. xlv. 6. So the Son; Rev. i. 17. and xxi. 13. Is the Father called Jehovah, *the mighty God, and God blessed for ever*? So is Christ; Jer. xxiii. 6. Is. ix. 6. Rom ix. 5. Christ is that Jehovah, whom *all the angels of God must worship*; Ps. xcvi. 17. compared with Heb. i. 6. Christ is that God, that Jehovah, who *laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of his hands*; Heb. i. 10, 12. compared with Ps. cii. 22, 25. He is that Lord and God, who *ascended on high, and led captivity captive*; Ps. xviii. 18. compared with Eph. iv. 8. He is that Jehovah, on whose name, *those who call, shall be delivered, or saved*; Joel ii. 32. compared with Rom. x. 13.

These, and many other scriptures prove, that Jesus Christ

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intelligent Agent, even as the true eternal God himself, with divine names, titles, attributes, &c. So the spirit of a man, though it be but one distinct principle in man, yet is sometimes represented as the man himself: And this is very common in the Hebrew idiom and sometimes in other languages. There are several instances of this representation of the spirit of God in scripture. Is God the Father the God of Israel? And is not the Holy Spirit so too? 2 Sam. xxiii. 2, 3. *The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, the God of Israel said.* The Holy Ghost is that Jehovah who was tempted by the Jews in the wilderness; Compare Ps. xcv. 3. with Heb. iii. 7—9. He is that God that dwells in the saints as in his temple; 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. and vi. 19. He is that God to whom Ananias told a lie; Acts v. 3, 4. *Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.* He is that divine Person, who said, *Separate to me Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have called them;* Acts xiii. 2. He is that Divine Agent, who sent Peter to Cornelius; Acts x. 20. *The Spirit said to him, behold two men seek thee, go with them for I have sent them†.*

Here note, That there are some places of scripture, where in it is pretty difficult to determine, whether the Holy Spirit be represented as the sovereign divine Agent, that is, God himself; or, as a distinct power, or principle in the godhead, by which God the Father acts. And, upon this account, some texts may be fairly interpreted both ways, without any inconvenience: Yet, in other places, this distinction is plainly observed, as may appear by several of these scriptures which I have cited.

XI. Sometimes this Divine Principle, the Holy Spirit, is represented in a personal manner, but in a subordinate character, and as a person more directly acting according to the economy of the gospel. Then he is set forth, not only as proceeding* from the Father, and given to the Son, but he is described also as sent both by the Father and the Son, to perform various offices and operations in the world, and especially in the church. John xv. 26. *When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.* And though under

† Here I take occasion to correct a mistake of my memory, in my last "Dissertations on the Trinity, where I did not remember, that the pronoun I, was applied to the Holy Spirit in the New Testament.

* I do not here enter into that question, whether the Holy Spirit, considered in his own divine essence, or subsistence, is derived from the Father, or from the Son, or both? But I content myself here to declare, that, as to the economy of the gospel, and the manner of operation, the Spirit proceeds from the Father, and is sent both by the Father and the Son. This is plain scripture, and beyond all dispute.

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this idea in the christian economy, the Spirit is represented in a subordinate manner, yet in his divine nature or godhead he is truly, essentially, and eternally one with God the Father.

If this proposition does not give full satisfaction concerning the representation of the Holy Spirit, in a subordinate manner in some scriptures, perhaps, the next proposition may relieve those difficulties.

XII. The term Spirit, and Holy Spirit, in scripture, does not always signify the divine Agent himself, but sometimes it means his gifts, graces, and influences, the virtue or efficacy of this divine principle in godhead. Nor is this at all strange, for Jesus Christ himself is called the Word of God, because he reveals the will of God to men; and yet the very laws and revelations, which God hath given to men by Jesus Christ, are sometimes also called the Word of God; so, though the Spirit of God himself distributes gifts, and graces, and divine influences among men, yet these very gifts and graces, and divine influences, which are given by the Spirit, are also sometimes called the Holy Spirit. This has been always granted by our best writers.

And perhaps, this may be the meaning of that term, in some of those places of scripture, where the Spirit is said to be poured out upon men, to be shed down on the apostles, to be given to believers by laying on the hands of the apostles, where men are said to have a portion of the Spirit, whether greater, or less, or double: or perhaps, where the Spirit is said to be, or not to be given by measure, or where persons are said to be filled, or anointed with the Spirit. Perhaps, I say some of these scriptural phrases may be better explained concerning the gifts, graces, and influences of the Holy Spirit, than concerning the divine Agent himself, who is true God. It seems to be much more proper to say, divine influences are shed down, poured out, and given to men, by laying on of hands, &c. then to say, that the true God himself is shed down, is poured out, or given to some men, by other men's laying hands upon them; or than to say, we are anointed with God, or God is given, or not given, by measure, &c.*

* There are several other scriptures that confirm this proposition. It is evident that it was the Holy Spirit by which Elijah spoke and acted, and yet it is called the Spirit of Elijah, that is, his gifts; 2 Kings ii. 9, 15. It is the Holy Spirit by which the Corinthians spake, yet it is called the spirits of prophets, and these are said to be subject to the prophets; 1 Cor. xiv. 32. which would hardly be said concerning the divine Agent, or God himself. See Poole's Annotations.

This proposition does by no means deny, or diminish the truth and glory of the Spirit of God dwelling eminently in the human nature of Christ, who was anointed and filled with the Spirit, and subordinately in every true christian: For God himself is said to dwell in his people, as in his temple, and the Spirit of

This has been the general sense of all our divines in this matter, and I thought it necessary to insert this proposition here, that it might more evidently appear, that though, in some scriptures, the term Spirit, and Holy Spirit, may signify his gifts, graces, and influences, yet this does not at all derogate from the true and eternal godhead, which is plainly ascribed to the Holy Spirit in other places. Here note, though it is hard to determine always with certainty, when the Holy Ghost, or Spirit of God, signifies the divine Agent himself, and when it denotes his influences; yet there are some texts, wherein the sense is plain and evident.

XIII. Though the Son, and Spirit, are true God, as well as the Father, yet all divines universally acknowledge, that the language of scripture seems to ascribe some sort of peculiar eminence, or special prerogative, to the Father, in such respects as these.

1. The Father, as I hinted before, is always represented as the first and chief Agent in creation, in providence, and in the affairs of salvation: the Father is described and exhibited as acting by his Son, or Word, and by his Spirit, as sending them, and employing, or using them, as mediums of his agency:—Whereas the Son, and Spirit, are never represented as Chief Agents, in comparison with the Father, nor are they said, in this manner, to act by the Father, or to send, or use, and employ him as such a medium of their acting.

2. When the name of God is used absolutely in scripture, it generally relates to the Father. This appears in innumerable instances: As, for example, where Christ is called the Son of God, the word God plainly signifies the Father: And indeed, this idea of God, as the Father or prime Agent, is much the most frequent and general sense of the word God, in the Old and New Testament, as all men confess.

3. The Father is described as the only true God, as the one God, even the Father; and that in such scriptures, where the Son, or Spirit, are named, and plainly distinguished from him; John xvii. 3. Christ saith to his Father; “This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent;” Eph. iv. 6. There is one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one God

God dwells in them, and abides with them for ever; John xiv. 16, 17. For he that hath not the Spirit of Christ, is none of his; Rom. viii. 9. But this proposition relieves those harsh and unwarrantable expressions, of being anointed with God, of receiving a double portion of God, of God being shed or poured down on men, which would be the plain consequence of interpreting such scriptures concerning the divine Agent himself, or the Holy Spirit, who is true God; and for that reason our divines have generally thought it proper and necessary to interpret many of these expressions, rather concerning the gifts, graces, and influences of the Spirit.

and Father of all. 1 Cor. viii. 6. "To us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things."

XIV. Since there is but one God, even the Father, according to St. Paul, and since the Father is the only true God, according to Christ's own expression, then the Son and Spirit cannot have another, or a different godhead from that of the Father: But since the Son and Spirit also are true God, it must be by some communion in the same true godhead, which belongs to the Father: For if it were another godhead, that would make another God; and thus the christian religion would have two or three Gods, which is contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel*.

This might be proved from many scriptures, and many reasonings drawn from scripture; I shall mention two or three of them:

1. Christ himself saith? John x. 30. "I and my Father are one," that is, one in divine power and godhead, as the context leads us to expound it: And this has been the most general sense of all our Trinitarian writers. 1 John v. 7. "The apostle saith, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one:" which is usually explained, these three are one in Deity, or have one and the same godhead. Nor do I know any better exposition.

2. The godhead of the Father, and the godhead of the Spirit, is the very same godhead which is in Christ, and which wrought his miracles. John xiv. 10. "I am in the Father, and the Father is in me: It is the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the works," that is, the godhead of the Father. And this language is so strong, as if Christ and God, in these miraculous actions, were to be esteemed one complex agent, since he elsewhere says; John x. 30. "I and my Father are one."—

* Here let it be observed, that I do not enter into that question, whether the godhead, which is ascribed to the Son, does always signify the full, complete, and adequate idea of the godhead, which is in the Father? or whether, in some scriptures, it only may mean an inadequate idea of godhead, which may be supposed to be called the word, or wisdom of God; or whether it be not rather the entire godhead under the special idea of wisdom? For I would not enter into any particular schemes of explication, in this sermon: But, in general, it is evident from scripture, that the godhead of Christ, and that of the Father, must be one and the same godhead, since there are not two Deities.

Let it be observed, again: that supposing the godhead of the Father and the Son, to be the very same, then, though the Father has the only true godhead in him, the Son and Spirit are not excluded from a communion therein. For thus it may be made to appear, that, though the Father be called *the only true God*; John xvii. 3. the Son and Spirit may be true God also; yet, perhaps, this text might receive a much clearer explication, by applying some particular scheme, in order to interpret it; but this is not my present work.

Again Mat. xii. 28. "Jesus, by the Spirit of God cast out devils." Now if there were any other distinct godhead in the Son, besides the godhead of the Father, or of the Spirit, it seems to be somewhat strange and unaccountable, that the miracles of Christ should never be plainly ascribed to that peculiar distinct godhead of the Son, but that scripture should so often tell us, he wrought his miracles by the Holy Spirit, or by the aid of his Father. I think, therefore, it must at least imply thus much, that the godhead of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, is but one and the same godhead. And it is this same one godhead, or divine essence, that is united personally to the man Jesus Christ, and wrought his miracles: It is the same godhead that subsists in the Father, and in the Son, whatsoever personal distinctions are between them; which shall be considered immediately.

3. Many of those scriptures, in the Old Testament, which apparently refer to God the Father, that is, to the great God, considered and exhibited as the prime Creator, and Lord of all, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; I say, many of these very scriptures are ascribed to Christ, in the New Testament, and interpreted concerning Christ, particularly in Rom. x. 11—13. xiv. 10—12. Eph. iv. 8—10. Ps. ii. 6—11. Heb. i. 10—12. which, I think, could not be a just representation, if the godhead of Christ, and the godhead of the Father, were not one and the same godhead. I add after all, this hath been the common and general sense of all our protestant divines, at home and abroad, that the godhead of the Father, Son, and Spirit, is but one and the same godhead, or divine essence.

XV. Yet, there is a plain distinction held forth in scripture, between the sacred Three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as I have already declared; even so plain and strong, as that they are all several times represented, in a personal manner, and are spoken of, as three distinct Persons*, who have different works or offices, attributed and assigned to them.

The Father is represented, as the prime Agent, in our creation, and redemption, our sanctification, and salvation: It was he sent his Son Jesus Christ to redeem, and save us from hell:

* Though they are generally called "three distinct Persons," by our divines, yet there are no writers, either abroad or at home, that ever pretended this to be the express language of scripture: And there are very few, if any, of our most orthodox writers, who ever supposed the word "person," was to be taken here in the full, common, and literal sense of it, for a distinct conscious being; but only in a qualified and restrained sense, or a sense that is analagous, or a-kin to the common meaning of it, among men: for three distinct persons, in the common and literal sense of it, would be three distinct Spirits, which very few Trinitarians allow.

It is he sends his Holy Spirit to enlighten, sanctify, and comfort us, and to prepare us for heaven.

The Son is represented as sent by the Father into this world, to take our flesh and blood upon him, that he might die to redeem us: He becomes our Prophet, our Priest, and our King, to complete our salvation: He sends the Holy Spirit, from the Father, to dwell in his people.

The Holy Spirit is represented as sent, by the Father and the Son, to confirm the truth of the gospel, to guide us into all truth, to change our sinful natures into holiness, and to witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God: He is expressly called a Witnesser, and a Comforter, or Advocate.

XVI. Upon the whole it appears, that there is, and there must be, some real union and communion in godhead between the sacred Three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to answer and support the divine names, titles and attributes, &c. which are ascribed to them all? And, there is, and there must be, some sufficient distinction between them, to sustain these distinct personal characters and offices, and to answer to these distinct representations of scripture: Though how far this oneness of godhead, and this personal distinction extend, may not be easy for us, to find out exactly, and to describe to the understanding and satisfaction of our fellow-christians.

This is that very question, which has so much difficulty in it to answer: This has been the hard problem of christianity, in almost all ages, how to reconcile and adjust this article: This has been the solemn labour of our several schemes and hypotheses, wherein some of us would be glad to arrive at clearer conceptions, by a further search of the holy scriptures. But among the many attempts that have been made to adjust this matter, there is not one which is universally approved.

XVII. Though perhaps, we may not find, nor determine clearly and precisely, how far the sacred Three are the same as to their oneness of godhead, nor how far they are different, as to their distinct personal character; yet it is our duty to honour them, according to the revelation which scripture hath made; that is, we must pay all of them divine honours, since they have communion in godhead; and we must transact our important affairs of salvation with them according to their distinct offices, as our Father, our Saviour, and our Sanctifier.

Thus I have given a plain scriptural account of the doctrine of the Trinity, without entering into those particular explications, whereby, Trinitarian writers have unhappily divided themselves into several contending parties. And I have done my endeavour to express what appears to be the first, the most plain, and

obvious representation of things in scripture, and that so inoffensively to my brethren, who own and believe this doctrine, that I am persuaded there have been but few Trinitarians these hundred years past, who would deny any one of all these propositions. Nor am I conscious to myself that I have ever written any thing inconsistent with them, in any of my discourses on this divine subject.

[Here is a proper division of this Sermon into two parts.]

The second thing contained in the text is, the important use of this great doctrine of the Trinity, and that is, We have an access to the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit.

I shall not stand here to debate, whether the access, which we have to the Father, in my text, refers to any particular act of worship, or to our general return to God from a state of sin, guilt, and distance. The text is a divine truth in both these senses: But since it seems to be the chief design of the whole chapter, to shew the way of our return to the favour of God, and a state of peace and friendship with him, since we are said to be *brought near to God by the blood of Christ*; verse 13. I suppose, it cannot be improper to take this verse, in the same extensive sense*. But, if the apostle should mean our access to God, in particular acts of worship, here in my text, yet I am sure, this glorious sentence is justly applicable to the general access of a sinner to God, and his introduction into a state of divine favour: For it must be confessed, that our first general return to God from a state of sin, and all our gradual advances to greater nearness, must be still expected, and obtained through Christ, and by the Holy Spirit.

Here let us consider the different stations, or characters, in which the sacred Three are represented in this great and important concern of our salvation, and at the end of each representation, I shall shew briefly, what our duties are to the sacred Three, in our approaches to God, correspondent to the stations, in which the gospel places them.

I. God, the great God, and Father of all, is here represented as sustaining the majesty of godhead, as the sovereign Lord, and governor of his creatures, and my text, compared with the foregoing verses, discovers him to us in these four views:

1. As offended with his creature man, on the account of

* I might take notice here, in order to confirm my extensive sense of the text that the word access in one or more copies, is *signis*, peace: And the inference, which the apostle makes in the next verse, *Therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners*, is very naturally drawn from our access to God, as a state of peace with God, but not from a particular act of worship.

in; verse 3. for we are, *by nature, the children of his wrath, we are strangers and enemies in our minds, and by wicked works*; Col. i. 21. *We are afar off from God, without God, and without hope in the world*; Eph. ii. 12. Though this be spoken particularly of the Ephesian idolaters, yet, in a sense, it is true of every man, in a state of nature.

2. God appears willing to be reconciled, ready to receive us upon our return to him, in this chapter. In other places of scripture, he is represented sitting on a throne of grace, approachable by sinful creatures; and this is sufficiently implied in verse 4. *He is rich in mercy, and has loved us with great love.*

3. He has appointed his own beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be the Reconciler. We are utterly unworthy of his favour or love; nor will a holy God suffer guilty creatures to come near him, without a proper and honourable Mediator; and since we could not provide ourselves of such a friend, he has appointed his own Son to that office. *God has set him forth to be a propitiation.*

4. He makes us willing to be reconciled: He saves us by free grace, and when he has ordained faith to be the way of our return to him, he works that faith in us, by his own Spirit. Verse 8. *By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.*

Let us consider now, what are our duties, according to this representation of the character, which God the Father sustains here. From all these things it plainly follows, that in our religious transactions, we are eminently to look to God the Father, as the person who is our original Maker, Lord and Sovereign; whose laws we have broken, whose anger we have incurred, and from whom we have separated ourselves by sin: We are to seek peace with him, and reconciliation to him. We must return to him as our rightful Lord, and address ourselves to him by humble repentance, as sitting on the throne of Majesty, and vindicating the rights of godhead: To him we must pray, and apply ourselves, eminently to him as the first Spring of mercy, the Author of all grace, and ascribe to him the glory of his condescending wisdom and love; we must offer him our thanks and praises, that he is willing to be reconciled, that he has sent his Son to be the Reconciler, and appointed a way of reconciliation. This is the general current of scripture language, both in precept and in example; and the chapter, where my text is, as well as the whole epistle, plainly leads us to this practice.

II. We come next to enquire more particularly, how Christ the Son of God, is represented as the medium, through whom we have access to the Father, for our reconciliation is attributed to him, *he is our peace*; verse 14. Now

Christ becomes our Mediator of reconciliation, eminently, these five ways :

1. By his incarnation, that is, by taking our flesh and blood upon him : And thus he became a man amongst men : The Son of God, who is one with the Father in godhead, became one with us in human nature. *The word, who was God, and who was with God, the same word was made flesh, and dwelt with us ;* John i. 14. When he became Emmanuel, *God with us*, he did not only unite God and man in his own person, but since he came *in the likeness of sinful flesh ;* Rom. viii. 3. he did, as it were, exemplify an union of peace and reconciliation between a holy God and sinful man. His very incarnation gave us a pledge of that friendship, which he came to restore between God the Creator and his guilty creatures, who were before at enmity, and strangers, both by the apostacy of our first parents, and our own continued rebellions.

2. Christ came to reconcile us to God, by fulfilling perfect obedience to the law, which we had broken, and by sustaining the punishment and death, which was due to our sins. This we could never suffer, and outlive the suffering ; for the broken law threatened death, but provided no resurrection. Christ Jesus, the Son of God, taking flesh and blood upon him, took our sins also, and became a sacrifice for sin ; *he bare our sins in his body on the cursed tree ;* 1 Pet. ii. 24. and, by his blood, has made complete atonement for sin, has repaired the honour of the law, and government of God, which we had highly dishonoured ; and thus he has made a way for the exercise of the mercy and forgiveness of God, without any disgrace to his governing justice ; and has laid a happy foundation for our approach to God the Father, though we are, by nature, strangers and rebels, guilty and condemned.

3. Christ ascended to heaven, to present his own sacrifice before the throne of God, even as the high-priest, under the Jewish dispensation, went into the holy of holies, to present the blood of the sacrifice of atonement, and sprinkle it before the mercy-seat. This was the chief glory and perfection of the priesthood of Aaron, and according to the apostle's reasonings, in the epistle to the Hebrews, chapters vii. viii. ix. This seems to be the ultimate glory and perfection of the priesthood of Christ, viz. his *entrance into heaven with his own blood, there to appear in the presence of God for us ;* Heb. ix. 11, 12—24. There he presents himself, not only as the Lamb that has been slain, but he appears, in his own pure and perfect mediatorial righteousness, before God, in the name of sinful man ; as Aaron the high-priest, in the name of the people of Israel, appeared in the most holy place before God ; not only with the blood of atone-

ment in his hand, but with holiness to the Lord, inscribed on the mitre, on his forehead; Ex. xxviii. 36. God the Father beholds his only begotten Son there, as the great Representative of all his children: He beholds his own law satisfied and fulfilled, in his perfect obedience, even to death: and this is an everlasting foundation for reconciliation and peace between God and sinners.

4. Christ lives for ever to intercede for sinful man, to plead with God for mercy to his guilty creatures. Perhaps, in the nature of things, this is not much different from the former particular; for his presenting of his sacrifice, as for ever fresh in the virtues of it before the Father, is a sort of intercession. His blood has a voice in it, and his very appearance there is a powerful pleading. But however, since the high-priest of old, not only presented the atoning blood, but also offered incense in the holy of holies, which is a type of intercession, we may properly enough make some distinction between them, and represent these two transactions of Christ, as our high-priest, in a distinct light. *He is able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him, since he lives for ever to make intercession for them; Heb. vii. 25.*

5. He is represented as dwelling in heaven, as our great High-priest, not only to present our services, our prayers and our praises to God, and make them acceptable to the Father, through his infinite merit, notwithstanding all their imperfections, but also to introduce our departing souls into the presence of God, *without spot or blemish; Eph. v. 27.* and to present his whole church, *at the great day, before his own and his Father's glory, with exceeding joy; Jude 24.* This is the last great act of his mediatorial office, and by this we obtain a full and complete access to God, to dwell with him for ever, in the regions of light and joy.

Now let us consider, how we ought to regulate our practice in our return from sin, and our approaches to God, in a correspondency with these instances of the mediation of Christ.

From this account of things, it follows, that whensoever we sinful and guilty creatures, address ourselves to God the Father, it must be done in, and by the name and interest of Jesus Christ, as our only Mediator. We must humbly ask forgiveness of our sins, for the sake of the sufferings of the Son of God; we must depend entirely for our acceptance with the Father, on the virtue of his perfect obedience even to death; and entreat of the Father, that he would be reconciled to us, upon the account of his own Son Jesus, utterly disclaiming all merit and worthiness of our own, renouncing all other Saviours and all other hopes, for

Christ alone is the way to God; *No man cometh to the Father but by me*; JOHN xiv. 6.

We must give thanks to the Son of God, for his amazing condescension to take our nature on him, and dwell in flesh and blood; and for his voluntary submission to death, to redeem such guilty creatures as we are. We must trust in him for complete salvation, both from sin and hell, and resign ourselves, as guilty, sinful and perishing creatures, into his hands, and to his methods of relief. All our prayers, and acts of worship and obedience, must be recommended to the Father by his name, and through his intercession.

After every fresh instance of sin, we must fly to him as our faithful advocate in heaven, and have daily recourse to him, as our great Sacrifice and our Mediator; because our sins are daily renewed in this imperfect state. In short we must surrender ourselves up to him, that he may bring us as near to God, as this present state of things will admit; and when we are dying, we must commit our departing spirits to him as Stephen did, that he may present us to his Father, when we leave this sinful and wretched world. Thus we have access to God the Father, by his Son Jesus Christ, who is our great Peace-maker.

I grant, that several other necessary duties, which we owe to Christ our Lord, might be mentioned in a more distinct and explicit manner, viz. the acknowledging him as our great Prophet, receiving his divine instructions with an humble faith, and imitating his sacred example with holy care; the submission to him as our Lord and King, yielding a ready and chearful obedience to his commands, and a humble subjection to his providential dispensations; to which I may add, depending on him for daily grace, and the promised aids of his blessed Spirit, as being appointed of the Father to bestow them; for he is exalted to be a Prince, as well as a Saviour; and indeed, Christ doth promote this great work of the salvation of men, by his universal government of the visible and invisible worlds, with this view and design by giving and continuing his gospel, to particular nations, by sending forth his ministers and messengers to invite sinners to be reconciled to God, and by the communications of his Spirit to men. But these things do not appear directly to be the present view of the apostle in my text, while he is describing Christ as a medium of our access and reconciliation to God, chiefly by his death and its influences. And as for the work of the Spirit, that comes next in course to be mentioned.

III. Having shewn the glorious service, which the second person in the Holy Trinity performs for our salvation, according to my text, we come now to speak of the third, that is, the blessed

Spirit of God, who is here represented as one who helps our return or access to God the Father, through Jesus Christ; and this he does eminently, in the ways following :

1. He convinces us of sin. He makes us see and feel our dreadful state of wretchedness, because of our guilt in the sight of God. Mankind, by nature, are insensible of their own misery; till the Spirit of God is sent to awaken them; out of their dead sleep, and make them look after a reconciliation to the infinite Majesty of God, whom they have offended. It is the powerful and inward operation of the Spirit, that makes sinners cry out; *What shall I do to be saved.*

2. The Spirit discovers the mercy of God the Father to us, and assures us that he is willing to be reconciled. This he has done in the word of the gospel, and the promises of grace, which are written and recorded in the bible by the holy men whom he inspired; and this he reveals also with power and pleasure to the mind of an awakened sinner. Then the guilty soul rejoices, that there is forgiveness with God, and conceives some glimmerings of hope.

3. It is the Spirit, who effectually reveals Christ Jesus to the soul, as the great Reconciler. He discovers who Christ is; and what he has done for us, and sets him before us in all the glories of his mediation. He makes the soul see the all-sufficiency of his sacrifice to atone for sin, the efficacy of his intercession to prevail with God, and his power to save to the uttermost. And all this is according to the promise of Christ; John xvi. 14. *He shall glorify me, for he shall take the things that are mine, and shew them unto you:* All the teachings of men, and all the words in the bible, cannot make a sinful creature see such glory in Christ, such grace, and so desirable a salvation, as is done by the enlightening work of the Holy Spirit.

4. It is the Holy Spirit, that makes us willing to return to God, in this way of his own appointment. It is he that powerfully persuades, and inclines us to part with every sin. He works in the heart of a sinner, holy repentance for his past follies; and renews, and changes the corrupt nature of man. It is he forms us after the image of God, and gives us a new and divine spirit and temper. *That which is born of the spirit is spirit;* John iii. 6. He works faith in us with power, even that living faith, whereby we are interested in Christ the Reconciler, and which is the spring of all holiness. It is through the divine operation of the Spirit of God on our hearts, that we are taught to resign ourselves up to Christ, and to commit all our concerns of salvation into his hands. Hereby we become partakers of the benefits of the life and death of Christ on earth, and

of his intercession in heaven ; for it is the appointment of God, that faith in Christ shall be our only means of drawing near to the Father.

5. The Holy Spirit preserves, and carries on his own divine work in the soul. What he begun in faith, he carries on in love : What he begun in repentance, he carries on by daily mortification of sin. *Faith and love are the fruits of the Spirit ; Gal. v. 22.* And it is *by the Spirit, that we must mortify the deeds of the body, if we would live ; Rom. viii. 13.* He sanctifies us more and more, and draws our hearts still nearer to God. It is *by the sanctification of the Spirit, and by the belief of the truth, that we are brought to partake of salvation ; 2 Thess. ii. 13.* He restores us when we wander, and brings us back, when we have gone astray : He fits us for converse with God, and awakens every grace, which he has wrought in us, into proper and seasonable exercise.

He assists the soul in all its devout addresses to God, as a Spirit of prayer and supplication. By him we draw near to the Father. He gives us to taste the pleasure of religion, and prepares us daily for the full enjoyment of God. He dwells in us, as a living spring of holiness, and keeps alive his own work in our hearts, through all the oppositions of indwelling sin, through all the various temptations we meet with, from Satan and from this present world, till we are brought safe to the heavenly kingdom. He gives all the final strokes of sanctification, which may be needful at our death, freeing us from every remaining sin, and completing his own work of holiness in us. Then our blessed Mediator Christ Jesus, at the right-hand of God, *presents us without spot or blemish, before the presence of his own and his Father's glory,* and gives us that sensible enjoyment of those everlasting pleasures, he hath prepared for us, in that holy and happy world. Now the duties that arise from this account of the operations of the Holy Spirit are as follow :

In our approaches to God, in order to obtain peace and favour with him, we must pray, and wait, and hope for the divine influences of this blessed Spirit, to convince us of sin, to make us sincerely willing to be reconciled to God, to give us a clear and affecting sight of Christ, in all the power and glory of his mediatorial office, and to enable us to apply ourselves to Christ, by a living faith, that we may by him, be brought into the favour of God.

We must pray earnestly to the God of all grace, that he would work deep and unfeigned repentance in us, by his Holy Spirit, that his Spirit might change our natures into his own likeness, and restore his image, which is defaced by sin ; that he would send his Spirit to mortify all the corrupt principles that are

within us, to lead us into all needful truth, and incline our hearts with power to the practice of every duty. We must ask, that he would assist us, by his Spirit, in all the holy and devout exercises of our souls, and enable us to worship God the Father aright, through Jesus Christ, in all his own appointments. We are to pray, that the Spirit of God may preserve the divine seed of grace alive in our souls, that he may recover us whenever we go astray from God, and carry on his own heavenly work in us to perfection.

We must seek, and wait for the divine influences, of this blessed Spirit continually, to give and to maintain holiness and comfort: And we must take the utmost religious care, lest at any time we grieve him, and cause him to depart, by resisting his sacred influences: And thus, with a daily dependance on the grace of the Holy Spirit, we must perpetually approach nearer to God, both in the temper of our souls, and in holy converse with him, till our state of trial be finished, and till the work of holiness is complete in heaven.

It is a very natural enquiry here, whether we may directly address ourselves in prayer to the Son or the Spirit of God, to bestow these divine influences upon us? To which, I answer, that the scripture, which is indited by the Spirit himself, generally instructs us to make God the Father the more direct object of our addresses in prayer, and to entreat the Father to bestow his Spirit on us, because it is he sustains the supreme dignity and majesty of godhead, as the Lord and sovereign of all, as the prime Agent in our salvation, and prime object of worship. It is the Father of lights, that is the giver of every good and perfect gift; James i. 17. It is the Father that gives his Holy Spirit to them that ask it; Luke xi. 13. It is the God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom St. Paul bowed his knees, that he would strengthen his saints, by his Spirit in the inner man; Eph. iii. 16. And he prays that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation; Eph. i. 17. It is evident, by the general current of scripture, both in its counsels and in its examples, that we are chiefly to seek the aids of the blessed Spirit, from God the Father, through the mediation of his Son Christ Jesus; and doubtless, this always has been, and this will be, the most usual practice of christians, who make the word of God the rule and guide of their worship*.

* As the Second Person is considered as vested with the office of mediation, and the Holy Ghost, as the Sanctifier and Comforter, so God the Father is, in a peculiar manner the object of our faith, love and worship. So Peter tells us; 1 Pet. i. 21. "Through Christ we believe in God." So writes Dr. Owen, in his Sermons lately published, and so all our divines practise in their holy ministrations.

Yet since Christ the Son of God has true godhead belonging to him, and is a proper object of worship; since he is exalted to bestow the promised Spirit on men, it cannot be improper to offer up our addresses to Christ Jesus our Lord, to send us his Spirit according to his promise. *I will send the Comforter to you from the Father; John xv. 26.* And it is manifest, that, in the day of temptation, St. Paul addressed our Lord Jesus Christ, for grace to resist it; *2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.* And perhaps when he triumphed in this, that *the power of Christ should rest upon him, ver. 9.* he means the Spirit of Christ, in his powerful influences, to resist temptation.

Now though it be generally agreed, that there are no plain and express precepts, or examples of prayers or praises, so directly addressed to the Holy Spirit, in all the New Testament, yet since the Holy Spirit is true God, since he is represented in scripture, in a personal manner, or as a divine person, and since, in the sacred economy, he is appointed to enlighten, to sanctify, and to comfort us, I think we may by just inference, derive sufficient ground from scripture, upon some occasions, to offer petitions to the Holy Spirit for his sacred influences, and to give him praise when we have received them: "Enlighten our darkness, O blessed Spirit, guide us into all truth: Sanctify our sinful natures, and fill us with joy and hope in believing. Blessed be the Holy Spirit of God for his divine work, that he has begun in our souls: May it be carried on and perfected unto the great day."

Thus I have finished the second general head of discourse, and shewn that these are the glorious and divine methods, whereby such guilty and sinful creatures as we have access to God the Father: This is the mediation of his Son Jesus Christ, who procures peace and reconciliation for us; and these are the inward and powerful operations of his Holy Spirit, whereby our hearts are reconciled to God, and trained up to a fitness for his heavenly presence. *In that presence there is a divine fulness of joy, and at his right-hand are pleasures for evermore; Ps. xvi. 13.*

The third general head contained in my text, is the union of all nations in this last and best of religions, which God ever taught the children of men: Both Jews and Gentiles have access to the Father in this way, that is through this one Mediator, and by one Spirit.

From the first apostacy of Adam, till the days of Abraham, all the forms and instituted ordinances of religion, which were given to men, were designed as a general instruction for all the nations of the earth, to shew them in what manner such guilty and sinful creatures might have access to God, and find accep-

tance with him. And these forms and ordinances, which were of such infinite importance, should have been preserved alive by constant tradition amongst all mankind. Whatsoever divine instructions God gave to Adam and Noah, were the appointed methods of worship and access to God for all their posterity, that is, for all the world, till God should reveal some new methods to them: for each of those two patriarchs were the fathers of all mankind; one before, and the other after the flood.

But when God called Abraham, he favoured him and his household, with peculiar privileges, and appointed to them new and peculiar forms of worship, and access to himself. And here began the distinction of the world into two parts: Some were obliged to the religion of Abraham, the rest left to the religion of Noah. But as most of the posterity of Noah soon forgot the true God, and degenerated into various forms of idolatry, so the religion of Abraham was also, for the most part, lost among the families of Ishmael and the sons of Keturah, and was chiefly retained and practised in the household of Isaac, and in the tribes of Jacob, surnamed Israel.

In the days of Moses large additions were made to the religion of Abraham, and then the family or nation of Israel was, in a special manner, separated to be a peculiar people to God. Their methods of access to God, by priests and sacrifices, by blood and incense, by sprinklings and washing, were very numerous, and continued to be practised in the Jewish nation for many ages, even till the Messiah came, while the Gentiles had utterly lost the religion of Noah their father.

But here observe, that all the chief rites and ceremonies of worship which were ever given to Adam or Noah, to Abraham or Moses, pointed to the great Messiah, and to the religion of Christ. These ceremonies had no power to save, but by virtue of their relation to Christ, the seed of the woman, the great Reconciler who was to come. It was therefore through the mediation of Christ, and by the influence of the blessed Spirit, that Adam, Noah, Abraham and Israel; that sinful mankind in all nations and in all ages, had ever any true access to God, or were received into his favour; though the person and offices of Christ were in those days concealed under ceremonies, figures and shadows, and the influences of the blessed Spirit were not quite so clearly revealed. *To them was the gospel preached as well as unto us; Gal. iii. 8. Heb. iv. 2.* the same gospel and the same salvation, but covered with many veils.

It is no wonder then that when Christ himself, the Son of God and of man, the great Reconciler, was come into the world, and had revealed to men in a clearer light, the doctrine of his own

mediation, and taught and promised the necessary influences of the Spirit of God ; it is no wonder that all other instituted rites and forms of worship should cease, which were only figures and signs of the glorious religion of the New Testament. It is no wonder that all nations should be now required to draw near to God the Father, by the mediation of his own Son, and through the aids of his own Spirit : All nations, I say, wheresoever the sound of this religion has reached, wheresoever this gospel has been published to mankind. This is the universal rule of approach to God for every sinful man, in order to obtain the divine favour. All other forms are as it were, dissolved and melted down into this one glorious appointment : This is the divine uniformity of religion and worship which God has now ordained among all his saints. Through one Lord Jesus, both Israel, and the rest of the nations, must have access by one Spirit unto the Father. *By one Spirit we are all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free ; 1 Cor. xii. 13.* And one Spirit, where it prevails gloriously, will lead us into one religion. *As there is but one God and Father of all, so there must be but one Lord and Mediator, and one Holy Spirit : For there must be one faith, one hope, one baptism into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost : to whom be glory and praise for ever.*

Let us conclude with three Remarks, answerable to the three things contained in my text, which have been the distinct heads of my discourse.

Remark I.—With what rich grace and glory has God condescended to reveal himself to us in the New Testament ! It is here God the Father appears eminently to begin, and carry on the divine affairs of his kingdom, of nature, providence and grace, by his only begotten Son, and his Eternal Spirit. It is here we learn the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh. It is here God hath made known to us, more of his own incomprehensible nature, and his ways of operation among his creatures, than ever the light of nature could find out, or than all the former dispensations of grace did clearly reveal. The great God, the Father of all, manifests himself as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him as our God, and our Father ; hereby he descends into a nearer relation to poor apostate mankind, in order to restore them to his favour and to his image, to holiness and eternal peace. He approaches near to us in his son Jesus, who is the *brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person ; Heb. i. 3.* He approaches near us indeed, by sending his Son, who is one with himself, to dwell in flesh ; he comes down to us and visits us, by the influences of his blessed Spirit, and causes our souls to ascend toward

m. What rich and condescending love is this! By the same word and the same Spirit, by which he created the heavens and the earth, does he transact the grand and important affair of grace and reconciliation with his guilty creatures. How divinely glorious is this doctrine of the blessed Trinity! And what an astonishing favour is it, that the sacred Three should join in the work of our salvation!

II. How happily is the gospel suited to the recovery of fallen man, by supplying all his wants in a most divine manner?

Is the great God offended by the sin of man? Behold, he takes upon him in the gospel, the name and title of a Father, to invite perishing rebels to return to his mercy, and he employs his Son and his Spirit, to give sinners a near access to himself. Are we guilty criminals, condemned rebels, and afar off from God? Behold, the Son of God himself, who is one with the Father, takes flesh and blood upon him, and so far becomes one with us, that he may sustain the punishment of our iniquities, and mediate a peace between God and sinners: and this he does by his powerful intercession, in the virtue of his bloody sacrifice. Is our nature corrupted by sin? Are we grown strangers and enemies to God by our continued rebellions? Behold the blessed Spirit of God comes into our hearts: His almighty operations can enlighten our dark minds, bend our obstinate wills, change our corrupted affections, and make us willing to return to God in his own way, and to accept the reconciliation. He sends his own Spirit, to create us anew in his own image, and make us fit for his service and his enjoyment.

We are, by nature, children of Satan, and children of wrath; the great God becomes a Father to us: We are condemned, and the Son of God, dwelling in the flesh, becomes a Reconciler: We are unholy, and the Spirit of God becomes our Sanctifier. We have destroyed ourselves beyond all possibility of created help, and God himself becomes our Saviour, and he will be seen in every part of our salvation, a divine Father, a divine Reconciler, and a divine Sanctifier.

III. How well has the blessed God provided for love and union amongst all his true worshippers! He has left them no just ground to contend and quarrel, or break themselves into little angry parties, for he has now appointed but one religion for them all, one general method of access to him. He has ordained but one Mediator, Jesus Christ, and has appointed one Spirit, to draw their hearts near to himself. A glorious religion indeed, that unites Jews and Gentiles, and mankind of all nations, to the great and blessed God! And what a disgrace is it to this religion, that we should not be more united to one another! *We are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the*

saints, and of the household of God; Eph. ii. 19. What a most absurd and grievous thing it is, that we, who are brought into such a state of friendship by divine grace, should obey the corrupt dictates of nature, and the lusts of the flesh! that we should quarrel and fight, even in the presence of that God, to whom we have access by the blood of one Mediator, and by the influence of one Spirit! Surely this must be a Spirit of union and peace and love, this one Spirit, which reconciles God and man, who were at a dreadful distance; this Spirit which reconciles Jew and Gentile, who were mutual strangers and enemies. And how can we suppose we are governed by this uniting Spirit, this Spirit of gentleness, meekness and friendship, if we indulge the ferments of wrath and revenge in our bosom, if we resolve to carry on strife and contention with the language of railing, and reviling against those, who worship the same God, by the same Mediator? How can we hope, that this Spirit has ever reconciled us to God, if we persist in enmity against our brethren? Should we have all faith, and remove mountains, if we have not love, we are not christians; 1 Cor. xiii. 2. The very nature and life of christianity, is faith working by love, faith leading the soul to God the Father, through the mediation of Jesus Christ his Son, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, and producing all works of holiness, by the influence of love to God and man. May this be wrought in our hearts, and practised in our whole course of life!

The Recollection.—“Hast thou heard, O my soul, hast thou learned, the glorious discoveries, that God has made of himself to fallen creatures, and does not thy heart rejoice within thee at the sound of such a doctrine, and such a salvation? Has the blessed God revealed himself to thee in his beloved Son, and by his Holy Spirit? And does he invite thee to approach him as a Father, by such a divine Mediator, and such a divine Sanctifier? O let all the powers of thy nature submit with joy to all the discoveries of such a grace. Go, humble thyself before an offended God, who is willing to become a Father and a Friend: Go, in the name of Jesus the great Mediator, and make thy approaches to the throne. Seek the influences of the Holy Spirit to enlighten thy dark understanding, to conquer the obstinacy of thy will, and subdue all thy affections to a sincere compliance with this method of divine love: And let the constraining force of this sweet doctrine unite thy heart to all thy fellow-christians, who sincerely worship the same God, who seek for acceptance through the blood of the same Mediator, and who depend upon the aids of the same Spirit.

“Happy day, when faith and holiness, and love, shall be found shining, and reigning amongst all that profess the religion

of Christ ! O when shall that promised hour appear, that " the Lord Jehovah shall be King over all the earth, and there shall be one Lord, and his name one ?" Zech. xiv. 9. Blessed Jesus, hast thou, by thy death, " broken down that middle wall of partition, that stood between the Jews and the Gentiles ? Hast thou reconciled both unto God in one body by thy cross, and slain the enmity thereby ?" Eph. ii. 16. What wretched creatures are we then to build up new walls of partition ourselves, by inventing and imposing new forms of faith and worship, which thy word has not taught us, and for which it has given us no foundation ! What wretched creatures are we, to raise up so many new enmities in the christian church, and support them with fierce and implacable zeal and fury ! This is to walk as enemies, even to the cross of Christ, and contrary to the compassionate designs of a dying Saviour. One would think, the blood of the Son of God crucified should teach us kinder lessons. O when shall all these enmities be abolished by the over-powering influence of the Spirit of light and love ? When shall these unhappy walls of partition be broken down, and the whole flock of Christ become one blessed fold under Jesus the universal Shepherd ? When shall we arrive at the " perfect unity of the faith, and maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of love ?" Eph. iv. 3—18. When shall the glory and beauty of the primitive church be restored, where " the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and one soul ;" Acts iv. 32. united in one faith and hope, by the almighty influences of one Spirit ? Come, blessed Redeemer, come and accomplish thy own gracious words of promise : Let there be one fold and one Shepherd ; and let thy blood and thy Spirit, by which we have access to one God, even the Father, cement all our hearts to each other in such an union as shall never be dissolved. Then shall we join with all the creation in one eternal song, even the song which thy word has taught us : " Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever ;" Rev. v. 13. *Amen.*

HYMN FOR SERMON XLIV.

The Doctrine of the Trinity, and the Use of it : Or, Access to the Father, through Christ, by the Holy Spirit.

FATHER of glory to thy name,
Immortal praise we give,
Who dost an act of grace proclaim,
And bid us rebels live.

Immortal honour to thy Son,
Who makes thy anger cease ;
Our lives he ransom'd with his own,
And dy'd to buy our peace.

To thy almighty Spirit be
Immortal glory giv'n,

Whose influence brings us near to thee,
And trains us up for heav'n.

Let men, with their united voice,
Adore the eternal God,
And spread his honours, and their joys,
Through nations far abroad.

Let faith, and love, and duty join,
One general song to raise,
And saints in earth and heav'n combine,
In harmony and praise.

SERMON XLV.

The Knowledge of God by the Light of Nature, together with the Uses of it, and its Defects.

Acts xiv. 16, 18.—The living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

WHEN the apostle Paul gave authority to his ministrations at Lystra, by working a miraculous cure on a man who was born a cripple, the inhabitants imagined that he and Barnabas were gods, and were immediately preparing a sacrifice for them; but to divert this madness and superstition of paying divine worship to creatures, the apostles, with holy jealousy and indignation, ran into the midst of them, and preached to them the living and the true God. “We, say they, are utterly unworthy of these divine honours; for we are men of such flesh and blood as yourselves, and are liable to the like infirmities; we preach to you, that ye should turn from these vanities to the living God, who made heaven and earth, &c.

From which words we may raise these three distinct observations:

I. “God may be known by the light of nature.” Surely he that made mankind, and doth them so much good, hath given them some hints and notices of himself; “He hath not left himself without witness.”—II. “The knowledge of God, which is attainable by the light of nature, hath its various uses;” of which this is one, that it is a witness for God and his goodness among men.—III. “Yet this knowledge of God by the light of nature, hath great defects and imperfections in it. Notwithstanding all this knowledge, which is within the reach of men, yet all the nations of mankind besides the Jews, continued to walk in their own ways, their ways of idolatry, of wild superstition and various wickedness. It is said indeed, that God suffered them to walk thus; not that he ever permitted them to do it as a Governor; but as a Creator and a Sovereign, he neither restrained them from it by his almighty power, nor by such special revelations of grace as he made to the Jewish nation: and their own natural knowledge did not secure them from it.

Let us begin with the first observation, *viz.* I. "God may be known by the light of nature." When I use the word God, I mean here the same thing which the lowest rank of mankind would understand by it, that is, the Being which made all things; or, in more learned language, the first Cause of all. And when I say, God may be known by the light of nature, I mean that the senses and the reasoning power which belong to the nature of man, are able to give him so much light in seeking after God, as to find out something of him thereby, or to gain some knowledge of him. By our senses, we are acquainted with his works, and by his works our reason may be led to trace out that more excellent Being who made them. This is asserted beyond all dispute. Rom. i. 19, 20. "That which may be known of God is manifest in them, that is, in men, for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are, or may be clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead." Now if we enquire more particularly, what it is that we can learn of God by the light of nature, I answer in the following particulars:

I. We may come to the knowledge of his existence, or that there is such a glorious Being who made all things.

This is evident and certain, that nothing could make itself. It is impossible that any thing which once had no being should ever give being to itself; or that once upon a time it should of itself burst out of nothing, and begin to be. Since therefore there is a world with millions of beings in it, which are born and die, it is certain there is some Being who had no beginning, but had life in himself from all eternity, and who gives life and being to all other things. This is the Being whom we call God.

Of all the visible beings that we are acquainted with, man is the highest and most noble; but he is forced to confess he is not his own maker. By sending our thoughts and enquiries a little backwards, we find that we came into being but a few years ago; and we are daily convinced, that we perish and die in long succession. Our parents, or our ancestors, were no more able to make themselves than we are; for most of them are dead, and the rest are going the way of all flesh: they cannot preserve our lives, nor their own; and therefore it is plain, that though we borrowed life from them at first, yet they are not the original and self-sufficient authors of life and being to themselves, or to us; they are but instruments in the hands of some superior first cause, some original and eternal Maker of us all.

Or if some atheist should say, we must run up from son to father, and from father to grandfather, in endless generations, without a beginning, and without any first cause; I answer, that

is impossible: for if ten thousand generations cannot subsist of themselves without dependance on something before them, neither can infinite or endless generations subsist of themselves without dependance. Suppose a chain of ten thousand links hung down from the sky, and could not support itself unless some mighty power upheld the first link: then it is certain, a chain of ten thousand times ten thousand links, or an endless chain, could never support itself. As the chain grows longer and heavier, the addition of new links can never make the chain more independent, or better support itself.

There must be therefore some first bird, some first beast, some first man, from whom all these succeeding generations begun; and since they are all dead, and could not preserve themselves out of their own original sufficiency, it is certain they could not make themselves; they all must depend therefore on some mighty Being, who has ever lived, and will ever live, and who is the first Cause and Maker of all things besides himself. Further argument for the being of a God will appear under the next particular.

2. We learn by the light of nature what God is, *viz.* that he is a Spirit, perfect in wisdom and perfect in power, who knows all things and can do all things, or who is all-wise and almighty.

The amazing works of God in the heavens, the sun, moon and stars, their regular and unerring motions for so many thousand years, the progress of the hours, the changes of day and night, winter and summer, which depend on these motions and revolutions, they all abundantly discover that the Maker of them was wise, and skilful beyond all our conceptions. If we observe the operations of a clock or watch, which doth but imitate the motions of these heavenly bodies, and point out to us the day and the hour, and distinct seasons; we say, it is impossible this curious engine could be made without great wisdom and skill in some artificer who contrived it; and can we be so foolish as to imagine, that this vast and glorious engine of the heavens, with all its bright furniture, which makes times and seasons, day and night, could ever come into being by chance, or be made without wisdom or contrivance.

The wonderful production of plants, herbs, trees, and flowers, the astonishing operations of living creatures, and their several parts and powers fitted for the proper ends and designs of their life, discover to us the deep wisdom and knowledge of the Being that made them. When we observe the strange and surprising actions of some animals, of dogs or foxes, of hen and chickens, of bees and emmits, we can scarce withhold ourselves from ascribing knowledge and reason to them; and is it possible

that the Being, which made these active animals should not have understanding and reason, and that far superior to all his creatures? Should Mr. Boyle, or Sir Isaac Newton descend from heaven, and begin a complete lecture on this subject, it would last for years, for ages, even to the end of time; and every instructive moment would acquaint us with some new glories of the Creator.

Let us consider but our own natures, our parts and powers; what wonders are contained in every sense? In the eye, what millions of objects are painted continually on one spot of that little ball, and transferred inward to the brain in all their distinct colours and shapes, and are beheld without confusion there? What varieties of sounds and voices, language and harmony, are taken in and distinguished by the ear in its winding caverns? How very various are the tastes and smells that we partake of by the palate and the nostrils? How happily contrived is our sense of feeling, not confined to one part, but diffused throughout the whole body, and to give speedy notice of every thing within us, or without us, that may hurt our frame? What a wonderful instrument is the tongue, to convey our thoughts in ten thousand sounds to our fellow-creatures? And what an excellent being is the principle of thought within us, even our souls or spirits, which can not only take in and converse about all the millions of objects, which our senses give us notice of; but millions more of numbers and quantities and intellectual ideas which our senses cannot reach? Now can all these be formed without infinite wisdom and skill? I might demand of the sons of atheism, in the language of the Psalmist; Ps. xciv. 6, 10. *He that planted the ear, shall not he hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that gives knowledge to man, shall he not know? He that made spirits, hath not he all the powers of a spirit in him, in a most transcendent manner and degree?*

And as the wonders of contrivance in the works of God declare his depth of wisdom, so the difficulty of creating them out of nothing argues his almighty power. *When we survey the heavens the work of his hands, the moon and the stars which he hath created; Ps. viii. 3.* what a glorious and powerful Being must that be, which formed these vast bodies at first, and which upholds their stupendous frame? What an almighty voice was necessary to call this whole universe, these heavens and earth, and seas, with all the hosts of them, out of nothing into being, and constrain them to obey the call? Man can only change the shapes and qualities of things: He can make a clock indeed, an elegant engine to measure time; but he must have brass and iron given him, for he cannot create these materials, though he gave them a new form: But God's

huge and astonishing engine of the heavens, whereby hours and days, seasons and ages are made and measured out, were all formed by him without any materials : He made all the materials himself, and gave all the wheels of nature and time their very being, as well as their shapes and their motions, and they continue to observe his orders. A Creator must be Almighty, he must be God. Again,

Let us think within ourselves, what a powerful Being must that be, who can make a soul, a spirit, a thinking being to exist so nearly like himself, with such a faculty of understanding, as to be capable of taking in so many millions of ideas, and forming the figures of the skies and the seas, and the thousands of plants and animals, which are found upon this earth, each in their proper proportion ? An understanding capable of knowing the works of God, and of knowing God himself ? How powerful is the divine will, which could make a creature with a free will to determine its own choice, a will which can move all this frame of flesh and blood, and by these limbs can give motion to ten thousand other bodies round about us ? What a glorious power must that be, who could create such an image of himself as a human spirit is, and which bears such a near resemblance of his own perfections, both in his understanding and his will, in his knowledge, and his power. We are his image, we are his offspring. Thus sung Aratus the heathen poet, in Acts xvii. 28, 29. and spoke like a christian.

And thus it appears beyond all controversy, that the light of nature finds there is a God, and that this God is an All-wise and Almighty Spirit. If we were in doubt about his existence or being, these reasonings would assure us of it ; and if we seek after his nature and his perfections, these his works discover them.

3. Another thing which we learn by the light of nature, is his supreme and absolute dominion over all things, that God is the sovereign Lord and Possessor of heaven and earth, so Gen. xiv. 19. and consequently that he hath a right to dispose of all things as he pleases ; Rom. ix. 20. " Who therefore shall say unto him, What dost thou ? Shall the thing formed say to him that hath formed it, Why hast thou made me thus ? " Shall the vessel say to the potter, Why didst thou mould me in such a form ? Why was I disposed of in such a station ? and why was I appointed for such a purpose ? And the force of this argument grows yet much stronger, when we consider, that the great God not only gives his creatures their form and manner of being, but created the very substance as well as the qualities of every thing, and gave them their whole nature and all the being they have.

4. The light of nature teaches us, that though God is the absolute and natural Lord of all things that he has made; yet "he is pleased to deal with his rational creatures in a way of moral government, that he rules them by a law, and will some time or other reward them in equity according to their works." The conscience which he hath formed in man, may discover to him so much of the natural law and will of his God, as a righteous Governor of the world, if it be properly and wisely employed: Rom. ii. 14, 15. *The Gentiles which have not the written law which the Jews enjoyed, yet they do by nature the things contained in the law that is, they are inwardly excited to do them; these having not the law, are a law to themselves, which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing them.*

This law written in their hearts, and which they may find out by a diligent use of their reason, not only teaches them that adoration and worship, prayer and praise, are duties which they owe to God; but it instructs them also to distinguish between vice and virtue, good and evil, as it relates to their neighbours and themselves. It shews them the difference between sobriety and intemperance, between kindness and malice, between honesty and knavery, truth and falsehood; and it teaches them also to expect some vengeance to fall upon transgressors. So Acts xxviii. 4. *Surely this man is a murderer, said the barbarous inhabitants of Melita concerning St. Paul, when a viper fastened on his hand; and though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance doth not suffer him to live.*

Reason and conscience might teach mankind, that since God has given them an understanding and freedom of will to chuse or refuse good or evil, he will certainly call them to account for their behaviour, and will take some opportunity to judge, reward and punish according to their conduct in the present state. In their own consciences there is a kind of tribunal erected before-hand, their conscience excusing or accusing them, as a sort of warning, an emblem and forerunner of divine judgment.

5. The light of nature teaches us further, that God is an universal Benefactor to mankind, even above and beyond their deserts, and notwithstanding all their provocations. The words of my text declare, that though they walked in their own idolatrous ways, yet God left them not without witness of his goodness, giving them—fruitful seasons, and filling their hearts with food and gladness. Their own consciences tell them they have sinned, and forfeited all favours from heaven; but their very senses assure them, that God does not presently insist upon the forfeiture, nor seize away their blessings; but that he waits long, and heaps the

instances of his goodness upon them, even upon the evil and the unthankful in the midst of all their iniquities and unthankfulness. Thus have I shewn particularly what it is the light of nature teaches us concerning God.

II. The second general head of discourse leads us to enquire, what are the various uses of this knowledge of God, which is attainable by the light of nature. I answer in general, it is to bear witness for God in the world. But we must enter into particulars.

1. This knowledge of God, as our Maker and Governor, by the light of nature, is useful, "not only to shew men their duty, but to convince them of sin against the law of God, and to lay all mankind under a sense of guilt and self-condemnation." The apostle Paul begins with this doctrine in the first chapters of his epistle to the Romans, where his great design is to shew mankind the guilt and wretchedness of their state; for after he had introduced the natural knowledge of God in the nineteenth verse of the first chapter, he proceeds to convince the heathen world, and particularly the philosophers, of their heinous iniquities against God and man, and leaves them in the middle of the ii. and iii. chapters under the condemnation of their own consciences and the law of God: *all have sinned, and come short of that glory of God, which they should have originally obtained by perfect righteousness.*

2. This knowledge of God by the light of nature, "as it is designed to awaken men to the practice of their duty; so it has had some influence on mankind, at least by the fear of punishment, to keep, preserve, and restrain part of them from the extremest degrees of wickedness." This natural conscience is the candle of the Lord, which he has set up in the heart of man; and though it shines but dimly, yet it has sometimes kept them from being so vile and abominable, and from running into such excess of outrage and madness, as otherwise they would have done. There have been some outward virtues practised among the Greeks and the Romans, who had a little knowledge of a superior divine power.

There was some temperance, some truth, some honour, justice and goodness, now and then appearing among the multitudes of their vices: there was a secret horror within, and a foreboding of some divine vengeance, that withheld them now and then from the practice of villainy, especially in the extravagant degrees of it. This natural knowledge of God amongst the heathen nations, has been found there like a small quantity of salt, to preserve some part of mankind in those countries from being utterly over-run with corruption and putrefaction; and has answered some valuable purposes in the government of God among men.

Where there has been nothing of this knowledge, mankind have almost lost their superior rank among the creatures, and degenerated into a brutal nature.

3. This natural knowledge of God and his goodness, "Gives some encouragement to guilty creatures to repent of their sins, and to return to God by a general hope of acceptance, though they had no promise of pardoning grace. And this was the very principle upon which some of the better sort of the gentiles set themselves to practise virtue, and to worship God and endeavour to become like him*.

4. This natural knowledge of God which is attainable by the light of nature, serves to vindicate the conduct of God, as a righteous governor in his severe dealings with obstinate and wilful sinners both here and hereafter. This will leave them without excuse in the great day, when God shall judge the secrets of all hearts. Their own consciences will accuse them, and bear witness against them. Rom. i. 20, 21. and ii. 15. *Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance on such sinners? God forbid, for how then*

* I do not say that natural religion can give sinful men a full and satisfying assurance of pardon upon their repentance; for the deepest degrees of penitence cannot oblige a prince to forgive the criminal; but still the overflowing goodness of God, his patience and long-suffering, notwithstanding their sins, may evidently and justly excite in their hearts some hope of forgiving grace: and I think the words of my text cannot intend less than this, that God has not left them without witness, when he gave them rain from heaven, when he satisfied their appetites with food, and filled their hearts with gladness. What was it that these benefits of their Creator bore witness to? Was it not that there was goodness and mercy to be found with him, if they would return to their duty, and abandon their own ways of idolatry and vice. Surely, it can never be supposed, that the apostle here means no more than to say, that the daily instances of divine bounty in the common comforts of life assured them, that God had some goodness in him, and blessings to bestow on their bodies, but gave them no hope of his acceptance of their souls, if they should return and repent never so sincerely. The Ninevites themselves, when threatened with destruction repented in sackcloth and ashes; for, said they, who can tell but God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? Nor were they mistaken in their hope; for God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and he repented of the evil that he had threatened; Jonah iii. 5—10. And there is yet a more express text to this purpose; Rom. ii. 4. *Despise thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?* And if God leads us to repentance, by a sense of his goodness, surely he gives hope that our repentance shall not be in vain: and though, perhaps, I could not affirm it with boldness, and certainty by mere light of reason, yet I may venture to declare, upon the encouragement of these scriptures, that if there should be found any sinner in the heathen world, who shall be thus far wrought upon by a sense of the goodness of God, as to be led sincerely to repent of sin, and seek after mercy, God would find a way to make a discovery of so much of the gospel, as was necessary for him to know, rather than such a penitent sinner should be left under condemnation, or that a guilty creature should go on to eternal death in the way of repentance. Cornelius, the centurion, who feared God, who prayed to him daily, and wrought righteousness, according to the light of his conscience, had both an angel and an apostle sent to him that he might receive more complete instruction in the matters of his salvation, Acts x. 1—6. and from 30—35.

shall he judge the world; Rom. iii. 5, 6. As there have been many instances of a righteous providence in the present life whereby the great God has already *revealed his wrath from heaven against the unrighteousness and ungodliness of the heathen world*; Rom. i. 18. So in the world to come not one condemned sinner shall be able to say God is unjust: Every mouth shall be stopped, and the heavens and the earth proclaim his righteousness, when he shall appear in his Son Jesus at the last day, as the judge of all mankind.

5. This knowledge of God by natural light prepares the way for preaching and receiving the gospel of his grace: and that he doth many ways, viz. Unless men are first acquainted that there is a God who can make known his mind and will to men, what ground is there for preaching any discoveries of his mind and will amongst them? Unless the heathens are taught that he is a God of all knowledge and cannot be deceived himself; and that he is kind and good, true and faithful, and will not deceive his creatures, how can they be persuaded to believe what he reveals? Unless they are instructed by the light of reason that he is an Almighty God and the Lord of Nature, how can any miracle give testimony to the truth of what he reveals? For it is as the Sovereign Lord of nature that he sets the seal of a miracle to his divine truths; a miracle which is above the power of nature to work.

Again, when sinners, by the light and law of nature in their own consciences are laid under conviction of sin and guilt, and they are in fear of the wrath of God, they become more ready to receive the gospel of pardon and salvation as glad tidings from heaven.

We see the great apostle St. Paul wisely managing his ministry to the Athenians, of which we have but short hints in Acts xvii. 22—30. By discoursing first on natural religion, he comes at last to awaken men to repentance, and preaches Jesus with the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment; verse 31. And agreeably to this method of propagating the gospel among the heathen nations, we find, in fact, that where there was any thing of the knowledge of the true God, either by the light of nature, or by tradition, there the gospel was soonest received; the minds of men were better fitted and prepared for faith in Christ, the Son of God, by this degree of knowledge of God the Father. Those who in the book of the Acts are styled the devout persons, are such as feared God, they acknowledged the one living and true God, and worshipped him; and they much more readily complied with the gospel of grace, and the tidings of a Saviour, than the idolaters who had these other lessons to learn first. Thus having shewn the various uses

of this knowledge of God by the light of nature, I proceed in the third place to consider, what are the defects or imperfections of it.

1. "It is but a small portion of the things of God, which the bulk of mankind can generally be supposed to learn merely by their own reasonings." This is sufficiently evident by the history of past times and ancient nations, as well as by present observation of the heathen world. Though some of the philosophers, particularly the followers of Plato and Pythagoras, attained some considerable knowledge of the nature of God, and clearly saw *his eternal power and godhead*, as it is expressed Rom. i. 20. yet these were but very few in comparison of the rest of men; the bulk of mankind, even in the learned nations, as well as the rude and barbarous countries, did actually know but little of the true God, or of their duty towards him, or the way of obtaining future happiness.

2. The light of nature even in those things which it did teach the heathen world, is but dim and feeble, and leaves mankind under many doubts and uncertainties in matters of considerable importance. A short lesson of knowledge in the heathen schools was obtained with long toil and difficulty; their philosophy was rather a feeling after God in the dark, than a sight of him in day light: so the apostle expresses himself, when he is talking to the Athenians, who were the most learned of mankind; Acts xvii. 27. *That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him.* What feeble words are these? How doubtful a knowledge is represented by them? How wretchedly did their wise men wander astray and bewilder themselves in their dark and blundering searches after the true God: What endless contests are found amongst them, whether there was a God, and what was his nature, and what was his will, and what was their duty? Into what gross mistakes and shameful falsehoods did they plunge themselves, for want of a better guide than their own reasonings? and how generally, and almost without exception, did their philosophers comply with the idolatry of their country, and *worshipped God in the form of beasts and birds, and creeping things and changed the truth of God into a lie: or the true God into false and shameful images*; Rom. i. 23—25.

Sometimes appetite and passion, pride and humour spread a mist over the understanding of the heathen; sometimes the customs and traditions of their nation, the authority of their ancestors, or their philosophers, or their own vile prejudices, of various kinds, gave them a false clue, and set them a running upon a wrong scent: In other places, the tyranny of their princes, and the folly and superstitious madness of their priests, either led, or

drove them far away from the truth. What shameful vices were authorised by some of their great men? Theft, in some places was commended as a feat of dexterity, and revenge as a point of honour; while public robberies of nations were the glory of their heroes. The murder and ravage of whole countries, were allowed for the enlargement of their dominions, and the blood of kingdoms was made an offering to the ambition of neighbouring kings. In some countries, the youth and flower of conquering nations were doomed a sacrifice to their idols; and sometimes filthy and abominable lewdness were the ceremonies of their worship. How blind was the eye of their reason, not to see this madness? And how feeble its power, that it made no remonstrances against these lewd and bloody scenes of pretended piety?

All these instances indeed do not effectually prove, that reason could not possibly teach them better; but the experience of long ages, and of whole nations, sufficiently shew us, that their reason neither did inform them better, nor was ever likely to do it. Even the best of the philosophers could give us but a sorry system of religion compared with our bible; so that St. Paul roundly expresses it; 1 Cor. i. 21. *The world by wisdom knew not God.*

3. "All the knowledge of God which they arrived at, by the light of nature, had actually but little influence to reform the hearts, or the lives of mankind." I say, it had but little influence in comparison of what it might, or should have had; for this knowledge of God, which was attained by their own reason, *suffered the Gentile nations to walk in their own ways, as my text expresseth it; Acts xiv. 16.* Wretched and perverse ways of idolatry and mad superstition, with regard to God, and falsehood, treachery, hatred, malice, and envy, towards their fellow-creatures. See the iniquities numbered up in a large and detestable catalogue; Rom. i. 23—32. The histories of the heathen world confirm these dismal accounts given us by the sacred writers, and enforce the charge upon them with abundant proof. And it is no wonder at all, that this knowledge had so little influence on the generality of mankind, when so few of them ever attained it, when it was so imperfect as to the discoveries of it, and so dim and feeble in its evidences. It came into their heads a little, but it reached not to their hearts: or if it did touch them, it was but feebly, and with very small authority, and was not enforced upon the conscience with, *Thus saith the Lord.* A single sentence, with this preface, has vastly greater power on the hearts and consciences of men, than whole volumes of their dark uncertain reasonings.

4. This knowledge of God by the light nature, "doth

rather serve to shew men their sin and misery, than discover any effectual relief ;” and in this respect, it comes infinitely short of what the revelation of the gospel of Christ has done. It lays them under guilt and a sentence of death in their own consciences ; but it discovers not the plain and certain way of salvation and life : The hope that it gives is but feeble, and there are but few who could spell it out*.

Thus I have finished the three general heads of my discourse. I have shewn you as fully as such a narrow space of time would permit, that there is some knowledge of God to be attained by the light of nature, that this knowledge is made subservient to some valuable purposes in the providence and government of God ; but that it hath such a variety of imperfections and defects, that considered in itself, it gives but feeble influences to repentance and holiness, and very doubtful and uncomfortable ground

* This might be exemplified in several particulars. The light of nature of itself gives no assurance of forgiveness to the repenting sinner ; for the repentance of men is no compensation to a holy God, to God as a Governor of the world for their perpetual rebellions against his laws, and the daily dishonour done to his authority. Such knowledge as the Ninevites had. Jonab ii. 9. when they said, “ Who can tell but the Lord may turn away from his fierce anger ?” is but a feeble motive to repentance and new obedience in comparison of such a word from God himself ; as Ex. xxxiv. 6. *And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,—forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.* Prov. xxviii. 13. *He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy.*

The light of nature discovers no effectual atonement for sin, nor relief to a guilty conscience by all the costly sacrifices and blood of animals ; but the gospel points us to the “ Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world,” and assures us that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all unrighteousness ; John i. 22. and 1 John i. 7—9. The light of nature points us to no effectual Mediator, or Advocate in heaven ; but the Gospel leads us to Jesus the righteous, as our Advocate with the Father, and by pardoning grace encourages us to love and obey a reconciled God ; 1 John ii. 1, 2. The light of nature and our daily experience discover to us our weakness to subdue sin within us, to restrain our unruly appetites, to mortify our corrupt affections, to resist the daily temptations that surround us ; but it points us not to the Fountain of Strength, even the promised aid of the Holy Spirit ; these are the peculiar glories and blessings of the gospel of Christ which the light of nature could never reveal.

The light of nature and continual observation shew us that we must die, but give us no clear and certain evidence of happiness after death, for such sinful creatures as we are, even in the midst of our repentances : for since our daily sins and offences are so numerous, and the best of our righteousnesses and duties are so very defective, the man of virtue and penitence might hope indeed to escape punishment ; but he might well doubt of any future happiness, notwithstanding all the comfort the light of nature could give him, or all the discoveries it could make. But the gospel sets these future glories in a divine and certain light before every man who reads or hears it. It encourages us to repentance of us, to diligence, patience and perseverance in the ways of faith and holiness, by the joys unspeakable, which are set before us, and builds our hope of eternal life on the well-attested promises of a God who cannot lie, and the Son of God who has power given him to perform them all.

for a sure and satisfying hope to rest upon. I proceed to make a few reflections on this discourse.

Reflection I.—Since the rational knowledge of God and natural religion has its proper uses, and especially to lay a foundation for our receiving the gospel of Christ, let it not be despised or abandoned by any of us. There may be some necessary occasions for our recourse to it in a day of temptation, when our faith of the gospel may be tried and shaken. The gospel with all its glories is built upon it as a solid foundation; and if these foundations be destroyed or despised, we may be terribly shaken and beat off from all our hope in some evil and unhappy hour. This gives us a rational ground for our faith in God, and it is necessary in order to our faith in Christ Jesus his Son. As St. Paul made glorious use of it in his discourse with the Athenian infidels, so we may be called by providence to converse with atheists and unbelievers, and we should be furnished with the same doctrines and principles of argument: for so far as they are just and true, they are divine, since they proceed from God as the God of nature, who is the Author of our reasoning powers as well as of all the revelations of grace.

II. Since this knowledge of God which is attainable by the light of nature has so many defects, let us never venture to rest in it. Dare not content yourselves with the lessons of the book of nature, which are very imperfect and obscure in comparison of the discoveries of the book of grace. The sun in the firmament, with the moon and all the stars, can never give us that light to see God, which is derived from the Sun of Righteousness.

What a deplorable thing is it that multitudes in our nation where the glory of the blessed gospel shines with such brightness, should be running back to the glimmering light of nature, and satisfy themselves with heathenism and philosophy! That they should chuse to walk in twilight as the happiest and safest way, and refuse to be conducted by the blaze of noon, as though it were a deceitful and foolish light! What an affront against the authority and mercy of the God of heaven to renounce his brightest blessings! *The God of this world hath blinded the eyes of them who believe not*; 2 Cor. iv. 4. and we have reason to fear he is leading them blindfold to eternal darkness.

III. Since the nations which have only the light of nature, are forced to feel out their way to God through such dusky glimmerings, let us bless the Lord with all our souls, that we are born in Great Britain, a land of clear light, where the gospel shines in its beauty and power, and surrounded with various evidences; a land where the book of grace lies open before us, as well as the book of nature, to teach us the knowledge of God

and his salvation. Let us say within ourselves, and why was not I born a poor ignorant African, a wild Indian ignorant of God, and averse to seek after him, and without any person near me to give me one beam of light, and point out my way to happiness? Why was not I left merely to the dumb and silent lectures of the heavens, and the earth and sea, or the instruction of the trees, and plants, and beasts of the earth, to teach me the knowledge of him that made me? Who am I, that I should be brought into being, in the midst of sun-beams, and not in a region of thick darkness under the shadow of death? Everlasting glory be given to distinguishing grace,

O how should we value the bible as our highest treasure, which gives us such blessed discoveries of God, and his wisdom and power; and his mercy in Christ; which infinitely exceeds all the doubtful twilight of nature, and our own powers of reasoning. O may the blessed bible lie next our heart, and be the companion of our bosoms! It is this lays a sure foundation for our recovery from all our guilt, and ruin and wretchedness. You that have any concern for your eternal interests, love the bible, walk by the rules of it, and live upon its promised grace; and I dare pronounce in the name of God and his Son, that you shall be for ever happy.

IV. Pity and pray for the heathen world, the dark corners of the earth, the benighted nations where the Sun of Righteousness never rose, and where they can but feel after God through the mists of ignorance and error. Let us remember those ancient times when our forefathers in this nation were led away into the same errors and gross idolatries, and exercise our compassion toward those who are still left under the same darkness. Now and then O christians, send a pathetic sigh over the nations, lift up one compassionate groan to heaven for them, and say, "When shall the day come, O Lord, that the heathens shall become thy worshippers, and Assyria and Ethiopia thy people? When wilt thou reveal thyself to the poor African idolaters, and the savage tribes of America that know not God? When shall the ends of the earth learn to know thee, and rejoice in Jesus thy Son the Saviour? When shall all nations, people and languages begin their songs of *Salvation to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, who has redeemed us with his own blood?* To him be dominion and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

of God, and we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Thus you see this blessed work of conversion, of changing the heart of man, is described in such language as excludes man himself from being its original author: it is regeneration, or a new birth, it is a resurrection from the dead, it is a new creation; all proper expressions to shew that the work is divine, and must have God for the author of it.

III. "The distinction that is made by this work of God in the heart of men, is attributed in scripture, not to any merit in man, which God foresaw, but to the free grace of God toward his people and his special choice or election of them, to be partakers of these blessings." So the words of my text: We are chosen to be made holy, according to the good pleasure of his will. If some among the Jews, who were God's chosen visible church did believe in Christ, and receive this salvation, they were chosen of God, from among the rest of that nation, to become part of his invisible church by mere grace. When the greatest part of Israel rejected the Messiah, yet there was a remnant of Jews, according to the election of grace, who became christians; and if it is of grace, then no more of works, otherwise grace would be no more grace; Rom. xi. 5, 6. Works and merit are inconsistent with an election of grace. If some of the Ephesian Gentiles received the gospel, they also were chosen from among the rest that lie dead in sins, and were quickened and saved by the grace of that God, who is rich in mercy according to the great love wherewith he loved them; Eph. ii. 4, 5, 7, 8. And the apostle ascribes his own salvation, as well as that of other sinners; Tit. iii. 5. *not to works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.* This is the fountain of all blessings, whether conferred on Jew or Gentile; Rom. ix. 15, 16. *God has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and compassion on whom he will have compassion.*—Time would fail me to shew how full this chapter of St. Paul is of the distinctions, which are made between men by divine grace, even before they had done good or evil, whether it be for a temporal or eternal inheritance, and the one as a type of the other. St. John concurs in the same doctrine. If we love God, the first source of it was his love towards us. 1 John iv. 10—19. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us; and if we love him, it is because he loved us first.*

IV. "This choice of persons to sanctification and salvation by the grace of God is represented in scripture, as before the foundation of the world, or from eternity. So my text expressly declares; and indeed it must be so in the nature of things, for whatsoever the power or the mercy of God doth in time, he decreed to do it from eternity. He has no new designs. *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world;* Acts

rv. 18. So 2 Thess. ii. 13. *God hath from the beginning chosen, or taken, you from amongst the other Gentiles, unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.* And to this he called you by our gospel. There was a book of life written before the foundation of the world; Rev. xiii. 18. *All that dwell upon the earth, that is, all this part of the world to which the prophecy refers, shall worship the beast, or follow after antichrist, except those whose names are written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain;* for that I take to be a much more proper translation of the original. In this book of life were written the names of those persons, who should not yield to antichristian idolatry, and should be preserved from the general corruption that came upon the christian world.

Upon the whole it appears from the language of scripture, that those who are sanctified and saved by divine grace, were before chosen of God, to be made holy and happy.

I proceed now to the second general head of my discourse, viz. That God from the beginning appointed his Son Jesus Christ to be the medium of exercising all this grace, and gave his chosen people to the care of his Son, to make them partakers of this salvation. This seems to be the meaning of my text.

Are we blessed with all spiritual blessings? It is as the members of one body, in Jesus Christ, as our common head. Are we chosen? It is still in Christ the Son of God. *In all things he must have the pre-eminence: He is the head of the body, the church;* Col. i. 18. He was first chosen by the Father to be the glorious head of a holy and happy number of mankind, and we are chosen in him that we might become his holy and happy members. He is called "The elect of God, in whom his soul delighteth; Is. xlii. 1. "The mighty One on whom God has hid our help, who was exalted and chosen out of the people;" Ps. lxxxix. 19. You may observe he is represented here to be chosen, as a man from among the people of Israel to be their Lord and Saviour; but that he might be equal to this work, and and mighty to save, he was *one with God, all the fulness of the godhead dwelt in him bodily;* Col. ii. 9. He is *the Word who was with God, and who was God;* John. i. 1. And in due time *this Word was made flesh and dwelt among us;* verse 14.—Are we chosen that we might be saved? It is in and through Christ, who was chosen to be our Saviour.

Are we predestinated to the adoption of children? It is still in Christ, who is the original Son, the "brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his person, and who was appointed to be heir of all things;" Heb. i. 2, 3. "And we

are appointed to be conformable to his image, to be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, and possessors of the inheritance; Rom. viii. 17—29.

Is there a book of life written? It is the Lamb's book of life: 'The names of all the chosen sons and daughters of God were written down in this book, but his name stands first there in divine characters, as the first chosen, and the head of all the rest; for before the foundation of the world, God gave the care of all these persons to his best beloved Son.

Hence it is you find our Saviour so often speaking of those who were given him by the Father, out of this world; John xvii. 2. "Thou hast given thy Son power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him;" which the twentieth verse of this chapter teaches us to apply to all who should believe on him, through the word of the apostles, as well as to the apostles themselves. And in verse 24. "All that the Father hath given me, must be with me where I am." And John vi. 37. "All that the Father hath given me, shall come unto me, that they may have life." Hence also arise those glorious expressions of St. Paul; 2 Tim. i. 9. "God hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began;" Tit. i. 1, 2. St. Paul speaking of the faith of God's elect, he adds, "in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, hath promised before the world began." Here is grace given to men, before the beginning of the world; but it is given more immediately to Christ their head, in trust for them: Here is a promise of eternal life made before the creation; but it was made to Christ, for them, before they had a being. Examples of this kind are common among men, when one person is made trustee of an estate for many children, or heirs that are yet unborn, and he stands engaged to make them possessors of it in successive seasons.

I have put all these texts together, that we may observe the whole current of scripture running this way, and leading our thoughts to this great doctrine, viz. that as God has chosen his people before the foundation of the world to holiness and salvation, so he has given them for this purpose into the hands of his Son. Nor did the Son of God refuse this glorious trust, but cheerfully undertook the work: So he is represented in the Old Testament; Ps. xl. 7. "*Lo, I come in the volume: or rather in the beginning of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God.*" Whether this book be the secret book of life, or the public book of scripture, I will not here determine; both are true. And so it is written also, in the history of the life of Christ; for he speaks often with sacred pleasure, that he came to do his Fa-

er's will, and to take care of those whom the Father had given him, to keep them from perishing, and to raise them up at the last day.

Now this is what our divines generally call the covenant of redemption, even these sacred transactions between God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ; *before the foundation of the world*; and I think the scripture calls it the *covenant*; Ps. lxxxix. 3. When the Psalmist has represented Christ, under the character of David, as chosen of God from among the people, to lay his help upon him, he adds, *my covenant shall stand fast with him, saith the Lord, his seed will I make to endure for ever*; and though they may sometimes fall into sin, *yet I will not suffer my faithfulness to fail: my covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once, have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David*, that is, I will fulfil the promises that I have made to my Son, the true David, the king of Israel, or the head of my chosen people; for I have confirmed this covenant with him, by divine solemnities. And I am sure, the five first verses of the seventeenth of John, wherein our Saviour pleads with his Father, carry in them the plain language of a covenant as every reader may observe.

The only thing which remains on this head, is briefly to run over the articles of this covenant, or the mutual engagements between God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.

First then, let us consider what it was Christ undertook, as the chosen Saviour of his people. *The only begotten Son of God, who lay in the bosom of his Father, and had glory with him before the world was*; John 1. 18. and xvii. 5. *agreed to come forth from the Father, and to come into the world, and to be emptied of that glory for a season*; John xvi. 28. Phil. ii. 7. *to take flesh and blood upon him*; Heb. ii. 14. *to be born of a woman*; Gal. 4. and *to be made in the likeness of sinful flesh*; Rom. viii. 3. *in the fashion of a man, that he might be bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and become a proper head for such members as we are*; Eph. v. 30. and that he might be our brother, kinsman, who should have a right to redeem our lost inheritance. *He who was in the form of God, consented to take upon the form of a servant*; Phil. ii. 7. and past through a life of our labour, reproach, and suffering, as well as performed the duties of the moral and ceremonial law, not only that he might be a pattern to us, of patience and universal holiness, but that he might do all the will of God, and fulfil the righteousness of the law which mankind had broken; Ps. 7, 8. He undertook to become a preacher of righteousness and of grace, and to lay down the law of God, and proclaim the gospel of salvation to men; Ps. xl. 9. Is. lxi. 1.

And besides all this, he consented to take upon him the sins of men, that is, by way of imputation, as a sacrifice, to bear our sins in his body, on the cursed tree, to be made a sin-offering for us, and to expose himself to painful sufferings, and a bloody death on that account, that he might make a proper atonement for sin; 2 Cor. v. 21. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Heb. x. 5—12. Rom. iii. 25. *The good Shepherd came to lay down his life for his sheep*; John x. 15. And in John xiv. 16. when he was about to leave this world, he promised to intercede or pray for them. And when the Father should exalt him to the kingdom, and put all power into his hand, he engaged to call them by his word, to bestow on them repentance, and forgiveness, to send down the sanctifying Spirit upon them, and in general to rescue them from every evil; to bear them through all the difficulties and dangers of life, and to convey them safe to the possession of the appointed inheritance. It would not be possible, in this short discourse, to cite at large all the scriptures that reveal and support these truths. Whatsoever our blessed Saviour performed in the execution of his mediatorial office, we may justly suppose it was an article and agreement in that original covenant made betwixt him and his Father: And in many of the instances which I have mentioned the scripture expressly teaches us, that he performed them as the appointment of his Father.

In the next place, let us take a brief survey of the articles of this covenant on God the Father's side. Whatsoever powers, or honours, or employments he bestowed on his Son, we have reason to suppose, it was in pursuance of this original covenant of grace and salvation.

First then, we may justly conclude, that God engaged to employ him in the work of creation, as a foundation of his future kingdom among men; by him God made angels, and they shall be his ministering spirits, for the men who shall be heirs of his salvation; by him God created mankind, and he shall be Lord of them all; by him the blessed God made his own people, and he shall save them. He spread abroad the heavens, and he laid the foundations of this earth; even all the provinces of his future vast dominion, with all their inhabitants, are of his own making; for *without him was nothing made that was made*; John i. 3. and Col. i. 14, 15.

Again, we may suppose it was agreed by the Father, that he should be the king of Israel, which was the visible church of God as a type of his kingdom, and the government of his invisible church; that he should fix his dwelling in a cloud of glory in *his holy hill of Zion*; Ps. ii. 6, 7. and should govern the Jewish nation by judges, or priests, or kings, as his deputies till he himself should appear in the flesh.

God the Father undertook also to furnish him with every thing necessary for his appearance and his ministry here upon earth, to *prepare a body for him*; Heb. x. 5. *to give him the Spirit without measure*; John iii. 34. 1s. xi. 2. to bear him up through all his sufferings, to accept his sacrifice and atonement for sin, to raise him up from the dead, to exalt him not only to the former glory which he had with him, before the world was, which he asks for as a matter of agreement: John xvii. 4, 5. but to honour him at his right-hand with superior powers. He gave him the assurance of a people to obey him, or a seed to serve him; he promised the Gentile nations for his inheritance, and to make him the Lord of all things in heaven and earth, that he might govern all for the good of his church. He gave him also the *promise of the Holy Spirit*; Luke xxiv. 49. that he might send down in a variety of gifts and graces, upon his apostles at first, to begin his gospel-church on earth, and upon all his chosen people for their sanctification through all ages, to the end of the world. He appointed him of old to be the judge of men and angels; and all this authority and glory was promised him in that early covenant, partly as a proper recompence for his sufferings, and partly as a means to enable him to fulfil all the articles of his engagement to God, his Father. *Father said he, glorify thy Son, for he hath finished the work thou gavest him to do on earth; and thou hast given him, that is, promised to give him, power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him;* John xvii. 1—4.

These things are recorded in a variety of scriptures, which it would be too large at present to rehearse. A glorious covenant! with sacred and divine engagements, which are fulfilled on both sides, with perfect honour and faithfulness! What an effectual security is derived hence, for the salvation of all that believe in Christ! What an assurance is hereby given, that none of his chosen ones should perish! What matter of delightful meditation, of holy wonder, and devout thankfulness, may the saints of God derive from this blessed covenant, which reaches beyond the limits of this world and time, and extends from one eternity to another! In condescension to our understandings, the holy prophets compare the firmness of this covenant to the ordinances of heaven, to the foundations of the earth, to the certain periods of the moon, and the established course of nature: But by the light of the New Testament, we may venture boldly to rise higher, and say, that when these heavens shall be folded up as a curtain, when the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon be deprived of her light, when the foundations of the earth shall totter, and all things in it be burned up, this covenant shall remain in its

full force, shall bring everlasting honours to God the Father, and his Son Jesus, and for ever establish all the children of God in holiness and joy.

There are yet four things that remain to be done, with relation to this great doctrine of the election of sinners in Christ to be made holy and happy. There are some difficulties attend the belief of it, which ought to be relieved. There are some proper uses to which this doctrine should be applied. There are some practical abuses of it, against which we must set a guard; and there are some remarks or inferences which may be formed upon the whole discourse.

First, As for the difficulties which attend it, and the many cavils and objections which are raised against it, I shall not interrupt this half-hour with controversy, so far as to take notice of any of them in the body of my discourse*. I proceed therefore

* There is one objection of the greatest importance and weight, and therefore I would say something to relieve it in the margin.

Some persons have argued thus; If God has chosen a certain number to be made holy and happy by Jesus Christ, the Mediator, while others are left out of this choice, and go on in sin to their final destruction, will they not justly complain of God, at the last day, as having laid a bar against their salvation, by not choosing them? Will they not say, there was no Mediator to undertake their cause, no pardon, no salvation provided for them; and therefore the offers of pardon and salvation, which are made to them in common with other sinners in the gospel, are mere delusive words, and have no truth in them? But far be this imputation from the God of grace and truth!

Answer I. The offers of salvation by a Mediator, are made in general terms to all sinners whosoever the gospel is preached, and every one that applies himself to Christ in the appointed way, and is sincerely willing to receive this salvation, shall have it bestowed upon him. John iii. 16. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but should have everlasting life.* So far was our blessed Lord appointed the common Mediator of mankind that none shall be able to complain in the day of judgment, that they perish for want of a Mediator. *This is the will of God who sent him, or the grand commission with which he came into the world, not only that he should take care of those whom the Father had given him, but it runs in general, that he should receive all that come to him, and he will by no means cast them out; See John vii. 37—40.* None shall complain, that their sins are unpardoned for want of a sufficiency in the merit or atonement of Christ. And though it is confessed, that his blood and life were paid down as a price for the certain redemption and salvation of all that the Father had given him, yet the blood of him who was *God manifest in the flesh*, had a sufficient value in it to procure pardon, heaven and happiness, for a whole world of sinful men: And the reason why unbelievers and impenitent sinners are condemned is, because they did not apply themselves sincerely to this Mediator, they did not chuse to lay hold of this salvation, which consists in a likeness to God, as well as in his favour, in holiness as well as happiness.

II. Nor shall any be able to say at that day, that they missed of the salvation of Christ, for want of sufficient natural powers to lay hold of it, and receive it. Sinners who hear the gospel have a natural understanding to take in the meaning of the word preached: they have also a will to accept or refuse the proposals of grace, to receive or reject this all-sufficient Saviour: But there is an aversion in them to attend to and obey the gospel, through the corruption of their nature by original sin; their minds will not learn divine things, because they shut

immediately to the second thing I proposed, which was to shew what are the proper uses of this doctrine of God's election of sinners to salvation, and giving them into the hands of his Son.

their eyes; their wills refuse to receive the grace of the gospel, they shut it out of their own hearts: they have a delight in sin, a dislike of Christ, and of his salvation, which consists in holiness and the love of God; they have a rooted obstinacy of will against the methods of divine mercy. *This is their condemnation; John iii. 19. that light came into the world, and they loved darkness rather than light; and therefore they must die in their sins, because they would not come unto Christ, that they might have life; John v. 40.*

I confess this aversion, this obstinacy of mind and will against the gospel may be called natural, or rather native, as it comes to us by nature in its present corrupted state; and in scripture it is sometimes represented as impotence or inability to repent, to return to God, to receive Christ, and his grace; John vi. 63. *No man can come to me, except it were given him of my Father.* And it is termed blindness of mind and hardness of heart, and a death in sin; not that there is really such a natural incapacity in their mind and will to receive this grace, as there is in a blind or dead carcase; but it is a moral impotency, as it is well expressed by our divines, because the aversion is so strong and so rooted in their hearts, that they will never renounce sin, and receive the salvation of Christ, without the powerful influences of divine grace.

And that it is a moral impotence and not properly natural, appears by the moral remedies applied to cure it, viz. commands, promises, threatenings, &c. which it would be useless, and ridiculous to apply to natural impotence, that is, to make the blind see, or the dead arise.

Both the first and second answer to this objection, may be represented by a very fair similitude. Suppose God has decreed, that he will make the rising sun-beams shine so effectually on a thousand certain persons, that they shall be roused thereby to their morning work, and enjoy the pleasure of it; May we not say, the sun has beams sufficient to enlighten the whole nation, and they have all a natural power to behold and enjoy this light; though perhaps only that thousand will see the sun rising, because their sloth confines the rest to their beds, they have an aversion to the early business of the morning; and this lazy humour hangs so heavy upon them, that they cry, they cannot rise. Thus though the Sun of Righteousness has light and grace enough in him to save all mankind, yet their own sloth and obstinacy, and evil inclinations, exclude them from this salvation. Both these events arise without a just complaint against the God of nature, who called up the morning sun to enlighten the nations, or against the God of grace, who sent forth the Sun of Righteousness, to bless the dark and sinful world.

III. No condemned sinner shall have reason to say, that there was any bar or hindrance laid in the way of his salvation, by this decree of God, or by his choosing some sinners, and giving them to Christ, for though he provided effectual grace for those whom he chooses to certain salvation, yet he only left others to their own natural state, as corrupted by the fall of Adam; he left them to the wilful blindness of their own minds, and the wilful hardness of their own hearts. While this original counsel of God, this decree of election provides and secures grace and glory to some, it does not in the least hinder others from receiving and obeying the gospel.

IV. None shall be condemned at last, because they were not chosen in Christ, but because they were impenitent sinners, who in some measure have resisted the light of their own consciences, under whatsoever dispensation they have lived, whether under the law of nature, the law of Moses, or the gospel of Christ. These consciences of theirs shall lay them under a dreadful and unanswerable conviction of their own guilt, shall give sentence against them, and confirm the condemning sentence of Jesus, the Judge of all.

Objections which are started against this doctrine, which

Abuse II. Another abuse of this doctrine is, when persons indulge despairing thoughts under this pretence: "If I am never so watchful, never so diligent I cannot be saved unless I am elected; and therefore it is in vain for me to seek after salvation: for the scripture tells me; Rom. ix. 16. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."

Answer. But remember also, O tempted and despairing souls that there was never any one who had a will to obey the gospel, and who did run the christian race, but that he obtained the blessed prize of salvation. It is granted indeed that the Holy Spirit is the first, but secret agent in this important affair: Pray earnestly then for the Holy Spirit, and set thyself in a course of duty according to the appointment of Christ in his gospel, and thou hast many promises to support thy hope, that such prayers shall be answered. Luke xi. 13. "Your heavenly Father will give his Holy Spirit to them who ask him." Thy first business is not to enquire after thy election which is a secret thing, but hearken to the public call of the gospel, repent of every sin and receive the grace that is there offered; and when thou art become a lover of God and a believer in Christ, thou mayest then trace up these graces to their original spring, even to thy election in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world.

The last thing I proposed is to make some few remarks on this subject.

Remark I. I infer that there are some doctrines wherein the reason of man finds many difficulties, and which the folly of man would abuse to unhappy purposes which yet are plain and express truths asserted in the word of God. Among these we place the great doctrine of the election of sinners in Christ to be made holy and happy. We intreat our brethren who differ from us in this point, to be so candid as to suppose that we feel the difficulties as well as they, and we see the awful consequences which seem to affright them from receiving it; we have had our doubts about it, and found our reasoning powers a little perplexed and unwilling to receive it lest God should be represented as partial in his favours, and lest man should cavil against his proceedings: But we feel ourselves overpowered with evidence and conviction when we see the doctrine so plainly and frequently asserted in scripture, that we cannot resist the light and force of it: The express words of God demand our submission and constrain our belief, and we are persuaded our brethren would believe it too, if they saw it in the same light.

We are sensible also of the abuses of this doctrine, and the sinful purposes to which it is sometimes perverted; yet since it is a truth God has seen fit to reveal in several parts of his

word, and since it has some valuable purposes and uses in the christian life, we cannot but think it proper sometimes to mention it on special occasions as part of the counsels of God toward our salvation.

II. However this doctrine may be opposed by the reasonings of men, and even ridiculed by a bold jest, yet if it then appear to be a divine truth as the scriptures now seem to teach us the blessed God will not be ashamed of it in the last great day; then shall he unfold all the scheme of his original counsels, and spread abroad his transactions toward mankind before the face of all his intelligent creatures. Rev. xx. 12. *When the judgment shall be set, and the books shall be opened, that is, the book of divine laws and the several dispensations of grace, as well as the book of divine records, wherein the lives and actions of men were written down, there shall also another book be opened, even the book of life: And as those former books compared together, viz. the records of the behaviour of men whether good or evil, compared with the laws and dispensations of God shall shew the equity of the great Judge in his rewards and punishments; so the Lamb's book of life wherein the names of his people were written down as elected in Christ before the world began, shall discover the blessed correspondence between the final sentence of happiness pronounced on holy believers, and the original grace of God which chose them in Christ Jesus unto faith and holiness, and secured this happiness for them. A glorious harmony of divine wisdom, grace and providence!*

I cannot think that any of the cavils of wit against this doctrine will stand before the light of the great tribunal. Banter and ridicule of electing love, and of the names written in the book of life, however they may be applauded in a degenerate age will meet with no applause before that tremendous appearance. Every mouth shall be stopped, the righteousness of God shall be cleared from every imputation, the grace of God shall be glorified in all his chosen ones in that day, and Christ shall be admired in all his saints. But this leads me to the third remark:

III. The whole chain and current of our salvation from the beginning to the end, arises and proceeds all the way from the free grace of God, through the mediation of his Son Jesus Christ. God and his Son must have the glory, and pride must be hid from man for ever. Are we chosen, are we called, are we justified and sanctified, and at last advanced to heaven? It is all by the mercy of the Father, by the mediation of the Son, by the power and the grace of God, and his Spirit exerting themselves in all the stages of our salvation before time began, and when time shall be no more. Grace and Christ run through all, and reign and triumph through the whole scheme of our happiness from the

very foundation of it : And when the top-stone of this blessed building shall be laid in heaven, the inhabitants of that world shall join all their voices, and shout together to the honour of Christ and grace. And that I may conclude this awful subject with the language of sincere charity, I am persuaded there will be found many holy souls there, whose voices shall join in this triumph, and this song of glory to electing love, who had not learned this doctrine till they came to heaven, nor knew the eternal spring of their own salvation till they were made possessors of the blessing. *Amen.*

SERMON XLVII.

*The Excellency and Advantages of the Christian Dispensation,
with the Invitations and Promises of the Gospel.*

Hrs. viii. 6.—He is the Mediator of a better Covenant which was established upon better Promises.

THIS better covenant which the apostle here commends, is the christian religion, or the dispensation of the gospel under Jesus Christ the Messiah and the Mediator. Now in order to shew the superior excellency of the christian dispensation it is necessary to take a brief review of all those former dispensations of grace, which are more largely explained in the foregoing sermon*.

The first is that of Adam. No sooner was man fallen from his state of innocency, and had lost all reasonable hopes of happiness, according to that constitution and covenant in paradise which our divines have generally called the covenant of works, but the goodness of God was manifested in revealing to Adam the covenant or constitution of grace, as it was contained in this obscure promise, *the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent*; Gen. iii. 15. which in the language of the New Testament, signifies that the Saviour *in the fulness of time should be born of a woman, and should destroy this work of the devil*. Gal. iv. 5. 1 John iii. 8. This first promise, doubtless was more largely explained to our first parents, which encouraged sinful mankind by the hopes of a Saviour, and of acceptance with God, to repent of their transgressions and return to their Maker in a way of new obedience. This is that gospel which is the same in all ages, and which runs through all the bible; viz. that there is forgiveness for sinful men who return to God, and this is to be manifested through a Saviour. But in the several discoveries of this gospel to men, there were several additional duties or promises, or both, which distinguish them into what we call different dispensations.

This constitution or covenant of grace in its dispensation to Adam, had the appointment of sacrifices superadded, which were

mons at Berry-Street, sermon xlii. "The various Dispensations of the Gospel, &c."

and affections as well as outward actions. As for the doctrine and duty of christian love, forbearance, and forgiveness of enemies, and a readiness to return good for evil, it is either raised to higher degrees than before, or at least it is explained in a more spiritual and sublimer sense than the Jews were ever acquainted with, and enforced by superior motives, and through the aids of divine grace thousands of christians have lived honourably in the practice of it.

II. " In the christian dispensation the gospel or covenant of grace is revealed more perfectly and plainly than ever before ; not in obscure expressions, in types and carnal metaphors, but in its own proper form and language, that is, as a covenant relating to *things spiritual and eternal*. Every covenant between God and man, in the most complete sense of the word, implies some engagements on our side, which are appointed duties, and some engagements on God's side, which are promised blessings. Now in both these respects the covenant of grace is revealed in the New Testament in a much more plain and express manner than in former dispensations. The blessings of the covenant of grace are regeneration or a change of heart, pardon of sin, justification, and acceptance with God, adoption into his family, whereby we are made his children, sanctification of our natures, or being renewed after the image of God, assistance to perform duties and support under troubles, comfort in life and death, and everlasting joy in another world in the presence of God and our blessed Saviour, These are most plainly described in the New Testament. The duties of this covenant are faith or trust in a Messiah, who is much better known now having actually appeared in the flesh, unfeigned repentance toward God, confession of sin, converse with God in secret prayer, love to God as a Father, delight in him, joyful hope in his promised mercy, zeal for his honour, and sincere obedience arising from a principle of faith and love. All these are more expressly required in our gospel.

I grant that the chief of these things were contained also in the former dispensations, particularly the Jewish ; but many of them were there veiled under types and figures and dark shadows ; so that the Jews were ready to take up with these shadows instead of the substance. And besides these spiritual promises and precepts of the gospel were then mixed with so many carnal commandments and temporal promises of the Sinai-covenant, that the Jews knew not well how to distinguish them : They were too often ready to neglect the inward and spiritual constitution or covenant of grace, that ran through all the dispensations of God, as well as the more spiritual duties of the moral law ; *they were ever mistaking their covenant of Sinai, which consist-*

ed of so many political and ceremonial, as well as moral precepts and temporal promises, for the very covenant of grace and salvation itself: And accordingly, by an outward observance of these precepts, they hoped for the pardon of all their sins, and eternal life. This was the mistake into which they were always running, and which kept them from receiving the gospel of Christ.

But now the christian dispensation sets the covenant of grace and salvation before us, in its own spiritual language, in a clear and distinct light, and without a veil; so that we plainly behold the free and rich grace of God in this covenant, how it has wrought in every age, towards the recovery of mankind from the ruins of our fall, how it proceeds from step to step in its own glorious way, how it works to restore us to the favour of God and his image, and becomes more abundantly effectual to turn the hearts of sinful men to God, and bring them to blessedness. The vision of grace and glory in the New Testament is written so plain, that he that runs may read it; the high way of repentance, faith and holiness, which leads to eternal life, is laid so open that *the stranger and wayfaring man, though a fool shall not err therein*; as the prophet Isaiah hath foretold; Isa. xxxv. 8. And it may be observed, that when the ancient prophets speak of these evangelical duties and blessings in the clearest language, it is generally in some prediction of the christian age, and the happiness of this last dispensation.

III. "The rites and ceremonies which are superadded to the covenant of grace, in the christian dispensation of it, are much preferable to those in former times, and that in three respects; they are fewer, they are clearer, and they are much more easy."

They are much fewer than the ceremonies of the Jewish state. What a multitude of ceremonies were they incumbered with? What a numerous train of actions and abstinences are required in the law of Moses? What washings and sprinklings, what numerous purifications by water and blood, what continual danger of new defilements at home and abroad, by night and by day, so that man, woman and child were forced to be upon a perpetual watch lest they should be polluted in their food, in their raiment, in their habitation, or in the common actions of life! And what innumerable ceremonies of worship belonged to the service of the tabernacle and temple! What frequent journies from one end of the land to the other, and multiplied forms of religion at the tabernacle? Whereas in the christian state there are but two ceremonies appointed, *viz.* that of baptism and the Lord's supper. There is no danger that the spiritual part of it should be overwhelmed, buried and lost in the multitude of rites

and carnal ordinances, which was often the case under the Jewish state. Again,

These ordinances of the New Testament are much more easy, and less burthensome and expensive than those of the former dispensations. To wash with water, to break a little bread, to pour out a little wine, and to eat or drink in a small quantity, are no such yokes of bondage as those who went before us in every age have sustained. As for the Mosaic rites, they were exceeding expensive and burthensome indeed, beyond all our present power of description ; and even the dispensations of Adam and Noah, with their continual sacrifices, and the rite of circumcision, which was added in Abraham's days, had something in them much more costly, bloody, and painful than these two easy ceremonies of the New Testament.

And as the ceremonies of christianity are fewer and easier, so they are much clearer in their design and manner of representation, than most of the rites annexed to the former dispensations : They have a more natural and direct tendency to explain and illustrate the covenant of grace, and to assist the observance of it. When the body is washed with water in baptism, it very clearly represents, that our souls must pass through the laver of regeneration, or that we must have the Spirit of God shed down upon us, to cleanse us from our defilements. The bread broken, and the wine poured out in the Lord's supper distinctly represent the body of Christ broken on the cross for our sins, and his blood poured out as an atoning sacrifice ; and the actions of eating and drinking do as evidently hold forth our partaking of the blessings purchased by the blood and death of the Son of God. This rite also solemnizes and confirms the covenant of grace, which God hath made with us through his Son Jesus Christ, by our hearty consent thereto, which is expressed by eating and drinking in his presence, and at his table.

IV. " The Son of God, who was the real Mediator of the covenant of grace, through all former dispensations, has condescended to become the visible Mediator of this dispensation. So saith my text, *he is the Mediator of this better covenant*. He began his office of mediation between God and man indeed in those early counsels and transactions with God the Father, before the world was made, which are called the covenant of redemption, and of which you have heard in a former discourse ; He appeared in the Old Testament in the form of God ; and though he was sometimes called the angel of the Lord, and the angel of his presence, yet he often appeared as God himself, as Jehovah dwelling in a cloud of glory, in light or flame : and as he was one with the Father, so in his visible appearances he represented God, even the Father, both to the patriarchs and to the Jews,

in his grandeur and majesty, as well as his mercy. But in this last dispensation, he appears visibly and plainly as the one Mediator between God and man, when he discovers himself as *the Son of God*, and as *the man Christ Jesus*; John iii. 16. And so St. Paul more expressly speaks in 1 Tim. ii. 5. The Lord Jesus in the course of his ministry, and especially at the end of it, gave some notices that he was our Mediator with God, and that he came to give his life as a ransom for sinners, and to make peace with his blood: Before he died and rose again, and ascended, he gave us a pattern of his pleading with the Father, in the seventeenth chapter of the gospel of John; and he appears now as St. Paul represents him, as our Mediator and Intercessor in his human nature, before the throne of God. Moses the mediator of the Jewish covenant, with all his virtues and graces, with all the sacred intimaey to which God admitted him, and with all the shining honours with which God invested and surrounded him, was not comparable to the Mediator of the new covenant, the Son of God himself, *the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his person, who lay in the bosom of the Father before the foundation of the world*, but seventeen hundred years ago, *was made flesh and dwelt among us*; John i. 14, 18.

And let it further be observed here, that every thing which we have to do with God by a Mediator, is much more clearly and expressly set before us in the New Testament, than in all former dispensations. Though Jesus was always the Mediator of the covenant of grace, yet the ancients knew so little of him under this express character, that you find neither Abraham, nor David, nor Isaiah, nor those which were most enlightened in divine things, make much use of his name in their addresses to the Father, nor make plain mention of drawing near to God by a Mediator. But if we christians call upon God, and draw near to him, we have the prevailing name of Christ given us to plead at the throne; if we apply to the mercy of God, it is by Jesus Christ, the great Reconciler; if we offer our sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to the Father, they will be well received through Christ, his first beloved Son. We must do all and every thing in the christian life through Jesus Christ, and there we are secure of finding acceptance with God; Col. iii. 17. *Whatever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

V. "This dispensation of the gospel is not confined to one family or to one nation, or to a few ages of men, but it spreads through all the nations of the earth, and reaches to the end of time." That of Moses was confined to one nation only; that of Abraham to one family, and chiefly limited to his son Isaac. The dispensations of Adam and Noah are more general indeed, and

may be represented as given to all mankind; because these were the two great fathers of all, one before the flood, and the other after it: But then each of these revelations was left to the care of one family to publish it to all mankind, who were to be their posterity. But the christian dispensation is and shall be conveyed through the world, to all the heathen nations, as well as to the Jews, and that by a multitude of messengers, by apostles, and evangelists, prophets and teachers, endowed with the gifts and powers of the Blessed Spirit, and sent forth for this purpose. And it has been preserved and conveyed even to our nation, and to our day, by the writings of the apostles, and the ministrations of the preachers of the gospel through every age, and it spreads the rich grace of God, and the salvation of Christ, to the very ends of the earth; nor shall any other dispensation succeed it. Other religions of God's own appointment are worn out, and vanished away, but this being once introduced, must abide for ever.

VI. I might add here some other characters of the christian dispensation, which the apostle gives it in 2 Cor. iii. 6—18. whereby he exalts it above all the religion of the Jews, and especially far above the Sinai-covenant. *That was, saith he the ministration of the letter*, a dispensation which consisted much in outward forms and figures and types: This is *the ministration of the Spirit*, that is, either of the substance and the thing signified in these types, or wherein the Spirit of grace is more eminently poured out on mankind, for conversion and salvation:—*Either of these senses may give it this name. That was written only in tables of stone: This in fleshly tables of the heart, by the Spirit of the living God.* That was a ministration of terror and condemnation and death, in outward terrible appearances of God on Sinai, and it kept the people under a spirit of bondage and fear: This is the ministration of righteousness and life, inasmuch as all the springs of pardon and life, hope and happiness are set open in the gospel of Christ. But I proceed to the

VII. And last particular. “The encouragements and persuasive helps which christianity gives us to fulfil the duties of the covenant, are much superior to those which were enjoyed under any of the former dispensations.” Now these consist chiefly in examples and motives.

Do examples invite us to our duty, and by a soft and secret influence encourage and lead us on to the performance of it? Such indeed were the names of Abraham and David, each in their day a happy pattern to their several ages: But in my opinion all the praises which are due to David, and Abraham, fall far short of the labours and sufferings, the zeal and patience, the holiness and the love of that divine man, St. Paul, whose life is

commended as an example to the christian world : And neither David nor Abraham, nor any of the ancient saints, who had each of them their blemishes, are to be compared with the more excellent and perfect pattern of Jesus the Son of God, who was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners ; who was without the least blemish in heart and life : He hath given us a glorious example of piety, virtue, and goodness, incomparably superior to all former ages ; it is most inviting indeed, and yet imitable by all that follow.

Let us next consider our various motives to duty under the New Testament.

Are the motives of love and gratitude powerful principles to encourage and persuade us to every active service ? Such indeed are the blessings and gifts which God bestowed on men under former dispensations. But what were all those gifts and blessings in comparison of the unspeakable gift of his own Son, to die as a sacrifice in our stead, which is one of the chief themes and mysteries of the christian revelation ? The love of God to us, made visible in the sufferings of the Son of God for our sins, carries with it a more abundant force of persuasion to work upon our affections and our love, than all the discoveries of grace from the days of Adam till this day. How can we sin against such astonishing goodness : Against such a sublime instance of divine compassion ?

Are the promises and threatenings of God another set of motives to duty ? Do the awful glories and terrors of a future and eternal world work upon all the springs of our activity and diligence, by hope and fear ? Yes certainly, in a high degree. But in former dispensations had but few of these eternal terrors and promises, these threatenings and promises relating to an invisible state. All beyond death and the grave had a gloom and darkness upon it in former times, except here and there a glimpse of light that was shot in between the clouds. A few bright sentences collected from David, Isaiah, and Daniel, were some of the chief discoveries that we know of in those ancient ages ; but in the New Testament the gates of the other world are thrown open ; heaven of happiness, and a hell of misery are discovered there, and set before us in a divine light. The blessedness of departed spirits, who see the face of God, and the agonies and outcries of a sinner, who lifts up his eyes in the place of torment, are revealed to us and described in the speeches of Christ, and the writings of his apostles. The awful and glorious scene of the day of judgment is spread out at large in the christian dispensation, together with the decision of the eternal states of the righteous and the wicked according to their works, when everlasting joy, or everlasting sorrow shall be the portion of every soul and

daughter of Adam. If hope and fear have any power in man-kind, to awaken them to an abhorrence of sin, and the practice of holiness, surely these motives of the New Testament, which have so transcendent an influence on our hope and fear, are of the most effectual and constraining kind.

But this leads me to the second part of my text, which corresponds with the appointed theme of my discourse; and that is, "The excellency of the promises of the new covenant;" as St. Paul tells us, this new covenant is established, appointed or constituted, upon a set of *better promises*.

The promises of the New Testament will appear to be much superior to those of the Old, if we consider what was hinted before, that they contain in them such blessings as were scarce known under the former dispensations, or at least were so expressed, that it was hard to read them: But in the gospel these future scenes of solemn glory are set before our eyes in the clearest language. We hear the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God; we see the dead arising out from their graves, a glorious army of saints and martyrs springing at once out of the dust, and their bodies all bright and active, vigorous and immortal. We behold Jesus the Saviour and the Judge upon the throne, and his faithful followers at his right hand, invested with public honours. We hear the happy sentence pronounced upon them, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom*. We behold them, as it were, reigning with Christ, upon his throne, and ascending with their Lord, to dwell forever in his presence.

Again, the apostle has taught us to look upon all the promises, as sealed to believers by the blood of the Son of God, and secured to christians by the resurrection and exaltation of their Mediator; for the Father hath put all power into his hand, and he has taken possession of the heavenly inheritance in our name; *Because I live ye shall live also*; John xiv. 19.

Yet farther, the New Testament confirms all the best promises of the Old, and claims them for itself; for they were eminently made with a design for the days of the Messiah, as many of them expressly inform us. New hearts and new spirits, taking away iniquity, and remembering sins no more, writing the law in the heart, and the dwelling of God amongst them, and their assurance of not departing from God, are such promises as the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel more directly pronounced on the subjects of the kingdom of the Messiah. And there is a new light cast upon them in the gospel, which teaches plain christians to make use them, and apply them to their own consolation and joy. *They were all written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope*; Rom. xv. 4.

Thus we christians become much richer in divine promises, than all the ancients, having a common interest in all the most valuable ones of the Old Testament, as well as a peculiar property in those of the New. What an invaluable and everlasting treasure are these exceeding great and precious promises which God has given us in Christ Jesus? It is by these we are made partakers of the divine nature, that is, the image of God, and by these we are enabled to escape the corruption that is come into this degenerate world through lust; 2 Pet. i. 4. It is by these we are quickened when we are slothful, we are supported when we are sinking, we are encouraged to run the race of duty, and to combat with every opposition. It is from these that christians derive courage in their dying moments, and they triumph over death itself, the last enemy, when a promise sets the prize of eternal life and the crown of glory just before them. *Be thou faithful to the death, and I will give thee a crown of life;* Rev. ii. 10.

And how are all the invitations of grace in the Old Testament animated by the Son of God come in the flesh? How many new ones are superadded? And how much is their force of persuasion increased, when the power and success of them has appeared in such wondrous instances as the New Testament sets before our eyes? How are the worst of sinners encouraged to lay hold of a promise of mercy, and to rest upon it, when our blessed Saviour received publicans and other notorious criminals, when Levi and Zaccheus were so favoured by him, when Mary Magdalen found pardon for the guilt of a public and shameless life, when Paul the persecutor and blasphemer obtained mercy, and was made a favourite and an apostle, and when he assures us that his conversion was designed to this blessed purpose, as a pattern of abounding grace; 1 Tim. i. 16.

How powerfully are humble and despairing christians supported, and backsliders encouraged to return to God in a way of dutiful obedience, when Peter who fell in the hour of temptation and denied his Lord, was recovered to repentance by a compassionate look of Christ, and not only received to forgiveness, but advanced to the first rank of office in the kingdom of Christ, and did glorious service for him? But it is time to put an end to this discourse, and it shall be concluded with a few inferences.

Inference I.—“ Though every part of our bible be sacred and divine, yet the latter part of it is much more valuable to us than the former:” The New Testament far exceeds the Old, because it reveals to us this better covenant, and makes us possessors of these better promises. The books of Moses and the prophets, and the Psalms of David, contain admirable discove-

ries of the majesty and mercy of God, but where the beams of *Jesus the Sun of Righteousness* shine, there is not only a more glorious light to direct our steps, and to enliven our spirits, but there is a new lustre shed abroad over the psalms and the ancient prophets, and the typical ceremonies and promises of Moses. So that in Great Britain and in our age, we understand those ancient divine writings much better than the Israelites in the land of Canaan could understand them, even better than Moses and the prophets understood what they themselves were inspired to write. John the baptist was greater than all the prophets, because he could point to Jesus the Messiah, *Behold the Lamb of God*; John i. 29—36. And since the death and resurrection of Christ, and pouring down of the Spirit, the least minister, or perhaps the least member in the kingdom of Christ, knows much more of the Messiah and his kingdom than John did, and than all the former ages, and the writers that lived in them.—Mat. xi. 11.

II. “What abundant thanks and praises are due to the blessed God, who brought us forth into the world under this last and best dispensation, who hath trained us up in the christian doctrine, and not made us Jews!” We are not called to that troublesome, and expensive kind of worship, which consists in the killing and burning of bulls and goats, and the choicest lambs of the flock. The bleeding flesh of animals, and fire and smoke, make no part of our religious solemnities. Jesus the Lamb of God is already offered as an all-sufficient sacrifice: there is no need of another atonement: *He has by one offering for ever perfected them that are sanctified*; Heb. x. 14. We are not obliged to travel three times a year to distant parts of the nation where we dwell, in order to adore our Maker, at one single tabernacle or a temple, for in every place, that God who is a Spirit is worshipped now, even by public assemblies, *in Spirit and in truth*; John iv. 23. We are not forced to spell out the mercies of God by types and dark figures; but we see his overflowing goodness, in the person and offices of his beloved Son Jesus; we read the pardon of our sins in his blood, and our sanctification by his Holy Spirit. There is no such veil spread over the invisible world as covered the ancient dispensation. Heaven and hell, and all the awful and eternal things that belong to them, are discovered in a clear and surprizing light. We are not left to live upon the promises of temporal good things, and to search out the spiritual blessings that are covered and wrapped up in them; but the spiritual and everlasting mercies which are provided for the saints, stand open to sight, in the promises of the New Testament: They seem to court our embraces, and invite us to rejoice in hope. We need

no longer be "subject to a bondage of spirit through fear of death, for death is conquered by the Son of God; life and immortality brought to light by the gospel, and God hath not given us the spirit of bondage, and terror under the christian dispensation; but the spirit of courage, and faith, and love, and joy unspeakable;" 2 Tim. i. 7—10. For ever blessed be the Lord, who hath called us to be christians.

III. "Do we enjoy the privilege of knowing this better covenant, and shall any of us content ourselves without a certain interest in the blessings of it?" Do we hear of these better promises, and shall we be satisfied without a title to them? Shall we belong to that wretched tribe of *despisers, who behold this great salvation, and wonder, and perish?* Acts xiii. 41. What double anguish will seize our consciences, when the Judge shall pronounce at the last day, *Go ye cursed into endless misery; ye had all the glories and joys of heaven brought nearest of all to you in this better covenant, and offered to you in these better promises, and yet ye refused to accept them.*

IV. "If we christians live under a better covenant, and enjoy better promises, we must needs reproach ourselves if we find our faith and obedience fall below that of the Jews." Have we nobler assistance in our holy race to heaven, and yet shall we move on slower than they, and lag behind them? Have we brighter encouragements, and yet shall our zeal be colder? Are our duties set before us in a far clearer light, and shall our obedience be more defective? Does divine mercy reign in the promises of the gospel with superior glory, and shall our faith in these promises be more feeble and wavering? O let us set the pattern of Abraham and David, and other ancient saints before us, and shame ourselves out of this earthiness of spirit, our lazy humour, our cold affection to divine things, and our languishing hope of immortality. Let the name, and pattern, and Spirit of the blessed Jesus inspire us with new vigour to follow him, who is the Mediator of this new and better covenant, till he shall have brought us to the accomplishment of all these better promises. *Amen.*

SERMON XLVIII.

The Exaltation of Christ to his Kingdom, and his sending down the Holy Spirit.

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 this which ye now see and hear.

IT was a strange amazement that seized the hearts of the multitude who came up to Jerusalem at the days of Pentecost, when they heard the apostles speak so many new languages: The Jews and the Gentiles of various nations were struck with one general surprize, when they found fishermen, and persons of no learning, declare in every tongue the wonderful works of God and his grace: And while they were busy in their enquiries into the cause of this great event, Peter, standing up with the eleven, lift up his voice as their speaker, and beginning with the prophecy of Joel concerning the pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh, preached to them the life and death and resurrection of Christ, and assured them that these miraculous gifts descended upon the apostles from that Jesus whom the Jews had crucified and slain: "But we are witnesses," says he, "that God has raised him from the dead; and being exalted by the right-hand or power of God, he has shed forth these wondrous gifts of the Holy Ghost, which the Father had promised him, and of which your own eyes and ears are present witnesses."

The two great subjects of my appointed discourse, are evidently contained in this text, viz. The exaltation of Christ to his kingdom, and his pouring down of the Holy Spirit.

In pursuit of the first of these I shall shew you wherein consists the exaltation of Christ, and what are the several parts of it; and here I might take notice,

I. That at his ascension to heaven there was a glorious change passed upon his body to make it fit for the heavenly state. For though Christ was raised from the dead, yet being designed to continue forty days on earth, he was not raised in a glorified body; Luke xxiv. 39. He pronounces his "body to be flesh and bones, and bid his disciples handle him;" but St. Paul assures us; 1 Cor. xv. 50. "That flesh and blood cannot in-

erit the kingdom of God, nor can corruption inherit incorruption;" and therefore the bodies of the saints at the resurrection must be all changed into spiritual and incorruptible, as is, such as are fit for the services of a glorified spirit, and for an immortal life. Such a change passed upon the flesh and bones of our blessed Lord, when the bright cloud received him out of the sight of his disciples, and conveyed him upward to the mansions of light and immortality; Acts i. 8.

II. I might also take notice in the next place. That it is part of the exaltation of Christ to be delivered from all possible sorrows and pains and temptations, to which he was exposed in this world; to be placed above the reach of the malice of earth and hell, as well as to be delivered from all mortal infirmities, and to be filled with inward satisfaction and joy unspeakable. He is exalted to "the right-hand of God, where there are pleasures forevermore;" Ps. xvi. 11. His holy soul, which once endured the terrible conflicts and agonies, now sits triumphant in eternal peace never to be ruffled and disquieted again. He now enjoys the sweet and sacred satisfactions of heart which arise from the review of his own finished labours and sufferings; tireless labours indeed, and tremendous sufferings, but never more to be repeated! He is now for ever drinking in fuller pleasures from the indwelling godhead, from the smiles of his Father's face, and shall never more complain, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Mat. xxvii. 36. He, "for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame;" Heb. xii. 2. and these are the joys which he is now possessed of in a just and divine recompence.

III. He has authority given him by the Father to govern the world as long as it stands, and to judge it at the last day. "He is exalted to be both a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to men and forgiveness of sins;" Acts v. 31. He calls those who are given him out of the world, and makes them parts of his church: He changes their sinful natures, he makes them the children of God, and pardons all their iniquities. Nor doth his kingdom reach only to his own church, who are his willing and faithful subjects, but it extends over the whole world; the rebellious and infidel nations are under his reign and controul. His lordship not only includes all mankind, but it reaches over angels and devils, over all the regions and the inhabitants of heaven, earth and hell: *All things are put into his hands and placed under his dominion; he is Lord of all;* Mat. xxviii. 19. Acts x. 36. He doth not reign only in Sion as heretofore, and as King of the Jewish nation, but the heathens are now made his inheritance, and the most ends of the world his possession; Ps. ii. 8, 9. Not only his followers and friends are under his government, but

every creature is made subject to him : *His people are his willing subjects in this day of his power, and his enemies shall be made his footstool. Angels, principalities and powers are put under him as his ministering servants, for the purposes of his government over the church and the world ; Ps. cx. 1—3. Eph. i. 20. Heb. i. 4. Rev. iii. 21.*

And yet further, he is not only the appointed Heir and Lord of all, but he is constituted the final Judge of the living and the dead : He who stood once at the bar of Pilate and the high-priest as a transgressor, hath a throne of judgment preparing for him, and the high-priest and Pilate shall be arraigned there : All the tribes of the earth shall be gathered together before him, and shall receive their eternal sentence from his mouth. Mat. xxv. 31, 32, 34, 41. " God the Father hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, and has given assurance of it to all men by raising him from the dead." Acts xvii. 31. " The Father judgeth no man but hath committed all judgment into the hands of his Son, and hath given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man ;" John v. 22—27.

IV. Our blessed Saviour must have a most extensive knowledge and power to execute this vast authority, and to fulfil this glorious trust.

Let us first consider his extensive knowledge. He has not only the kingdoms of nature and grace committed to his care, but the book of the decrees of God is put into his hands that he may govern these kingdoms according to the Father's will. So that text is generally explained ; Rev. v. 1—9. " The Lamb in the midst of the throne came and took the book out of his Father's hand." He must know what God hath ordained that he may execute all his Father's counsels with regard to the church and the world, and that he may send his prophets to reveal to his church so much as is needful for them to know. The whole book of the Revelation is an instance of this knowledge communicated to him by the Father ; Rev. i. 1. " The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass : and he sent and signified it by his angel to his servant John." The day and hour of the last judgment, which were unknown to the Son in the days of his flesh ; Mark xiii. 32. and were reserved in the Father's hand, are now laid open before him in this book of divine counsels. Both as a Priest and a King he must know the hearts of men. He must see their secret thoughts that he may govern and judge them aright ; 1 Cor. iv. 5. And he must know all the groans and breathings of holy souls that he may present them in the sympathy of his affection before the Father, and may have a

fellow-feeling of their infirmities and sorrows ; Heb. ii. 18. and iv. 15.

Again, he must be acquainted with the hidden iniquities of men and devils, that he may countermine their pernicious plots, that he may sometimes prevent the mischiefs which they design; and sometimes permit them to accomplish their wicked purposes for the trial of his people. All the dark perplexities of providence, and the whole maze and labyrinth of human events lies open before him, and the secret things in the heart of man; for "he must bring to light the hidden things of darkness, he must manifest the counsels of the heart, and reward every one according to their works;" 1 Cor. iv. 5. Rev. xxii. 12.

But besides all this, we must remember in the next place; that he is possessed of active power equal to this extensive knowledge. What could the name of such a sublime authority do toward the government of all things, even if he had sufficient knowledge without a correspondent power? It would be but a splendid title and a mere shadow of kingship. But Jesus our King has universal royalty, and has power to support it. He must not sit like a shining cypher on the throne of government, nor on the tribunal of judgment; Rev. v. 6. "The Lamb who had been slain appears in the midst of the throne with seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." Whether this denotes the seven chief angels which are prime ministers in the court of heaven, employed by our exalted Saviour, or whether the number "seven" signifies a perfection of knowledge and power described by eyes and horns; still it must imply either such outward mediums of power and knowledge, or such inward capacities as the Son of God is furnished with in order to govern the ends of the earth, and execute his Father's decrees. The sun and moon with all their attendant lights; the earth, air, and sea, with all their millions of living inhabitants; nature and time with all their wheels and motions, are put under his controul: all move onward in their constant courses by his word, and they shall stop at his command and finish their last period. Then shall he call to the graves to give up their dead; the graves shall obey the Son of man, and the dead shall arise in millions at his call; John v. 26. And indeed without such all-commanding power, which can subdue all things to himself, how can he execute the office of being "Head over all things for the good of his church?" How can he fulfil his Father's decrees? How is it possible he should transact the important affairs of the last day, that he should judge the intelligent creation, that he should reward his friends and favourites in the heavens, and send his implacable enemies to the second

hear the voice of the Son of God, and live: The grave shall resign its prisoners at his command: He has the keys of death, and the gates of eternal life are in his keeping.

And as his promises are worthy of our trust, so are his laws of our obedience: for in this exalted state, he can enforce them powerfully with temporal and eternal rewards, with temporal and eternal punishments. Heaven, earth, and hell, with all that belong to them, being placed in his power, the blessings and the vengeance are within the reach of his hand; he shall distribute eternal recompences to men and angels, as the righteous and mighty Judge of all. Ps. ii. 11, 12. *Serve the Lord with fear, kiss the Son, or adore him with love, lest you perish upon the spot, if his wrath be kindled but a little: But blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

III. Is Christ exalted? Then "his faithful followers have a pledge and pattern of their own exaltation, though not to equal degrees of pleasure, honour or power." It is as their forerunner he is entered within the veil, and is dignified with many glories, as their great representative. Is his body of flesh and blood by some glorious change made fitter for the heavenly world, and better suited to be the mansion or instrument of a glorified Spirit? Such shall be the bodies of all his people, for they must be like him: *He will change their vile bodies till they are made like his own glorious body; Phil. iii. 21.* Is his holy soul filled with all joy and blessedness in the presence of God, and in the review of his past labours and sufferings? Such shall be the felicity of their souls, for *they must be like him when they see him as he is; 1 John iii. 2. They shall rejoice for ever, and their joy shall no man take from them; John xvi. 22.* Is he exalted to power and dominion, to a crown and a throne, and to royal honours? His followers also must have a crown of life and righteousness, they shall sit upon thrones to judge the tribes of Israel, they shall have power over the nations, and share according to their measure and capacity in the honours of an exalted Saviour. Rev. ii. 10, 26. and iii. 21. Mat. xix. 28. Fix the eye of your faith on a glorified Jesus, and behold there a pattern of your own joys and glories; such honour have all his saints; Ps. cxlix. 9. But again I say, remember that your character and your share is far inferior to his; you are but members, he is the head: You are but sinners saved, he is the Saviour and without sin: You are but adopted children, he is the original Son: You are but creatures made in time, he is the Son of God before the creation: *In the beginning he was with God, and he was God; John i. 1. In all things he must have the pre-eminence; Col. i. 18.*

IV. Is Christ exalted? "Then he can secure to himself and to his people whatsoever honours or blessings his humiliation has

purchased for himself or for them." He offered up himself a sacrifice for the sins of men, and thereby, according to the ancient covenant with his Father, he procured a seat of glory and power at his right-hand for himself, and eternal salvation for all his people. He is risen from the dead, he is possessed of these promised powers, he can vindicate his own honours, and insure grace and glory, and all the blessings of the purchased salvation to all his people.

V. Is Christ exalted to the kingdom? Then "the plots of all his enemies in earth and hell against his church are but vain devices." His enemies must submit to him or perish before him. When God has sent his Son Jesus as king on his holy hill, Zion; Ps. ii. 1—12. and given him the heathen for his dominion; it is but a vain and fruitless rage, that the princes or people can discover against his kingdom. Let the kings of the earth be wise; let them serve the Lord with fear, and bow before him, or he shall crush them with a rod of iron, and dash them as a potter's vessel. The church of Christ may rejoice in her lowest estate, having such a Ruler and such a Saviour on high. He will never forget nor forsake her interests, till he has fulfilled all his Father's promises, and made her all-glorious and blessed for ever.

I proceed now to the second general head of my subject; and that is, to consider the pouring down of the Spirit at the exaltation of Christ. This was a matter of astonishment to the Jews, and to the inhabitants of all nations who were gathered together at the feast. This is generally represented, and with great propriety, as the noble donatives which a conqueror distributes on the day of his triumph, or the royal gifts of a king scattered among his people at his coronation. Thus it is prophesied in Ps. lxxviii. 18. Thus it is recorded in history; Eph. iv. 8. "He ascended on high, he led captivity captive, he triumphed over the powers of darkness, which had led captive the nations of the earth; he received gifts for men," saith the prophet, "even for the rebellious or heathen world, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them as he dwelt of old in Sion." The apostle interprets this verse, that he gave gifts to men, even the gifts of the Holy Spirit, to make apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers for the conversion of sinners, and the edification of the church. These are the glorious blessings, or gifts of the Spirit, which he received of the Father, and which he shed forth on his disciples, under the visible emblem of tongues of fire. Let it be first observed here, that these divine donatives, these influences of the Holy Spirit, are generally distinguished into gifts and graces; and though in truth they are all really gifts of the Spirit from the grace of an exalted Saviour, yet it is chiefly those new capaci-

ties, or powers of actions, which are usually called gifts, and are reckoned among his extraordinary operations, because they belong chiefly to the primitive times; whereas the christian virtues are more frequently called the graces, or fruits of the Spirit, and are attributed to his ordinary influences, because they continue through all ages of the church*.

Let it be observed in the second place, that these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit did not necessarily carry with them christian virtues or graces; for in *Mat. vii. 22.* our Saviour declares, that some *who prophesied in his name and cast out devils by virtue of these gifts, were workers of iniquity; he will not know them,* he will at the last day bid them depart from him, and banish them for ever from his presence; and on the other hand, the graces of the Spirit are bestowed on thousands in every age, where these extraordinary gifts were never received; though some suppose that in the primitive days, all that were converted by the apostles themselves, received some or other of these gifts by the imposition of their hands.

Give me leave now briefly to set before you the several kinds of these gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, which were poured down from heaven upon men by our exalted Saviour: together with a hint of the chief designs or uses of them, and then I shall conclude with some remarks upon them.

The extraordinary gifts are of various kinds; they are represented by the apostle Paul; *1 Cor. xii. 8—11.* and explained by learned and ingenious writers. In the first place, the word of wisdom, or an extensive acquaintance with the mysteries of christianity, the doctrines and duties of the religion of Christ. This eminently belonged to the apostles, that they might be able upon all occasions to preach the gospel in all the substantial and necessary parts of it, and answer the questions of importance which were proposed to them. The next was the word of knowledge; which may imply such an insight into the Old Testament and the writings of the prophets, as to cite them and happily apply them by way of interpretation or allusion, to illustrate or confirm the gospel of Christ, and to refute the Jewish abuses and perversions of them. The third is the gift of faith; that is, probably, a peculiar impulse that came upon them from heaven, when any difficult matter was to be performed, which inwardly assured them, that the Spirit of God would enable them to perform it. Then follows the gift of healing of various distempers by a word of their mouth, or a touch of their hand, and the gift of working other miracles also, even the power of inflicting diseases, or death itself,

* I grant my text speaks chiefly, if not only, of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; but as the graces proceed also from the Spirit of Christ exalted, I thought it not proper to omit them here.

upon offenders. So St. Paul not only healed the maladies of men, but struck Elymas the sorcerer blind; so St. Peter not only bid Tabitha arise from the dead, but he also pronounced sudden death upon Ananias and Sapphira. Another of these gifts was prophecy, which, taken in general, signifies a power to speak by inspiration: And perhaps it may include the gift of utterance or freedom of speech: But in a more particular sense implies the foretelling of things to come. So Paul foretold the rise of anti-christ; 1 Thess. ii. 7. And Agabus, a christian prophet, predicted the famine in the days of Claudius Cæsar. Acts. xi. 28. Besides these, there was the gift of discerning spirits, that is, either of discovering the heart of a man, which on some occasions might be necessary in those early days of the gospel, or of discerning the temper and talents of a person, that it might be better judged in what service to employ him. And after these follow the gifts of tongues and the interpretation of tongues, whereby one person could speak several foreign languages which he never learned, that he might preach the gospel to persons of distant nations: And another could interpret tongues, or explain to the bulk of the assembly what was spoken in a strange language, for the use of strangers who might come amongst them. Besides all these, we might reckon also the gifts of singing psalms and praying by the Spirit, which parts of worship were performed by inspiration, in those primitive times. Thus much of the gifts.

The graces of the Holy Spirit are also of various kinds, for they include all those christian virtues, or principles of holiness, which are wrought in the hearts of men by the influence of the Holy Ghost, such as faith, repentance, love to God and man; add to these, meekness, temperance, a well-grounded hope, holy joy, patience in suffering, and courage to profess the name and religion of Christ even in the face of death and martyrdom; 2 Tim. i. 7. See the fruits of the Spirit reckoned up by the apostle; Gal. v. 22, 23. Eph. v. 9.

The design of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, which were shed forth by our ascended Saviour, was to spread the gospel more speedily in the world, to diffuse an overpowering evidence of it among men, and to establish this new religion in the earth; Heb. ii. 3, 4. *This great salvation at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will.* St. Paul assures the Corinthians, that when an unlearned man, or an unbeliever, came into their assemblies, and heard them speak by inspiration the doctrines of the gospel in a proper manner, *he is convinced, he is judged, the secrets of his heart*

are made manifest, and falling down on his face he will worship God, and will report that God is in you of a truth; 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. And indeed without these demonstrations of the Spirit attending the gospel in the first publication of it, it was not to be supposed, that so new and strange a religion should make its way like lightning through the nations, in opposition to the prejudices of mankind and the power of princes, and in a few years illuminate so many dark countries, which had lain for long ages under the shadow of death. When christianity was well established in the world, these extraordinary gifts died away by degrees.

As for the graces of the Spirit, the design of them was directly to change sinners into saints, and to raise a church for Christ among men. These were communicated sometimes in an extraordinary manner and degree in the primitive days, in order to give the gospel a more speedy success, after the exaltation of our blessed Lord: But these are continued also in following ages, and sent down among men daily, by our blessed Saviour in his glorified state, who is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, that he may maintain an everlasting kingdom on earth, through all ages, by bestowing repentance on men, and forgiveness of sins; Acts v. 31. It is by these influences new converts are made, sinners are called and sanctified, churches are raised or continued in a long succession, and the family of Christ restored, when it is diminished by the persecution of tyrants on earth, or by calling away the saints to heaven by death in the course of nature.

Thus I have given you a very brief account of the influences of the blessed Spirit, both with regard to gifts and graces, which were promised by the Father, and shed forth by our exalted Saviour, together with the most eminent and important uses and designs of them. Permit me now to conclude with these four Remarks:

Remark. I.—Since the gifts of the Spirit are shed forth in a way of promise and prediction, they more plainly appear to be divine. It is the promised Spirit, which our Saviour gave to men. It can never be said they were casual events, or they happened by chance, for they were foretold by the ancient prophets, by John the baptist, and by our blessed Saviour: They were promised to Christ Jesus by his Father, and he promised them to his own disciples, and bid them wait at Jerusalem till they received them. Luke xxiv. 49. There is a long shining track of divine promise and faithfulness, and a blessed harmony of grace and truth, that runs through all this event of the pouring down of the Holy Spirit, and we may trace it through the writings of the prophets and apostles with sacred delight. Is the Spirit sent down

to men in this wondrous manner, then God has not failed of his promises to the Jews and Gentiles, made by his ancient prophets; then the Father hath not failed of his promise to his Son Jesus, nor has the Son of God failed of his promise to his disciples and followers; Acts ii. 16, 17. Luke xxiv. 46. John' xv. 25. Acts i. 8. compared with my text.

II. Are these wondrous gifts of the Spirit sent down to publish and confirm the blessed gospel; then surely "it demands our firmest faith, since it was propagated at first by such divine miracles, and has been established by such surprizing and glorious gifts." How wisely has God ordained these visible and sensible wonders, to prove the exaltation of his Son Jesus, when he left the world, and became invisible to men? *He hath shed forth all this which you see and hear*; and this is the last and the greatest witness to christianity, and it confirms all the rest. Our Saviour wrought many miracles indeed, and he spoke as never man spake; yet he assured his disciples, that after his departure they should not only do the same works, *but greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to my Father*; John xiv. 12. Our blessed Lord cast out devils, healed diseases, and raised the dead; what greater works then can we suppose were left for the apostles to perform, or what greater gifts than these can be conferred upon them? May I have leave to express a conjecture here, that these might be *the word of wisdom and knowledge, and the gift of tongues*. We grant it was indeed a miracle, to heal the bodies of the sick with a word; but does it not seem a more astonishing thing, that the souls of persons, who were in a great measure ignorant of divine truths, should be at once illuminated with a word of wisdom, should be furnished so soon with such an extensive knowledge of the mysteries, doctrines and duties of the gospel, that they were able to preach them to an ignorant world; and that they should be so fully persuaded of these doctrines at once, in opposition to many former prejudices which reigned in them, that they could now venture their lives in the defence of these divine truths, which they learned from heaven by such an inspiration: It is granted again, that it is a miracle to make the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, to put life into a dead body: But it is not a more amazing event, that the mind of a fisherman who knew nothing but his mother-tongue, should at once be furnished with a million of words, even the languages of various nations, and that his organs of speech should be enabled to pronounce them right, which would be the learning and labour of two or three ages: and that they should speak to every man in their own tongue, *the wonderful works of God*? And yet still this wonder is greater, when we consider, that the apostles not only

spake with strange tongues themselves, but they communicated this gift of tongues to others also, which was never done by our Saviour himself in his own life time. Such were the attestations to the gospel of our blessed Lord, and so bright was the evidence that was shed over it by these gifts of the Spirit, that this is appointed to be the supreme seal to the truth of it, and he that blasphemeth the Holy Ghost, and renounces this evidence, after it has been convincingly set before him, and obstinately attributes these divine wonders to the sleights of men, or to the craft of the devil, is sealed up under condemnation by the lips of the Saviour of the world; and there is no forgiveness for him; Mat. xii. 31, 32*.

III. Though Jesus the founder of the christian religion submitted to death, yet the christian church was never designed to die, because Jesus lives again in an exalted state, and hath all the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit in his hand, which have been the life and soul of the church. When he left the world, he sent down his Spirit, both in the gifts and graces of it, to raise and maintain a temple or dwelling for himself in it so long as the world should stand: He hath promised that his Spirit should abide with it for ever, at least for the ordinary communication of gifts, and the influences of special grace, and therefore *the gates of hell or death shall not prevail against it*; Mat. xvii. 18.

And it might be added here also, that this is the reason why believers persevere in faith and holiness, because Jesus their exalted head has the fulness of the Spirit in him, and it is from him that the members derive their life, and all their support. *He that was dead is alive, and behold he lives for ever*; Rev. i. 18. And because I live, says our blessed Lord, ye shall live also; John xiv. 19.

IV. This thought points to us "whither to direct our eyes and hopes when the Spirit of God is withdrawn from amongst us." Since Jesus ascended to heaven, the great God communicates his promised Spirit to men only through the hands of his Son. Let ministers, let christians, let churches learn, whence to derive new supplies, new gifts, new graces and influences, when spiritual things run low in the midst of them. It is from the hand of an exalted Saviour that we must receive all these blessings: It is he must give new life to all his churches under their dying circumstances, and new zeal and vigour to our souls under all their witherings and decays.

Thus all-glorious and divine is our salvation, from the ori-

* Of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the efficacy and power of them, to prove and confirm the gospel of Christ; see the best account that ever I read, in "*Miscellanea Sacra*," Essay I.

ginal love, power, and promise of God the Father, through the sufferings, the death and exaltation of Jesus Christ his Son, and by the gifts and graces of the Blessed Spirit. Hence arise the talents and furniture of ministers, and hence the faith and hope, the life and holiness, the joy and comfort of christians. Nor can I put a sweeter period to such a discourse as this, than in those words of the great apostle, which unite the divine springs of our salvation; 2 Cor. xii. 14. *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be for ever with you. Amen.*

SERMON XLIX.

*The perpetual Obligation of the Moral Law; the Exil of Sin,
and its Desert of Punishment.*

1 JOHN iii. 4.—Sin is the transgression of the Law.—And ROM. vi. 23.—
The wages of sin is death.

THE blessed God has an undoubted right to command and govern his creatures, and when he makes known his will or lays the knowledge of it within their reach, this becomes a law to them, this determines what is their duty; and a transgression of this law, or disobedience to it, is sin; and sin carries in it the notion of moral evil, which deserves some penalty to be inflicted on the sinner. Now that the moral law is such a law as I have described, and has such consequences attending the transgression of it; I shall endeavour to shew in the following method:

I. I shall consider what we mean by the moral law, and where this law is to be found.—II. I shall prove that it reaches to all mankind, and is of perpetual obligation.—III. That sin or the transgression of it, is a very great and heinous evil.—IV. That it justly deserves punishment from the hands of God. I shall pursue each of these in their order.

The first enquiry is, What we mean by the moral law? To which I answer, The moral law signifies that rule which is given to all mankind to direct their manners or behaviour considered merely as they are intelligent and social creatures, as creatures who have an understanding to know God and themselves, a capacity to judge what is right and wrong, and a will to chuse and refuse good and evil. This law, I think, does not arise merely from the abstracted nature of things, but also includes in it the existence of God, and his will manifested some way or other, or at least put within the reach of our knowledge; it includes also his authority, which obliges us to walk by the rule he gives us. The commands or requirements of the moral law may be represented in different views, but all agree in the same design and substance. Sometimes the moral law is represented as requiring us to seek after the knowledge of that God who made us as obliging us to believe whatsoever God discovers to us, and as

commanding us to perform those duties he prescribes, and to abstain from those things which he forbids.

Sometimes again this moral law is represented by distinguishing it into those duties which we owe to God, to our neighbours, and to ourselves. The duties which we owe to God, are fear and love, trust and hope, worship and obedience, prayer and praise, doing every thing to his glory, and patience under his providences in life and death. The duties which we owe to our neighbours are submission to our superiors, compassion to our inferiors, truth and fidelity, justice and honesty, benevolence and goodness toward all men. The duties which we owe to ourselves are sobriety and temperance; and in general the moral law requires a restraint of our natural appetites and passions within just bounds, so that they neither break out to the dishonour of God, to the injury of our neighbour, or to hinder us in the pursuit of our own best interests.

There is yet another general representation of the moral law, which is used in scripture both in the Old and New Testament. It is mentioned by Moses; Deut. vi. 5. Lev. xix. 18. and repeated and confirmed by our blessed Saviour; Mat. xxii. 37. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul, and thy neighbour as thyself; on these two commandments hang all the law and prophets:* And therefore St. Paul, Rom. xiii. 10. tells us, *love is the fulfilling of the law.* For he that loves God and his neighbour as he ought, will perform all necessary duties toward them, as well as govern himself aright in obedience to God his Maker.

Having explained what I mean by the moral law, we come to enquire where it is to be found? I answer, it is found in the ten commands given to the Jews at Sinai; it is found in the holy scriptures, scattered up and down through all the writings of the Old and New Testament, and it may be found out in the plainest and most necessary parts of it, by the sincere and diligent exercise of our own reasoning powers. It was written by the finger of God in tables of stone; it is written by the inspiration of God in the holy bible; and it is written in the hearts and consciences of mankind by the God of nature. The voice of God from heaven proclaimed this law, the voice of the prophets and apostles confirm it, and the voice of conscience, which is the vicegerent of God in the heart of man, speaks the same thing*. See Rom. ii.

* That which is in the heart of man is called the natural law, because it arises from our natural principles of reason; that which was given at Sinai is more frequently termed the written law: Both are called the moral law, yet with these few differences. 1. The written law is more clear and express in its particular commands; the natural is more secret and less evident, especially among

14, 15. which must be thus explained. *When the Gentiles who have not the written law are admonished by nature and their own consciences to do things contained in the written law, their hearts and reasoning powers are a natural law to themselves, which shows or discovers the work of the written law or ten commands impressed on their hearts; their very consciences bearing witness for or against themselves, and accusing or excusing them, according as they have obeyed or broke that natural law within them.*

The second general head of my discourse leads me to prove that this moral law is of universal and perpetual obligation to all mankind, even through all nations and all ages. The will of God their Maker concerning their conduct being revealed to them, or laid within the reach of their knowledge as I said before, becomes a law or rule of life to men. Now this moral law is so far discovered to all, whether Jews, Gentiles, or christians, both by the light of reason, and by the writings of the Old and New Testament, and thus it becomes an universal law which requires the obedience of all mankind. And as it hath universal authority over all men, so its obligation is perpetual and everlasting; there cannot be any dissolution of it, nor a release from its commands or requirements; which will appear if we consider the following reasons:

I. "It is a law which arises from the very existence of God and the nature of man:" It springs from the very relation of such creatures to their Maker and to one another. Every creature must owe its all to him that made it; and therefore all its powers ought to be employed so as to bring some honour to its Maker God. He is the supreme Lord and Ruler, and he ought to be revered and obeyed: He is all-wise and almighty, he ought to be feared and worshipped: He is in himself the most excellent of beings as well as merciful and kind to us, and the spring of all our present comforts and our future hopes; he ought therefore to be loved above all things, and to be addressed with prayer and praise: nor can it ever be said that a creature is under no obligation to love and obey, to fear and worship his Creator, or to render what is due to his fellow-creatures, even according to his utmost powers.

II. "This law is so far wrought into the very nature of man as a reasonable creature, that an awakened conscience will

the greatest part of mankind. 2. The written law was a more peculiar favour of God given to the Jewish nation; the natural law lies within the reach of all men whose consciences are not grossly blinded or hardened by sin. 3. The natural law contains nothing but moral precepts or rules of life to men as intelligent, sensible, and sociable creatures; the written law includes in it something ceremonial, that is, the seventh day sabbath, and other modes of expression peculiar to the Jewish state and people. But the grand requirements and the design of both these are the same, as appears in many scriptures, especially *Rom. ii. 14, 15.*

require obedience to it for ever." Wheresoever the reasoning powers of man are diligent and sincerely attentive to his most important concerns, he must acknowledge the great God demands our best obedience, our honour and our love, and he deserves it : Every conscience acting on reasonable principles must confess that truth and honesty ought to be practised towards our neighbour, and temperance and sobriety with regard to ourselves ; that we are bound to restrain our vicious appetites and passions within the rules of reason and our better powers ; that we must not be savage or cruel to others, nor must we abuse our understanding and our senses which God has given us for better purposes, and by drowning them in wine and strong liquors, or by any intemperance behave like the brutes that perish. As long as man is man, and reason is reason, so long will this law be a rule to mankind.

III. This law must be perpetual, for " it is suited to every state and circumstance of human nature, to every condition of the life of man, and to every dispensation of God : " And since it cannot be changed for a better law, it must be everlasting. It is suited to the state of man in innocence, and of man fallen from his happiness : It is suited to every tribe and nation of mankind : All are required to yield their utmost obedience to the commands of God. It began in paradise as soon as man was created, and it will never cease to oblige in this world or the other. Neither Jew nor Gentile, neither saint nor sinner on earth, nor Enoch, nor Elijah, nor the blessed spirits in heaven, nor the ghosts of the wicked under the punishments of hell, are released from their obligation to this law which requires them to love and honour God, and to be faithful and just to man : For if any persons whatsoever were released from the bond of this law, they would not be guilty of sin, nor do amiss in neglecting the practises of virtue and godliness.

IV. It appears yet further that this law is perpetual, because whatsoever other law God can prescribe, or man can be bound to obey, it is built upon the eternal obligation of this moral law. Every positive command of rites and ceremonies and sacrifices given to the patriarchs, or the Jews ; every command of faith in the Messiah, trust in the blood of Jesus and obedience to him in his exalted state ; every institution of the Old Testament and the New, circumcision and baptism, the feast of the passover and of the Lord's-supper, with all the forms of worship and duty towards God and man which ever were prescribed, receive their force and obligation from the moral law. It is this law which requires all men to believe whatsoever God shall reveal with proper evidence, either by the exercise of their own reason, or by his divine revelation : It is the moral law that requires our hearts

and hands to yield obedience to all the positive laws God has given to men: Some of those rites and ceremonies so far as we can discover, seem not to be of any great importance in themselves; but a wilful neglect of the least of them is a disobedience to the great God, and a violation of this law; and I think we may say that if this law were abolished no other could bind us: for it is one of the first and strongest requirements of this law, that a creature must obey his Maker in all things. And for this reason it was that our blessed Saviour who had no need to be washed from sin, yet submitted to baptism under the ministry of John his forerunner, even when John seemed to dissuade him from it; Mat. iii. 15. *Suffer it to be so now said he, for thus it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness, that is, to obey whatever God commands.*

V. I would add in the last place, that scripture asserts the perpetuity and everlasting obligation of the moral law; Luke xvi. 17. *it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for the least tittle of the law to fail; and our blessed Saviour declares; Mat. v. 17. that he came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it;* by which he cannot mean the Jewish ritual which was soon abolished, but he means eminently the moral law, for it is the precepts of that law he proceeds to explain. And it is in conformity to this doctrine, the apostle Paul makes use of this law to convince Jew and Gentile, and all mankind in all ages, that they are sinners and guilty before God, in the second and third chapters to the Romans. *By the law is the knowledge of sin,* whether the natural law of the heathens or the written laws of the Jews: All have broken this moral law of God, *every mouth is stopped and all the world lies guilty before God.*

I know that there are some contrary opinions rising up in the heart of man against this doctrine. Some have objected here, that since the fall of Adam no mere man is able perfectly to comply with the demands of it, for it requires universal obedience in thought word and action, and a perfect abstinence from every sin; but since no man is able to yield this obedience, it can never be supposed that a righteous and gracious God can continue to require it. To this I answer, *first,*

Answer I.—That man has not lost his natural power to obey this law; he is bound then as far as his natural powers will reach: I own his faculties are greatly corrupted by vicious inclinations or sinful propensities, which has been happily called by our divines a moral inability to fulfil the law, rather than a natural impossibility of it. But though the powers of man be vitiated, and his inclinations to evil are so strong that they will never be effectually subdued without divine grace, yet the great and holy God continues still to demand a perfection of obedience; he can-

not give an imperfect law, or a law that requires but an imperfect obedience to it. His title as the Creator and the God of nature, demands the best service that our natural powers can perform: Our understanding and will, our heart, and hand, and tongue, owe him their utmost obedience. Besides if the law did not continue to require our best and highest obedience, we should not be guilty of sin where we fall short of perfection; that is, if we loved God in part, if we serve him in part, though it was not *with all our mind, with all our soul, with all our heart, and with all our strength*, yet we should not be transgressors; but this I think is a very absurd supposition. I answer in the second place,

II. That the moral law may continue still to demand perfect obedience of all men, though since the fall they cannot perfectly fulfil it; for the grace of the gospel which is revealed in scripture and which runs through every dispensation since the fall of Adam, has not abated the demands of the law, though it has provided a relief for us under our failings. And though we do not fulfil what God requires in this law, yet he condescends in this gospel to pardon and to accept the humble, the sincere, the penitent sinner, on the account of the perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice of his own Son. It is granted indeed that all men who have been saved in the way of the gospel have yielded but a very imperfect and defective obedience to this law, yet still the law of God demands a perfection of holiness according to our utmost natural powers and capacities; the law demands that *we sin not at all*; but the gospel says, *If we sin we have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous, who is a propitiation for the sins of the world*; 1 John ii. 2*.

* There is also another objection against this doctrine which some raise from the words of scripture. Does not the apostle tell Timothy that *the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners* &c. 1 Tim. i. 9. But this is readily answered by considering what is the apostle's meaning here. It is only to shew that disobedient and ungodly men have need of particular and express laws or precepts, with threatenings and terrors annexed to them, in order to restrain them from iniquity; but the righteous man hath a sanctified nature, and an inward aversion within himself to all evil practices; and therefore though his conscience acknowledge him to be under the commands of this law, yet he does not so much need the express and public proclamation of it in order to secure him in the practice of duty.

It has been objected again that St. Paul confirms the christians and encourages them to holiness by telling them they *are become dead to the law, and they are delivered from the law, that being dead, wherein they were held*; Rom. vii. 4-6. To this I answer that the apostle allows that christians are delivered also from the law as to its cursing and condemning power by their pardon and justification in Christ Jesus; they are delivered also from the unhappy effect which the law may sometimes have upon the hearts of sinners to irritate awaken and provoke sin in them by lusting for things forbidden; but he does not allow even himself or the best of christians to be delivered or released from the commands of the law; for in this very place he is persuading christians to holiness or obedience to the precepts of

Having proved the perpetual obligation of the moral law, I proceed to the third part of my discourse, and that is briefly to represent the evil nature of sin. Our text informs us wherein it consists. *Sin is the transgression of the law.* When a creature transgresses any command that God hath given, he commits sin; but this chiefly refers to the moral law, because it is this law upon which all others are founded, and which gives force and authority to them all. Now there is a heinous evil contained in the nature of sin, if we consider the following characters of it.

I. "It is an affront to the authority and government of a wise and holy God, a God who has sovereign right to make laws for his creatures, and has formed all his commands and prohibitions according to infinite wisdom. Every act of wilful sin does as it were deny the sovereignty of God over us and the property that God has in us according to the expression of profane sinners; Ps. xii. 4. *Our lips are our own, who is Lord over us.* Wilful sin against God renounces his right to govern us and pours high contempt upon his wisdom and his righteous dominion; it denies his laws to be wise and righteous, as though they were not fit to be enjoined of God or practised of men.

II. "Sin carries in the nature of it high ingratitude to God our Creator, and a wicked abuse of that goodness which has bestowed upon us all our natural powers and talents, our limbs, our senses, and all our faculties of soul and body." Such a Creator, who has furnished his creatures with so many excellent faculties, may reasonably expect and demand of them a return of love and obedience, but to employ these very talents and powers for the dishonour of him who gave them is abominable in itself and highly provoking to that God who formed us.

III. Sin against the law of God "breaks in upon that wise and beautiful order which God has appointed to run through his whole creation." Prov. xvi. 4. *God has made all things for himself* and his own glory; but if we set up ourselves and our

the law; and in 1 Cor. ix. 21. he declares he is *not without law to God, but he is under the law*, as it is in the hands of Christ. Not an apostle nor an angel from heaven can release creatures from the demands of duty to their Creator, for while we are the work of the hand of God, and continue to be his creatures, this law never ceases to command perfect obedience to the God that made us, viz. *that we must love him with all our soul, and with all our strength.*

Nor do all the lessening expressions which the apostle uses in his epistle to the Hebrews against the law, give us a release from the moral law, for his design is only to shew the weakness and unprofitableness of the Jewish law or covenant of Sinai in comparison of the glorious state of the gospel, and the new covenant, when the moral law shall be written on the hearts of men. Heb. vii. 8. and viii. 10—13. This is the law that must stand for ever when the Jewish covenant vanishes and is abolished.

own honour as the chief end of all, and neglect to pay our duty and honours to the blessed God, we run counter to this divine appointment, and place ourselves in the room of God. He has ordained that his creatures should be mutually helpful to each other, and that man should love his neighbour: but if malice and envy and falsehood prevail in us, and if cruelty and injustice be practised toward our fellow-creatures, the proper and beautiful harmony between the intelligent creatures is broken, and it is a hateful thing in the eyes of God to see those rules of order violated, renounced and trampled upon, which he has established with so much wisdom and justice. Yet further God has ordained reason in man to govern his appetites and passions and all his inferior powers: But sin brings shameful confusion into our very frame, while it exalts the appetites and passions to reign over our reason, to break the rules and dictates of conscience, and transgress all the bounds of reasonable restraint. Sin working in the heart gives a loose to those licentious and unruly powers of nature, and spreads wild disorder through all the life.

IV. As it is the very nature of sin to bring disorder into the creation of God, so its natural consequences are pernicious to the sinful creature! Every act of willful sin tends to deface the moral image of God in the soul, and ruin the best part of his workmanship. It warps the mind aside from its chief good, and turns the heart away from God and all that is holy. Sin forms itself in the heart into an evil principle and habit of disobedience; one sin makes way for another, and increases the wretched trade of sinning. A frequent breaking the restraints of law and conscience, not only strengthens the inclination to vice, but it enfeebles the voice and power of conscience to withhold us from sin; it sets man a running in the paths of intemperance and malice, folly and madness down to perdition and misery: It many times brings painful diseases upon the body, and it is the spring of dreadful sorrows in the soul: All these are the natural consequences of sin.

V. In the last place I add, "sin provokes God to anger as he is the righteous Governor of the world; it brings guilt upon the creature, and exposes it to the punishments threatened by the broken law. When sin entered into the nature of man there was an end of all the friendly converse between him and his Maker. Man is afraid of God and God is angry with man. Sin throws him out of his Maker's former favour, and exposes him to the wrath and indignation of a righteous and almighty God who will vindicate the honours of his own law. He is a *God of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and he is angry with the wicked every day*; Ps. vii. 11. The great Creator and Governor of the universe

will not always bear to be affronted by such contemptible little worms as we are. *If we turn not from our evil ways he will whet his sword, he has bent his bow and made it ready, he hath prepared for him the instruments of death, and the soul of the sinner shall feel his arrows.* Verses 12, 13.

And yet further as God has set up conscience in the bosom of man to be a witness for God there, and to put man in mind of his Maker's law and his own duty, so his power called conscience is also ordained to be a judge in the heart of man in the room of God, and to sentence and condemn the guilty creature, and to begin the execution of this sentence with sharp anguish of heart, with inward reproaches and bitter terrors. This home-bred torment is a hell upon earth, and it often begins before the sinner dies.

Who sees not the dreadful evil of sin, in the wretched change that is introduced by it into the creation of God in the upper and lower worlds? It has turned angels of light into devils and spirits of darkness: It has thrown millions of glorious and unhappy beings out of their heavenly habitation: It made our first parents afraid of their Maker even in paradise, and turned them out of that happy garden. It brought many curses upon human nature, many sorrows and sufferings of every kind. It is sin that has run through every generation, and exposed us to all the evils that we feel, and to all that we fear, either from the hand of God, or our fellow-creatures. While man stood innocent and obedient, nothing could hurt him; but he broke the law of his God, and renounced his government, and the bonds of love between mankind are broken, and the brute creatures have broken their subjection to man in a great degree. He who was made to govern them is afraid of them, and has often been destroyed by them: Innocence had been a sure and everlasting defence. All the desolations that have been made by famine and pestilence and wars and earthquakes, and by the rage of wild-beasts from the beginning of the world, are owing to the sin of man.

But these thoughts bring me down to the fourth general head of my discourse, which is to consider the proper demerit of sin, or what is the punishment it deserves. This I shall represent under these four plain Propositions:—

Proposition I.—When God made man at first, he designed to continue him in life and happiness so long as man continued innocent and obedient to the law, and thereby maintained his allegiance to God his Maker." This is agreeable to the terms of the law represented in Rom. ii. 7. If he had patiently continued in well-doing, he should have enjoyed glory and honour, immortality and eternal life: And the blessed God seems to have pro-

mised it to man, at least by way of emblem and sacrament, in giving him the tree of life, and perhaps also by a more express promise of life, which through the designed brevity of the history, Moses might not mention.

II. "By a wilful and presumptuous transgression of the law, man violated his allegiance to God his Maker, and forfeited all good things that his Creator had given him, and the hope of all that he had promised. Every sin incurs a forfeiture of life itself, and all the present and future comforts of it, according to the express words of the threatening; Gen. ii. 17. *In the day that thou eatest of the forbidden fruit thou shalt surely die, that is, thou shalt become mortal and liable to death**. And the apostle tells us; Rom. vi. 23. *The wages of sin is death*. Nor is such a forfeiture of life and the blessings of it by sin, utterly unknown to the heathen world, as St. Paul declares; Rom. i. 32. *Who knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death*: And I think the very light of nature might find out this; for it would be strange indeed if God the Creator should be bound to continue life or any blessing to a creature which had broken his allegiance to his Maker, and by a wilful and presumptuous offence, had as it were renounced the very end and design for which he was made.

III. "This forfeiture of life and the blessings of it by sin, is an everlasting forfeiture." Every sin is usually and justly supposed to increase its demerit or desert of punishment, according to the dignity of the person whose law is broken. Sin against a father or a prince carries greater guilt in it, than that which is committed against a neighbour or a servant: And in this way of argument, sin against God appears to have a sort of infinite evil in it, because it is committed against the infinite Majesty of heaven: And on this account every sin deserves a sort of infinite or everlasting punishment, that is, an everlasting loss of life and all the blessings of it, which are eternally forfeited thereby. And perhaps this is the lowest punishment that ever is inflicted

* Death in its original, and most proper and natural sense, signifies the loss of life, and together with it the loss of all its blessings and comforts. This is the common if not the universal sense of the word in the writings of Moses: And in the sanction of a law it is reasonable to suppose the word is used in its most natural and proper sense. Death in scripture is used sometimes for the loss of privileges, blessings and comforts, even where life remains: In this sense it signifies the soul's loss of the image of God, of holiness and peace: This is called spiritual death. Thus the Ephesians are said to be dead in trespasses and sins; Eph. ii. 1. Sometimes death signifies the loss of blessings in the world to come, together with positive sorrows and sufferings both in soul and body for ever. So in Rom. viii. 13. *If ye live after the flesh ye shall die*; And Job vi. 50. *This is the bread which came down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die*. In Rev. xxi. 8. this is called the second death. Now death in all these senses is either the natural consequent of sin, or it is the legal punishment of it, according to its several aggravations, as will appear afterwards.

for the lowest degree of sin or guilt, where the law of God is suffered to take its proper course in executing the penalty; for the mere loss of life is a less punishment than the continuance of it in any degree of misery.

IV. "There is scarce any actual, that is, wilful sin, but carries with it some particular aggravations, and these deserve such further positive punishments as the wisdom and justice of God shall see reason to inflict. Hence arises the penal continuance in life with the loss of all the comforts of it, that is the pains and sorrows of the future state. God is the righteous Governor of the world, his justice weighs in the nicest balances every command of his own law, and every grain of the sinners' offences, with all their circumstances of guilt and aggravation; and strict justice distributes sorrows in proportion to sins: This appears in the punishment of Babylon; Rev. xviii. 6. *God hath remembered the iniquities of Babylon, and rewarded her as she rewarded his saints: Double vengeance unto her, according to her double malice and persecution: How much she hath glorified herself and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her.* And this proportion of sorrow to sin will terribly appear in the last judgment and the final punishment of sinners in the world to come*. It is time now to conclude this discourse with some few reflections.

Reflection I.—Is the law of God in perpetual force, and is

† This is usually called eternal death, or the punishment of hell.

* Now from the desert of sin and the punishment due to it being set in this light, I would humbly enquire, whether we may not better learn the meaning of the apostle; Rom. vi. 12—14, when he says, *Death entered into the world by sin, and passes upon all men, for that all have sinned*; that is, sin is imputed to all, and death reigns over them, even over those that have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, which is generally interpreted concerning infants, who have committed no actual personal sin as Adam did: Yet here is a forfeiture of life and its blessings derived to the children of Adam, and they come under a sentence of death by original imputed sin, which we may suppose to be the lowest kind of guilt. But in Rom. ii. 8, 9. *Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish are denounced against every soul of man that doth evil, that is, that doth commit wilful actual sin, because there are special aggravations, some of a greater and some of a lesser kind, that belong to all actual iniquities.*

Whether therefore sin has any particular aggravation attending it or no, there is an everlasting forfeiture of life incurred by it, and an eternal loss of the blessings of it; and whatsoever further aggravations the sin carries in it, so much further pain or anguish does it deserve in body, or in mind, or in both; that is, it requires so much further continuance in life and being, as to sustain that degree of anguish and sorrow which is due to the sinner; and therefore the life of a wicked soul is continued in sorrows, in the other world after the death of the body as a punishment for sin; and therefore also at the last day shall be raised again, that all wilful and impenitent sinners may sustain punishments according to the various dispensations of God under which they have lived; and the several aggravations of their sins; and all these things shall be perfectly adjusted in the wisdom and righteousness of God, *who is the Judge of the whole earth, and always does what is right*; Gen. xviii. 25.

every transgression of it so heinous an evil? Then let "us take a survey how wretched and deplorable is the state of mankind by nature. We have all broken the law of our God, which we have been all bound to obey; we are still bound to obey it and are still breakers of it. Our daily thoughts, our words and our deeds sufficiently shew us that we are transgressors, and there is in our nature a perpetual propensity to transgress. Where is the mortal that has lived according to the purity and perfection of this law? *There is none righteous; no, not one;* Rom. iii. 10, 12. Where is the son, or daughter of Adam, that is not pronounced guilty and condemned by it? *Every mouth is stopped, and all the world is guilty before God.* What a miserable region is this earth, overspread with sinful inhabitants, criminal creatures, who are all transgressors against the law of the God that made them, and by the sentence of that law stand condemned to death, considered in their natural state?

II. Is the moral law of such constant obligation, and is death the due recompence of every transgression of it; "Then it is necessary for ministers to preach this law, and it is necessary for hearers to learn it." We should all know our duty and our danger. Not the best of christians are arrived at a dispensation above the knowledge and the practice of this law. There is no honour done to the gospel by explaining it in such a manner as to release us from the duties of the moral law; for it is one great design of the gospel to restore us again to a cheerful and regular obedience to it. To release christians from the precepts of the law is to make *Christ the minister of sin, and to turn the grace of our God into wantonness*, which the apostles Paul and Jude speak of with detestation and abhorrence; Gal. ii. 17. Jude verse 4. To pretend that obedience to the moral law is needless for christians who believe the gospel, is to deny and destroy, as much as in us lies, the great end for which Christ and the gospel came into the world; which is to *redeem us from all iniquity—that we might be zealous of good works;* Tit. ii. 14. To deliver us from the curse of the law, and the condemnation of it, that we might love the precepts of the law, and practise them with delight and newness of heart.

It is not therefore our preaching of the law to promote the gospel, that deserves the reproach of a legal sermon; but to preach the law instead of the gospel, or to preach the gospel as a law of works. Christ and St. Paul well understood the gospel, and yet they both preached the law in the commands and terrors of it. We must learn the law if we would be acquainted with our own guilt and danger, or if we would know our duty and practise religion and virtue. *By the law is the knowledge of sin,* and by the law our feet are guided into the paths of righteous-

ness. It is in the glass of the law of God that we see the sinfulness of our hearts and lives : It discovers every blot in our soul and every blemish in our conversation : It lays us under guilt it makes us know our misery, it humbles us to the dust before God, and is made use of by the blessed Spirit to drive us out of ourselves, and all our own pretences to righteousness, that we may seek the appointed salvation of Jesus, and fly to our better hope.

III. " What a holy regard and jealousy has God shewn for the honour of his everlasting law, and what a sacred indignation has he manifested against sin, when he sent his own Son to obey this law, and to suffer for our disobedience to it ?" Not the Son of God himself when he came into flesh and blood was exempt from the duties of this law, and he magnified it and made honourable by his practice of it in perfection : And when so glorious and divine a person condescended to become a sacrifice for our transgressions against this law, he gave the highest instance of his own veneration for it as well as of the just resentment of God his Father against every sin. The great and glorious God the Governor of the world, thought it more necessary and becoming his Majesty that the Son of his love should be put to a painful and shameful death to make a propitiation for our sins against the law, than that any one transgression should be pardoned without an atonement. These awful sentiments should be an everlasting caution to us against entertaining slight thoughts of the evil of sin. It is no trifling matter to indulge the least sin, when it awakens the resentment and wrath of the eternal God. *Fools are they indeed that make a mock of sin* ; Prov. xiv. 9. when the Son of God must die, before it could be pardoned.

IV. " How glorious is the wisdom and the mercy of the gospel, which does honour to the law in every respect, which prepares a honourable atonement and pardon for guilty rebels who have broken this everlasting law, and provides grace and power to renew our nature according to the demands of it." It not only pardons returning transgressors, but it promises to write this law in the hearts of men, that it may be better observed and obeyed. A double and complete salvation. Read the language of the gospel and rejoice in it ; Heb. viii. 10. *This is the covenant, saith the Lord, that I will make with men ; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.* And it is repeated in Heb. x. 16, 17. The law of God requires universal and everlasting obedience, and it is an unspeakable blessing to have this obedience made natural and easy by sanctifying grace.

V. " Happy is the world above, where such natural an

such easy obedience is for ever paid to this law of God without the least transgression." The moral law carries all its demands up to that blessed country, and whatsoever other laws are in force here, it is this eternal law that gives authority to them all, and every inhabitant answers all the demands of it by a free and cheerful obedience. Happy world indeed, where so pure and so perfect a law of the Creator cannot charge one creature with transgression and guilt! A world without sorrow and without sin! A strange unknown blessedness to creatures such as we, who were born and brought up in this dark region of sins and sorrows! It is the office of the law here on earth to give us the knowledge of sin; but there it shall lose this office, it shall convince us of sin no more; for it shall dwell in us, to discover the beauty of holiness, and to make us for ever holy, O when will that day come, that we shall be sanctified in this complete degree? When shall that blessed state commence, and the law be wrought into our nature with such power, and be practised with such perfection, that it will be able to bring no charge of sin against us either in thought, word or deed for ever? While we groan here, being burdened under the remains of corruption, while the law of God which works in our consciences gives us only a severe reproof and heart-ache, let us look forward with hope and desire toward that state, where our hearts shall be moulded into the very form of this law by the efficacy of divine grace, where sin shall be banished from all the powers of our souls, and pains, and sorrows, and death, and all the bitter fruits of sin, shall be done away, and shall be found no more for ever. *Amen.*

SERMON L.

The Lord's-day, or Christian Sabbath.

GEN. ii: 3.—And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work, which God created and made.

IN the history of the creation of the world and the beginning of mankind, Moses gives us an account of the appointment of a sabbath, or one day in seven that should be sanctified or separated from the common affairs of this life, devoted to the purposes of religion, and receive a peculiar blessing from God. I think it cannot reasonably be supposed, as some writers have done, that the sacred historian would take such special notice in this place of a certain day, which was not appointed at that time, but which should be appointed and sanctified and blessed among the Jews two thousand four hundred years afterwards. It is probable that the most ancient patriarchs did, according to this early appointment observe it as a day of rest from labour and of the worship of God, their Creator. And it is very evident that if it were lost among the nations, it was renewed again by Moses to the people of Israel, with many particular sanctions: and there is still one day in seven continues in the New Testament to be a day of christian worship, observed by the apostles and first disciples. So that upon the whole survey of the dispensations of God to men, as they are recorded in the bible, "it seems highly probable, that there is some sabbath or one day in seven divinely appointed both for the rest of man and the worship of God, which has run through all dispensations both before and after Moses, and which must remain to the end of the world."

It is impossible, in the compass of one short sermon, to run through all the reasonings* that are necessary to confirm this doctrine; yet that I may give some short hints toward the proof of a sabbath running through all ages, I desire you will consider the following particulars:

1. "What was the time when the first appointment of a sabbath was given to men, and who were the persons to whom

* For these reasonings see "The Holiness of Times, Places and Persons under the Jewish and Christian Dispensation Considered and Compared."

was given?" Was it not in paradise as soon as ever man was created that God claimed one day in seven for his own worship, as well as gave it unto Adam for his rest and release from labour in the garden of Eden; Now there is at least as much reason and as much need for all the sons of Adam in all ages and nations, in their feeble and sinful state, to have a day appointed for their own rest and for the worship of their God, as there was for Adam himself in paradise and in a state of innocence; for his body was then in perfection of health and vigour, and his mind more inclined to remember God and worship him.

2. "Consider the original reason that is given for one day in seven to be sanctified," and this seems to confirm the perpetuity of it. God rested on the seventh day from his work of creation: The sabbath was given to man to put him in mind of the creation of the world by the true God in six days, and to do honour to God the Creator. But all mankind in all ages, as well as Adam their Father, should preserve this truth in their remembrance: And the continual return of a seventh day of rest is an everlasting memorial of it, and gives opportunities continually for paying homage to that Almighty Being that made us.

3. "Consider the place which this command of the sabbath bears in the law of God, when it was renewed and enjoined to the nation of Israel: This doth in the opinion of most divines add considerable weight to this argument. It is one of the commands of the moral law, that was pronounced by the mouth of God himself on Sinai, with much glory and terror. It stands amongst those laws in Exodus xx. 1—17. which are conceived to be moral and perpetual, except in some small limitations and accommodations to the Jewish state. *Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work, but the seventh is the sabbath of the Lord thy God, &c.* It was written with the rest in the two tables of stone, which perhaps in that typical dispensation might denote perpetuity, and that it must last like a rock for ever. It was written by the finger of God himself, which gives a peculiar honour to it, and it was laid up in the ark of the covenant on which God dwelt in a bright cloud, or a blaze of glory behind the cloud; and thus it was put under God's own eye and care, together with those laws which are of perpetual obligation. It is granted indeed that in the books of Moses there are some peculiar rigours and ceremonies, and severe prohibitions of every earthly work under capital penalties added to the sabbath and enjoined to the Jews, but these do not belong to the sabbath considered in itself, but are properly the ceremonial and Jewish appendages of it.

4. When the apostles by divine appointment had abolished all the Jewish sabbaths, and all those ceremonies and peculiar austerities which belonged to the observation of the seventh day in the Jewish state; Gal. iv. 9—11. and Col. ii. 16, 17. yet “they still practised the observation of one day in seven, even the first day of the week, for christian worship; and they taught it to the churches” It was on the first day when the disciples met together with the doors shut for fear of the Jews, that the Saviour arose and appeared to them more than once; John xx. 19—23. and 26—30. It was on this day that pentecost fell out on that year, when the Spirit was poured down upon the disciples, as learned men assure us by their calculations, and then were three thousand converted at Peter’s sermon; Acts ii. 1—4, 41. It was on the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread at Troas, and Paul preached to them; Acts xx. 7. It is on this day that St. Paul gives orders for a collection for the saints, or at least that every one should then lay by him in store for this purpose, in 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. This same order he gave also to the churches of Galatia. Thus the collection for the poor, which was made in the Jewish synagogues on the sabbath, seems to be transferred to the first day of the week among christians.

Let it be further added, that the religious appointment and observation of the first day of the week was so universal and so well known, that it acquired a honourable title in early times, and was called the Lord’s-day; Rev. i. 10. even as the breaking of bread and the drinking of wine was called the Lord’s-supper, both having a reference to the appointment and honour of our blessed Saviour; 1 Cor. xi. 20—23. This practice also was continued by all those who professed the christian religion in the primitive times. And they were known and distinguished from the heathens as well as from the Jews by this particular character of observing the Lord’s-day. If we take all these things together, they give us a great deal of reason to infer, that our blessed Saviour himself appointed the celebration of this day, and gave the apostles notice of it among the rest of those things which he taught them in the forty days after his resurrection, when he appeared to them, conversed with them, and instructed them in things that pertained to the kingdom of God, or the institution or support of his visible church;—Acts i. 3.

5. “Consider the reasonableness and the necessity of such an appointment in order to keep up religion in the world, as well as to give rest to the animal bodies of men and beasts. This is another proof of the morality or perpetuity of it. The seasons of worship which men would have chosen, and even of natural

at which some men would have allowed either to themselves or their servants, probably would have been short and few enough, God had not always devoted one day in seven to these purposes. It is evident in common experience and by observation made upon persons and churches and nations, that where no sabbath is observed, where one day in seven is not separated to God by rest from the usual labours of life and a dedication to his service, religion is in a very decaying state, and in great danger of being lost. As it is a common confession of persons who fall into the vilest crimes and are executed by the public justice of a magistrate, that their disregard of the sabbath was the beginning of their guilt and ruin, and led the way to all iniquity; a careful observation of one day in seven for religious purposes has been the great spring and support of virtue and piety amongst mankind, and the constant guardian of it in its purity and power.

Now if all these considerations put together will but go so far as to make it highly probable that one day in seven has been always the proportion of time which God has appointed for a sabbath, that is, for rest from labour and divine worship, this probability as to the time and manner of a duty should go for evidence, where no further evidence can be procured, and here the duty itself is clear and certain: And since some rest from labour, and some seasons for worship are necessary, we cannot do a more reasonable thing than to separate that proportion of time which the wisdom of God has certainly separated in some of his dispensations to men, and most probably in all of them. Before we proceed, it will be necessary to answer a few enquiries.

Question I. "Why was the first day of the seven appointed for christian worship rather than any of the others?"

Answer. When God rested from his work of creation he appointed the seventh day for the ancient sabbath, to keep in mind the Creator of the world and his work; and so when Christ rested from his works of redemption, he appointed the first day, even the day in which he arose from the grave, as most proper to keep the great work of our redemption in memory. That the first day of the week was observed by the apostles and first christians in honour of the resurrection of Christ, and the finishing of their redemption, is evident from several texts of scripture, and many plain expressions in the history of the primitive church*.

* There have been some very great and learned men who suppose that the apostle Paul in the fourth chapter to the Hebrews builds a christian sabbath on this principle. See verse 4. *He spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise,*

I might add here also, that as the redemption or rest from Egyptian bondage given them by God and Moses is mentioned in Deut. v. 15. as one reason of the Jewish sabbath, so our greater redemption by Christ or rest from the bondage of sin and satan being on this day completed, seems by parallel reasoning to be a very proper argument for observing the christian sabbath. Besides, it is worthy of our notice that by chusing the first day of the seven for a sabbath after the seventh day was abolished, there remains still one day in seven to perpetuate the memory of the creation, and it is the first day of the seven to perpetuate the memory of the work of redemption. Thus our Lord's-day includes both.

Question II. "But what need is there of a whole day devoted to this purpose under the New Testament? Is it not enough to perform christian worship in public assemblies, and thereby answer the purposes of the day, without observing that day as a sabbath, or day of rest?"

I answer, It is too evident an observation, that unless the whole day be separated from the business and pleasures of this life, the hours and minutes of worship will for the most part be but poorly improved, and become much less profitable to our spiritual interest. It is hardly possible to attain the best ends of preaching and hearing, praying and praising, administering and receiving of the Lord's-supper, if we come into the sanctuary with our heads and hearts full of the affairs of this life, and all our earthly cares buzzing about our souls. And how much less good will a sermon do us, if, as soon as the hour of worship is ended, we run immediately from God, and plunge ourselves into worldly affairs, without giving our thoughts leisure and leave to reflect on what we have heard? And much worse would it be still for religion if we spent the rest of the day in recreations and sports, for these carnalize the spirit and estrange it from God and things heavenly much more than the common labours of life.

Alas! how difficult a matter do we find it to disengage our thoughts from this world when we come into the presence of God,

And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. Verse 7. Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To-day if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts. For if Jesus, that is Joshua, had given them rest, that is, if he had given them all that complete rest in the land of Canaan which was typified by the Jewish sabbath, then he would not afterwards have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest, or "sabbatism," as the Greek word is, there remaineth the keeping of a sabbath to the people of God; for he that is entered into his rest, which they refer to Jesus Christ in the work of redemption, he hath also ceased, or rested from his own works as God did from his. See Doctor Owen, "in his Treatise of the Sabbath." Thus the Son of God, the Redeemer, is supposed to have appointed a day or sabbath to celebrate his rest from his labours and sufferings, as God, the Father, the Creator, did, when he rested from his works.

even though we have a day appointed for this purpose? How hard it is to shake off all the dust of this earth when we would arise to God in devotion? And though we have bid farewell to our secular concerns the night before, and have had a long interval of sleep to divide our thoughts from this vain and busy life, yet how do the weighty cares of it hang continually upon our spirits, or the trifles and amusements of it hover and play about our souls, and divert our hearts from the exercise of godliness! And let us think with ourselves, how much harder it would be to fulfil the duties of the sanctuary with any good success, to improve public worship to our further acquaintance with God and things heavenly, to our greater delight in him, our mortification of sin and our growth in holiness, if there were no time devoted to religion but only that hour or two while we are at church? How would the words of the preacher run off from our souls, like a stream of oil gliding over a marble, if there were no recollection to fix it in our memory? How easily would Satan pluck up the good seed that was sown in the heart, if we join to assist him by giving a loose immediately to the cares or delights of this life, and call them to break in upon us when the sermon is ended? We may reasonably conclude, if Christ appointed the first day of the week for a season of the worship of God, he appointed it also to be a season of rest from the cares and labours of this life, that this worship might be better performed, and the great ends of it best secured.

Question III. "When must the christian begin his sabbath, or the Lord's-day, how must it be spent, and when must it end?" Here I answer,

Answer. That whatsoever is the usual and customary beginning and ending of the days of common labour and business in the nation where we live, such should be the beginning and ending of the Lord's day, or day of rest. The one day of rest answers to the six days of labour in the words of the fourth command, and must begin and end like them.

The Jews began their day at the evening or setting sun, and it ended the next evening. The nations of Europe where we dwell begin and end the day at twelve o'clock at midnight. But as the design of rest and worship on the Lord's-day is to bear a proportion of one in seven to the business and labours of life on the other six days, we may reasonably suppose that the command never requires any thing more, than that the same hours be spent at home or abroad, in public or private, for the general purposes of religion upon the Lord's-day, which are spent in the common affairs of life on other days; and consequently that the time which is devoted to eating and sleeping, and the necessities of nature and short intervals of refreshment on other days, may be em-

ployed to the same purposes on this day also. Public worship seems to be the chief design of the day; but when we are not engaged in public worship, we need not be, and indeed we ought not to be idle, but we should employ ourselves, as far as health and other circumstances will allow, in reading or hearing divine things at home, in prayer, singing psalms, alone or in families, in meditation, in holy conferences, or any of those actions which have a more direct and immediate tendency to the knowledge and worship of God, to the improvement of religion and virtue, and to our preparation for the everlasting rest and worship of heaven.

Question IV. "May we not labour or work on the Lord's-day to preserve ourselves from imminent dangers or threatening calamities, or to do good to the miserable or to the helpless?" &c. I answer,

Answer. That works of necessity and of mercy were not excluded on this day, even under the rigours of Judaism, where rest seems to be the primary or most obvious design of the sabbath; and much less should those necessary and merciful works be excluded in the christian dispensation, where the chief design is not bodily rest but worship; such works, I mean, as leading cattle to drink, giving them fodder, sailing a ship, quenching fire, stopping inundations of water, defending a town or city that is invaded by enemies, resisting an assault, raising cattle out of pit whereinto they are fallen, relieving the distressed, nursing the sick, and taking care of children. In short, there is nothing of this kind forbidden, even though it may, in a great measure, sometimes hinder the proper work of the day, which is religion and worship; for God *will have mercy and not sacrifice*: *Mat. xii. 1—7. Jesus healed the sick on the sabbath, verses 10—13; and his disciples rubbed out the corn from the ears when they were hungry; Mark ii. 23—28. and though the Pharisees reprove them, yet the Lord pronounced them blameless. The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath; Luke vi. 1—11. John v. 8, 9. Even the infirm man who was healed was ordered by our Saviour to take up his bed and walk, verses 10—12. as proof of his cure. The Son of God is the Lord of the sabbath; Mark ii. 27, 28. and he still more abates the severities of it when the Jewish dispensation is finished.*

Under the New Testament we have no such strict and severe prohibitions of every care and labour in the common returns of the Lord's-day, where they do not interfere with the primary design of it, that is, the worship of God and our best improvement thereby. As I would not bind new burdens on the servants of Christ, so neither would I release what Christ has bound. And therefore I say, where the necessary labours of a few in some

part of the Lord's-day, by providing food and other conveniences of life, render many more persons capable of spending the day in religion, I cannot find that the New Testament forbids it. I say, in some part of the Lord's day, for I think none ought to be so constantly employed in secular affairs as to exclude the whole day from its proper business, that is, religion or devotion, unless in the cases of necessity before mentioned. I think it may be maintained in general, that whatsoever tends to destroy or nullify the great designs of religious worship should be omitted on the Lord's-day; so some lesser labours which tend to make the performances of religion more easy, cheerful and regular to ourselves and to great numbers of others, may safely be performed on this day without a sinful violation of it. But wheresoever the conscience is doubtful, it is best to chuse the safer side. *Happy is he that condemneth not himself in what he alloweth; Rom. xiv. 22.*

And I would take leave to add here also, that as it is a day of sacred rest and refreshment, we are not called to draw out the duties of worship to such unreasonable and tiresome lengths, nor to be so incessant and uninterrupted in works of religion on this day, as would overmuch fatigue the spirits, and overpress animal nature. This does not tend to the edification of men, or the honour of God; but it has a certain and evident tendency to prejudice younger persons against the observation of the Lord's-day, if we render the service of it too irksome and tedious. According as our constitution is more or less healthy, or our circumstances in the world, as servants or masters, as poor or rich, call us more or less to necessary works on this day, so we are to employ ourselves in the affairs of religion at such hours, and with such intervals of release and refreshment, as that the sabbath of the Lord may be a pleasure to us, and may not over tire feeble nature instead of giving it rest. We should all employ this day to the designs and ends appointed, to the honour of God and our risen Saviour, not with Jewish rigours and superstitious abstinences, not in indulgences of the flesh and lazy idleness, not in sports and pastime, but with christian wisdom improve our time for religious purposes according to our capacities and stations, knowing that we are in a state of gospel liberty, freed from a state and spirit of bondage, and rejoicing in the Lord our Deliverer and Saviour.

This leads me to some practical exhortations.

I. "Delight in the Lord's-day as a high privilege bestowed upon you, make it the matter of your holy joy." Give thanks to God your Creator, who has not suffered you to wear out all your time in the drudgeries of this world, and the cares and toils of a mortal state, but has appointed one day in seven for your

release from the business of earth, and your employment in the work of heaven. Give thanks to Jesus your Redeemer, who on this day finished the work of your redemption, and arose from the dead : and as those which are *risen with Christ set your affections on the things that are above, where Christ is at the right-hand of God* ; Col. iii. 1, 2. *This is the day which the Lord has made, we will be glad and rejoice therein* ; Ps. cxviii. 24. Bless his holy name that he has appointed christians to assemble themselves together for divine and heavenly purposes on this day, and be not the last in these assemblies, because if you are frequently so, it looks as if you had no mind to attend upon them at all.

Give thanks again to God the Creator and Governor of the world, who has fixed your birth and habitation in a land wherein the Lord's-day is observed, and wherein there are laws to guard the observance of it ; so that you are not disturbed and hindered by the sons of wickedness in the practices of religion on this day. This is a distinguishing favour which you enjoy above the christians of the primitive ages who dwelt under heathen princes, where they had much ado to observe any sabbath, or to employ the Lord's-day in religious practices, while the whole nation around them was engaged, either in the busy affairs of this mortal life, or in vile idolatry and superstition.

Do not say, concerning the duties of worship on this day as the Jewish hypocrites did in the days of the prophets Amos and Malachi, *Behold, what a weariness is it? and when will the sabbath be gone, that we may set forth wheat and sell corn* ; Mal. i. 13. Amos viii. 5. Do not so much enquire, what earthly business may I do on this day without sin, as what is there I can omit till to-morrow? What worldly business can I be excused from doing on God's holy day? This will discover a truly religious temper indeed, and shew that you delight in the things of God more than in things carnal or earthly.

II. " Dispose of your earthly affairs wisely in the foregoing week, so that, if possible you may not have the Lord's-day, which is a day of rest and worship, invaded and intrenched upon by the cares and business of this world." Endeavour to quit yourselves of them so early the foregoing evening, that they may not cut short your hours of sleep that night, and thereby render you listless and drowsy upon the day appointed for worship. There is a great deal of christian prudence and discretion to be seen in such a disposal of our worldly businesses, as may give us full leisure for God and heavenly things upon the Lord's-day ; that when our thoughts are rising up to our risen and ascended Saviour, we may not feel the cares of life hang about them like

so many clogs and chains to drag us downwards, and divide our hearts from God and our Saviour again.

III. " Think of the promises which are made to those who with a religious care serve and worship God upon his appointed day. There are some very gracious words of this kind spoken to the Jews, and may with equal justice be applied to those who observe the day of God's appointed rest, for the spiritual purposes of it under every dispensation; Is. lvi. 1—7. *Thus saith the Lord, keep ye judgment and do justice, for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed; which words have a plain reference to the gospel state. Blessed is the man—that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it;—the sons of the stranger who join themselves to the Lord to serve him and to love his name, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant, I will bring them to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their sacrifices shall be accepted upon my altar: I will give them in my house, and within my walls, a place and a name better than that of sons and daughters.* And in lviii. chapter of the same prophecy, and verses 13, 14. *If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thy own ways, nor finding thy own pleasure, nor speaking thy own words, then shall thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.* And there has been a multitude of instances even under the gospel, wherein the blessings of the upper and the lower world have been plentifully poured in upon those who have observed the day of the Lord, and spent it to the sacred purposes for which it was designed. Their basket and their store has been sensibly enlarged and increased by a divine blessing, and their souls have received much of the dew of heaven, have brought forth abundant fruits of holiness, and been fitted in an eminent degree for the business and blessedness of the upper world. Our famous English judge, Sir Matthew Hale, has left it upon record as his own experience.

IV. " Whatsoever spiritual advantages, or improvements you obtain on God's own day, take care that you do not lose them again amidst the labours or the pleasures of the following week. 2 John 8. *Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which ye have wrought,* that is, that ministers may not lose their labours in preaching, nor the disciples lose theirs in hearing. Treasure up something on every christian sabbath that may add to your spiritual riches, your knowledge, your faith, your zeal, your hope. It is a day appointed for the enriching of your souls: let not the cares of the world bury those treasures, or rob you of

them. Take large steps towards the heavenly world on that day, and see that you be not drawn back again by the allurements or the toils of this mortal state. Maintain that savour and relish of divine things, that holy nearness to God and heaven, as far as possible amidst the business of life, which you have gained amidst the ordinances of the sanctuary. Thus you will have a sort of sanctification spread over all your earthly affairs, and you will walk with God in them all.

V. "Take notice what relish and satisfaction you find in the duties or services of the Lord's-day, and let that be a test whereby you may judge of the sanctification of your souls, and your preparation for heaven." I grant those who are fatigued and overpressed with the labours of this life, may be well pleased with a day of rest from labour, from mere principles of nature, and the desire of ease or idleness: But do they love the work of a Lord's-day? Do they delight in christian worship? Do they rejoice to remember a risen Saviour? Do they take pleasure in the remembrance of God in his glorious works of creation and redemption, and converse with him with a holy satisfaction in prayer, in praise and other religious exercises? Let us enquire, my friends, how it stands with us in this respect? Are we glad of a day of rest and release from the business of this life, that we may be more at leisure for God? Or could we be well enough pleased if there were no sabbaths? Are the ordinances of worship our delight? Do we take pleasure in devotion and practical godliness? Do the things of inward religion relish well with us? Are they our pleasure and our joy?

What shall we do in heaven if we are not possessed of this temper, if our spirits are neither suited to the blessedness nor business of it, and if this world with the cares and pleasures of it be our chief delight? And how can we expect to be ever fit for heaven, which is a state of everlasting separation from the businesses of this world, and the perpetual enjoyment of God, and Jesus the Saviour, if we do not make some advances towards this temper on every Lord's day that returns, which separates us from the world, and is designed to bring us toward God?

In the last place, I would add, "Let every Lord'-day, every christian sabbath, lead your meditations, your faith and hope onward to the eternal rest in heaven, and the glorious worship of that world." Amidst all the fatigues and cares of this life, amidst all the interruptions you feel in your devotions here, and the inroads that are made upon your religious employments and joys, even on God's own day, yet still rejoice in the view and hope of that state where you shall find everlasting rest, a sabbath which never ends, and be for ever employed in divine exercises without the weariness of flesh or spirit. Alas! how soon are our souls

before you in this plain easy method, as I think they may be derived from scripture.

I. I shall consider what this ordinance of baptism is, and what it doth imply or signify.—II. Who are the persons to whom it is to be administered.—III. In what manner this ceremony is to be performed.—IV. What practical inferences or exhortations may be drawn from this subject.

First, “What is baptism, and what is implied in it, or intended by it?” the ordinance itself, that is christian baptism, is the washing a person with water *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. When it was introduced by John the Baptist it was but imperfect, and therefore it was repeated in the name of Christ to the Ephesians, who had received the baptism of John before; Acts xix. 3—5. And even as our Lord himself practised it in the days of his personal ministry, it did not seem to be drawn out into its complete form: John baptized his disciples, pointing their faith to Jesus who should come after him: Jesus might possibly baptize into his own name as a great prophet, but not under the character of the Messiah, since he kept that point very much concealed from his common followers or disciples in his life time. However, all that was done both under the ministry of Christ and of John the Baptist, seem to be continued and included in this most perfect form of baptism which our Lord appointed to his apostles after his resurrection from the dead, and just before his ascent to heaven. Whatsoever I find therefore in the baptism of John as well as of Christ himself or his apostles, I may reasonably presume are contained also in the outward form, and in the spiritual signification of christian baptism.

Let us consider now, “What doth this baptism, this washing with water, mean and imply in a spiritual sense.” And under most of the following particulars, I shall endeavour to shew what is the use of the sacred names of Father, Son and Spirit in this ordinance.

1. “Christian baptism implies a humble acknowledgment of some defilement; otherwise there would be no need of washing.” Sin is often represented in scripture as a matter of uncleanness which pollutes the soul, and this it doth two ways. *First*, The principle of sin within us defaces the image of God which was stamped on man in his first creation, and thereby it renders us unfit for the presence of God and communion with him as he is a God of spotless holiness: And, *Secondly*, The guilt of our actual sins exposes us to his punishing justice on account of the breach of his law, for every sin is a transgression of the law of God, and deserves death. Whosoever therefore is baptized, doth profess and declare that he is a defiled creature, a

sinner ; that he is guilty in the sight of God, and lies exposed to his anger, that he is unfit to converse with him or to stand before him. So the Jews who attended on the ministry of John ; Mat. iii. 6. *were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins ;* and therefore they came to the water seeking to be purified. The foundation of our hope and salvation is laid in the acknowledgment of our misery. This acknowledgment is eminently made to God the Father as sustaining the character of supreme Governor of the world whom we have offended by sin.

II. "Baptism implies a belief of the blessed provision which God hath made in his gospel for the purification of our souls from sin and all its defilements."

I. "He provided for the removal of the guilt of sin ;" for he sent his own Son Jesus Christ to take flesh and blood upon him that he might die to make atonement for the sins of men, and that God without dishonour to his governing justice might pardon repenting sinners. This is sometimes called in scripture, *washing away our sins by the blood of Christ ;* 1 John i. 7. Rev. i. 5. And for this reason the blood of Christ is called the *blood of sprinkling ;* Heb. xii. 24. Now this is particularly applied to baptism ; Acts xxii. 16. *Ananias said to Paul, arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord Jesus.* Therefore baptism is called *the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins ;* Mark i. 4.

2. "God hath also provided for the removal of the principle of sin, which defiles the soul of man by the persuasive arguments of his gospel which was revealed by the spirit of God, and by the powerful operations of this Spirit on his heart." It is the Spirit of God who is appointed to work on the dark and sinful mind of man, to change his corrupt nature, enlighten his mind, and give him a new bent and bias toward holiness. This is called *renewing us by his Spirit, regenerating us, or causing us to be born again by the Spirit, giving us a new heart and a new spirit, sprinkling clean water upon us, and making us clean, and pouring out his Spirit upon men and their seed ;* John iii. 3—6. Ezek. xxxvi. 35. Is. xlv. 3. This also is in scripture applied to the ordinance of baptism, and therefore we are said to *be born of water and of the Spirit ;* John iii. 5. And the *washing of regeneration* is explained by *the renewing of the Holy Ghost which he shed on us abundantly ;* Tit. iii. 5, 6.

But here I would stay to observe, that though both the ceremonies of the gospel, baptism and the Lord's-supper, do in some sort represent both these methods of purification from sin, that is by the atoning blood of Christ and by his sanctifying Spirit ; yet the Lord's-supper more expressly represents the death and blood of Christ, and so more naturally and properly shews forth our

rdon and justification from the guilt of sin by the atonement which Christ hath made, whereas it is the more peculiar office of baptism to represent our regeneration or sanctification by the Spirit of God or the cleansing our natures from the power and principle of sin, by pouring the Holy Spirit upon us under the emblem of water ; by which emblem in scripture the Spirit of God is often exhibited to us.

However, in general it is to be acknowledged that christian baptism in the completeness of it, implies a belief of both these blessings, even these provisions of God the Father, for the cleansing us both from the guilt and from the principle of sin by the blood of Christ and the operation of his Spirit : and I take this to be one reason why we are baptized in the name of the Father, as the author of these blessings, and of the Son and Spirit, as divine mediums to procure and convey them.

3. The next thing implied in christian baptism is a " humble acceptance of these blessings in the method of God's own appointment ; that is by repentance for sin in the sight of God, faith in Jesus Christ his Son, and by seeking the influences of the Holy Spirit and obeying them." When we come under this ordinance we do as it were by way of action and emblem consent to accept of this purification both from the guilt and principle of sin, we repent and are ashamed of our past iniquities : we trust in Jesus Christ and his atonement for pardon ; we declare our desire to become new and holy creatures by the cleansing and vivifying power of the Spirit of God in the gospel ; and therefore when persons professed their belief in Christ and repentance of their sins they were baptized ; and those who were sincere were inwardly cleansed from their defilements, and received both these blessings. See 1 Cor. vi. 11. when the apostle had been reckoning up many vile pollutions of the inhabitants of Corinth fore their conversion, *and such were some of you saith he, but you are washed in baptism as a token and seal that you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of God.* Faith and repentance were the great things required of those who were admitted to baptism : This was the practice of John, this the practice of the apostles in the history of their ministry. Did John the forerunner of Christ teach *the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins?* Mat. iii. 2—9. so St. Peter, Acts ii. 38. " Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins." Did John call them to " believe in Jesus who should come after me?" Acts xix. 4. So Philip the evangelist saith to the eunuch, " If thou believest with all thy hear, that is in Jesus as

the Son of God, thou mayest be baptized ;" Acts viii. 37. He answered, "I believe ; and Philip baptized him.

And here the sacred names of Father, Son and Spirit are of great use and importance again. When we are baptized into the name of the Father, Son and Spirit, we do humbly accept of God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as our Father and our God : We accept of the Son of God as our Saviour, especially by the blood of his sacrifice, and of the Holy Spirit as our Sanctifier by his gospel, and his powerful influences.

4. Baptism implies also by necessary consequence, a "profession of our obligation to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and our engagement to act consistently with this solemnity ;" that is to live agreeably to these favours we receive from God, viz. the pardon of our sins and the sanctification of our souls ; to watch against sin for time to come, to abstain from all pollutions of flesh and spirit ; for we are not washed by the blood and spirit of Christ that we may defile ourselves again. We engage to carry on the work of repentance and mortification of sin all our lives, as well as to live upon Christ by faith for the remission of daily rising transgressions. In short it includes a holy resolution through the grace of Christ, and by the aids of his Spirit to follow every other means which God hath appointed for the rooting out of sin with all its defilements from the soul, and restoring us to purity and holiness and the likeness of God. Thus baptism becomes a seal of the covenant of grace between God and men, an acceptance of his blessings and engagement to their correspondent duties, even as circumcision was to Abraham, "a seal of his justification by faith ;" Rom. iv. 11. and an eminent proof and assurance of his obedience. Persons who desire baptism, and yet will not take these obligations upon them, have no claim to this ordinance : And therefore John drove away the scribes and pharisees from this baptism, because they would not "bring forth fruits meet for repentance ;" Mat. iii. 7—9.

5. Baptism being significant of all these blessings and these duties, "it becomes the appointed ceremony and sign of professing the whole christian religion, and the rite or form of entering into the visible church of Christ." Those who are baptized are professed christians ; they are avowed disciples of Christ. And herein also the sacred names of Father, Son and Spirit have their proper plain significancy. Baptism is a profession of the religion which was contrived by the wisdom and grace of God the Father, it was published and preached to the world by Jesus Christ his Son, and it was confirmed and established by the miraculous gifts and operations of the Holy Spirit. It implies

resolved obedience to the authority and commands of the
 a professed belief of the gospel as taught us by the Son,
 dependence on the grace and salvation of Christ as car-
 by all his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, together
 compliance with all the outward discoveries, and all in-
 fluences of the Holy Spirit: This is the duty, and these
 engagements of every professor of christianity. As cir-
 on was the mode of entrance into the Jewish church, and
 is a professed disciple of Moses, and hereby an obligation
 to perform and practise the whole Jewish law; Gal. v. 3.
 baptism we lay ourselves under a holy obligation to prac-
 whole religion of Christ, and to wait for all its promised
 s. We hope for the love and grace of the Father, the
 n of Jesus Christ his Son, and the sanctifying and coin-
 influences of the Holy Ghost; and we are hereby de-
 the service and honour of the blessed Trinity, God the
 the Son, and the Spirit; whose adorable unity in respect
 godhead, and whose three distinctions in respect of their
 I characters have been set before you at large in a former
 on this same text.

Having said thus much in describing the ceremony itself,
 as to the spiritual meaning of it, we come now in the second
 enquire,

Who are the subjects of this ordinance of baptism, or to whom
 it is administered?

To this I answer, The first, the most proper, or at least the
 best subjects of it are persons who confess their sins, and
 to repent of them, and who accept of this grace and sal-
 vation offered in the gospel: Those who have been taught the
 doctrines and duties of the gospel of Christ, and profess to
 understand and receive them and to comply with them: Those who
 own them the religion of Christ become his disciples and
 give their names to him. Here is no difference whether
 a Jew, whether male or female, as there was in the
 ceremony of circumcision which belonged properly to the
 Jewish nation, and admitted none but males: But all pro-
 fessors of the gospel must receive this ceremony, and be bap-
 tized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and
 on the most common account the New Testament gives us of
 baptism, that when persons professed their faith in Christ they
 were baptized. Texts of this kind need not be cited, they are so
 many.

It is in the christian church from its early ages, and we
 know from the apostles' time it hath been the custom also to bap-
 tize infant children of professed christians; and though there

be no such express and plain commands or examples of it written in scripture as we might have expected, yet there are several inferences to be drawn from what is written, which afford a just and reasonable encouragement to this practice, and guard it from the censure of superstition and will-worship. This has been a long and troublesome dispute indeed among the churches since the reformation: I shall not pretend to debate it here, but only rehearse a few hints of argument, which are commonly used to vindicate the practice of baptizing children, viz.

1. That ever since God called the family of Abraham, and settled his visible church in it, he has never suffered it to fail. It was an everlasting covenant that he made with Abraham to be his God, and the God of his seed; Gen. xvii. 7, 8. that he might be the Father both of Jews and Gentiles, who were brought into the church, as in Rom. iv. 11—16.

2. The Jewish and the christian church are but one and the same visible church in a continued succession, though under different administrations and ordinances. The same spiritual promises and blessings which belonged to the church under the Old Testament, belong also to it under the New; Acts ii. 39. 2 Cor. i. 20. Abraham is represented as *the root or stock of the visible church*; Rom. xi. 16, 17, &c. *The Jewish church are the natural branches of it, the Gentiles are ingrafted into the same stock, verses 17—24. and partake of the blessings of it.*

3. The children of the Jews were visible members of the Jewish church under the covenant of Abraham, and as such they were recognised, acknowledged and received into it by circumcision, as the door of entrance: Now circumcision was a seal in general, both of spiritual blessings and outward privileges; Rom. iv. 11. A seal of the righteousness of faith, as well as the possession of Canaan, and of the covenant of grace, as well as of the covenant of Sinai.

4. The children of christians were never cut off from this privilege, when the fathers were received into the church, whether they were Jews or Gentiles: and therefore they are to be reckoned at least a sort of incomplete members of the christian church also, under spiritual promises and blessings. When the Jews the natural branches were cut off from the good olive tree their little buds were cut off with them also; and when the Gentile by a profession of faith were grafted in as foreign branches, their little buds were grafted in with them. Christ received the children thus were brought by the hands of their believing parents, and "laid his hands on them, and blessed them, and said, of such is the kingdom of heaven;" Mat. x. 13—16. The promises of the Old Testament, wherein children are included in some of the prophets do refer to the Gentile church as well as the Jew

ish; Is. xlv. 3—5. Is. lxxv. 23. Joel ii. 28, 29. For it is the “ blessing of Abraham, which reaches to his seed, that comes upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ;” Gal. iii. 14. Rom. xv. 8, 9. “ that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy.”

5. As this sort of reasoning seems to manifest the right of the children of christians to these blessings, or that they have some interest in this covenant, so there are some considerations which render it very probable that children should be admitted into the visible church by the christian door of entrance, that is baptism. As for instance,

First, That circumcision being abolished and baptism coming in the room of it, baptism should be applied to all those who have any interest in the covenant as circumcision was. Now that baptism is come in the room of circumcision, seems plain from Col. ii. 12. where the apostle argues, “ that being baptized we need not be circumcised:” And besides baptism and circumcision signify the same thing, that is the removal of sin, one by cutting off, and the other by washing away.

Again, The gospel which is a dispensation of greater grace, does not lessen, but increase the privileges of the church: It takes away yokes and burdens indeed, such as circumcision was; Acts xv. 10. but does not diminish its honours, titles and privileges.

Yet further, when the father or mother of a family believed in Christ, their households were baptized together with themselves, even where there is no mention that the household believed in Christ also: As in the case of Lydia and Stephanas; Acts xvi. 15. 1 Cor. i. 16. Now children are usually a considerable part of the household.

In the last place, Children under the New Testament are as capable of receiving the blessings signified, and fulfilling the duties enjoined, as ever they were under the Old. It is granted indeed, they neither could then nor can now understand the blessings nor the duties; yet they might receive the seal of circumcision or of baptism, as a bond laid upon them in infancy, to fulfil the obligations and the duties at riper years, and as an encouragement to wait and hope for the blessings. This was the case of Jewish infants, and why may not christians be favoured with it also?

I proceed now to the third general enquiry, viz. “ What is the manner of performing this ceremony?” which also I shall dispatch in a brief hint or two. The Greek word ‘ baptizo ’ signifies to ‘ wash ’ any thing, properly by water coming over it:

Now there are several ways of such washing, viz. sprinkling water on it in small quantity, pouring water on it in larger quantity, or dipping it under water, either in part or in whole: And since this seems to be left undetermined in scripture to one particular mode, therefore any of these ways of washing may be sufficient to answer the purpose of this ordinance. Now that the Greek word signifies "*washing*" a thing in general by water coming over it, and not always "*dipping*," is argued by learned men, not only from ancient Greek authors, but from the New Testament itself: as Luke xi. 38. *The pharisees marvelled that Jesus had not first washed before dinner*; in Greek, that he was not first baptized; and can it be supposed, that they would have had him dip himself in water; Mark vii. 4. *The pharisees when they come from the market, eat not except they are washed*, that is baptized; surely it cannot mean except they were dipped: And if this should be restrained to signify washing their hands only, yet it does not necessarily signify dipping them; for the manner of washing their hands of old was by pouring water on them; as *Elisha poured water on the hands of Elijah*; 2 Kings iii. 11. Yet further they practised the washing of tables, in Greek, of beds, as well as cups and vessels. Now beds could not usually be washed by dipping. Heb. ix. 10. *The Jews had diverse washings* prescribed by Moses in Greek *baptisms*, which were sprinkling and pouring water on things, as well as plunging them all over in water. 1 Cor. xii. 2. *The children of Israel were baptised unto Moses in the cloud and the sea*, in their passage through the Red Sea at the march from Egypt; not that they were dipped in the water, but they were sprinkled by the clouds over their heads, and perhaps by the water which stood up in heaps as they passed by.

Besides, it is said farther on this head, that pouring or sprinkling more naturally represents most of the spiritual blessings signified by baptism, viz. the sprinkling of the blood of Christ on the conscience, or the pouring out the Spirit on the person baptised, or sprinkling him with clean water, as an emblem of the influence of the spirit; all which are the things signified in baptism, as different representations of the cleansing away of the guilt or defilement of sin thereby.

But this shall suffice for a hint of this controversy, which has filled large volumes in the world, made a huge noise in the church, and destroyed the charity of a multitude of christians. Since I do not here profess to enter into the argument, but only to give a few short notices and rehearsals of what is said in our vindication, who practise the baptism of infants by sprinkling water on them, I do the rather ask leave to speak one charitable word on this subject, viz. that since this controversy has

considerable difficulties attending it, persons of an honest and sincere soul in searching out the truth, may happen to run into different opinions: And the things wherein we agree are so important, as should not suffer us to quarrel about the lesser things wherein we differ. Our brethren who reject infant baptism, as well as we who practise it, all agree in a belief of the sacred institution of this ordinance, and in our reverence for it: We all agree that the children should be devoted to God, and should be partakers of all the utmost privileges into which scripture admits them, and that they should grow up under all possible obligations to duty: and since each of us desires to find out the will of Christ, and practise it accordingly, it is a most unreasonable thing, that we should be angry with each other, because some of us are devoted to God and Christ by this ceremony a little sooner or a little later than others; or because some devote their children to God in baptism as a claim of privileges and an obligation to duties, before they can do this for themselves; whereas others let this claim and obligation alone, till children themselves are capable of acting therein: Or because some of us think this ordinance requires much water, and that the whole body be immersed in it, others suppose a little is sufficient, and that he who hath the face or head washed in this solemnity, has as true a signification of gospel benefits and obligations, as he who has his whole body put under water, since our Saviour thought so when he washed Peter's feet; John xiii. 10. In short, where faith in Christ and love to God, and obedience to the sanctifying operations of the Spirit are made necessary to salvation and agreed upon by us all, it is pity that these lesser things should raise such unhappy and scandalous contentions among the disciples of the blessed Jesus, who is the *Prince of Peace*.

Having given you some account of the subjects of this ordinance, and the manner of performance, I cannot finish this head without adding, that since every thing under the New Testament is sanctified by the word and prayer, it is generally most proper to administer this ordinance, with a word of exhortation or instruction to men, and a prayer lifted up to God in the name of Christ, that the blessings of grace may accompany this ordinance, that it may not be a vain or empty sign, but may be attended with special and divine graces. I come now to the last thing which I proposed, and that is to mention a few practical exhortations relating to the point in hand.

Exhortation I. "Adore the wisdom of God, and give thanks to his goodness, who hath appointed such sensible helps to our faith, such sensible memorials of his grace and our duty." True religion is in a great measure an inward and spiritual thing; but it is of vast importance towards the preservation of

SERMON LII.

Christian Diligence, with the Blessings that attend it, in Opposition to Sloth, Security, Backsliding, &c.

PROV. xiii. 4.—The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.

SHOULD we apply these words to labour or learning, to trade or religion, to the concerns of this life, or that which is to come, still we shall find this sentence of Solomon true and useful; it is a remark well worthy of our attention, and our best improvement. The son of diligence considered either as a man or a christian, is in a fair way to obtain the good things he seeks: His desire shall be satisfied, his soul shall be made fat, or filled with them, he shall increase in earthly possessions, he shall abound in knowledge and wisdom, or he shall grow rich in grace and the fruits of righteousness; but the slothful wretch shall be poor indeed. In vain doth he sit with folded hands, and wish for the blessings of nature or grace, of time or eternity: The idle hand shall be empty still, he shall desire in vain, and shall never possess.

Diligence is the appointed theme of my discourse, the diligence of a man or a christian. I shall endeavour first, to describe it in all the several parts of it, and then take a short survey of the blessings temporal and spiritual which attend it; and by the way, I shall give some occasional hints of the crime and the punishment of the contrary vices.

First, Let us enquire what are the several things which are implied in true diligence, whether it relate to the things of this life, or the life to come.

1. "Diligence includes the employment of every part of our time in proper business; and thus it stands in opposition both to sauntering and doing nothing at all, to trifling, or doing what is to no purpose, and to mis-timing the business which is to be done." Every person in the world has some proper business to do daily, for God, for themselves; or for the good of their fellow-creatures. Mankind, even in the golden age of innocence, was not made for idleness. Adam was put into the garden of Eden, to dress and keep it; Gen. ii. 8—15. and it is our duty wisely to enquire what is our proper work, and to employ ourselves in it.

But how many idle creatures are there in the world that act quite contrary to this rule?

1. How many do we find who saunter their lives away, and let their days, and months, and years run to waste in doing nothing at all, as though they were brought into the world to eat, drink and sleep, to gaze away life, and then to lie down in death? O wretched abuse of these precious blessings, life and time! "*I must work, saith our Lord, while it is day, I must do the particular work, for which my Father sent me hither: the night is coming when no man can work: John ix. 4.* Let us all be imitators of our blessed Jesus. The business of the rich is to render their wealth useful to the good of the world, and to the interests of religion: The business of the poor is to labour to obtain their daily bread, and not be burdensome to their neighbours, nor useless inhabitants of the earth. The business of a scholar is to improve his mind in daily knowledge; and as for all the learned professions, their business is to lay out that knowledge for the ease and happiness of mankind in this world, or the next.

It is the proper business of a sinner to seek after converting grace, to return to God by repentance, to secure his salvation by faith in the Son of God, and all instances of new obedience. It is the proper business of a true christian to grow in grace, to adorn his profession with holiness, and abound in good works. It is the necessary and daily business of a mortal and an accountable creature to prepare for death and judgment, that he may die in peace, and give up his account with joy, if he should be summoned away on a sudden. Thus it appears every creature hath some proper business, both relating to this life, and the life to come: And therefore a sauntering and idle life is a high offence to the God of nature and grace, time and eternity.

2. "Trifling or wasting time in impertinences, is another vice contrary to this part of diligence." Doing nothing to the purpose, is little better than doing nothing at all: As if a youth designed for the study of divinity, should lay aside his bible, and spend his whole time in measuring squares and circles in mathematical figures; or if a man of trade, or an artificer, who must provide daily bread for himself and his household, should waste his days in coffee-houses, still learning, and still discoursing of the rights of election of the kings of Poland, or in adjusting the bloody quarrels between the Turkish and the Persian armies. This is such an impertinence in the sight of God and men, as deserves the just reproaches of men, and punishment from the hand of providence. To wear out those seasons in prating and tattling, which are appointed for useful labour or business, is a wretched abuse of time, and merits the frequent censure of Solomon the wisest of men. *The talk of the lips tendeth only to*

poverty, and a prating fool shall fall; Prov. xiv. 23. and x. 8. And too many there are who pretend to christianity, but they are only talking christians instead of being active in the duties of their appointed station, and their zeal for religion appears no where but in their tongues. Others also shall be pronounced idle, and triflers at the bar of God, who lay out all their spirits in little controversy, perhaps about mint, anise, and cummin, or in vindication of rites, and forms, and ceremonies which God never appointed, while they neglect the weighty matters of the law and the gospel, justice and goodness, repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus, the correction of their tempers, and the amendment of their lives. Again,

3. "Mistiming the various actions of life is another abuse of time, and contrary to true diligence." *There is a time, saith the wise man, for every purpose under heaven, and every thing is beautiful in its season; Ec. iii. 1, 11.* If we should be dancing at midnight and sleeping at church or seeking our diversions in a hour of business; if we should work with our hands, when the season calls us to our closets, or spend that time in reading and prayer, which is appointed for the labours and cares of the family; these are all failures in our duty, and contrary to the true diligence which the word of God requires. That is but trifling or impertinence in one season, which is a necessary duty at another; nor will any works out of season prosper or succeed well, or be approved of God: And yet there are some persons so habitually guilty of this folly, that whensoever the certain season of any duty returns, they are ever beginning to do something else first, which perhaps they did not think of before, which would be much better left till afterward; *Prov. vi. 6—8. Go to the ant, thou sluggard, who seizes the days of summer and fair weather, to gather her food, and hides herself at winter, and lives upon her former provisions.*

The *second* thing implied in true diligence, is "earliness in opposition to delay." If we consider ourselves as men; the early man shews that his heart is in his work; but he that from hour to hour, or from day to day, delays the practice of any duty or service, gives sufficient notice that he doth not like it, and would never perform it at all, if he could safely avoid it. If we begin betimes the service of the day, we happily provide against hinderances, and we are not in danger of being thrown into a hurry by accidental avocations: We have hours before us to do our work well, to review and correct it: We keep our temper, and are composed amidst our cares and labours and finish our designs with honour. But if we suffer our work to lie neglected, till the latter end of the appointed time, we are ever in a hurry, in perpetual confusion, our temper is ruffled with every incident

that comes in our way, and give us the least hinderance, and we never perform with such accuracy or such success. Have we not sometimes learned these inconveniences by sad experience, and shall we ever be guilty of delays again ?

Or if we consider ourselves as christians, have we not found that by needless delays we have lost the season of morning prayer, and could never recover it again, but have past the morning without solemn addresses to the God of our lives ? And hath not many a sinner felt the dreadful consequences of his delays of repentance, when, day after day, and week after week, his own conscience and the voice of God in his word have called upon him to repent and return to God, and invited him to accept of pardon and peace, to receive the grace of Christ, and everlasting life ? What terrible agonies of soul, what reproaches of conscience on a dying bed, what horror of spirit in the review of his cursed delays ? And with what tormenting despair his soul hath been hurried out of this life, and been plunged into an eternal state, without hope, or at least at a terrible uncertainty ? Children can you hear this, and not enquire betimes, *what must I do to be saved ?* Acts xvi. 30. Can you hear this in the days of youth, and delay any longer to secure your immortal concerns, and provide for the approaching hour of death and judgment ? It is a dangerous thing for children in their younger years to learn the language of idleness, and to cry out on every occasion, "It is time enough yet." They generally grow up to feel the bitter fruits of delay. It is an excellent rule in the things of earth or of heaven, "Never leave that to be done the next hour, which may properly be done now, nor dare to put off till to-morrow the business which you may as well begin to-day." *Who knows what a day may bring forth ?* Prov. xxvii. 1. He that hath done his work to-day is secure of peace, but to-morrow may be all disappointment. Let us who pretend to be christians, or to have a regard to God and religion, let us upon the first notice of any duty, make haste to the practice of it. Upon the first conviction of sin let us apply ourselves immediately to God for pardoning and sanctifying grace : Let us return to our duty with early diligence like David, *As soon as thou saidest, Seek ye my face, my heart replied ; Thy face will I seek. I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments ;* Ps. xxvii. 8. and cxix. 60.

3. "Diligence implies activity and vigour, in opposition to sloth and laziness, languor and indifference." It is not lazy wishes that will perform work or obtain a blessing. The sluggard desireth and hath nothing ; *Prov. xiii. 4.* therefore the wise man advises ; *Ec. ix. 10. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might :* Then it is likely to be finished in proper season ; but the slothful wretch makes no riddance of his work,

he moves heavily in his business, just as he doth upon his bed, like a door upon its hinges, never gets forwards ; *Prov. xxvi. 24.* A beautiful simile indeed, nor is the description of the sluggard less elegant ; verse 25. "When he hath hid his hand in his bosom, it grieves him to bring it to his mouth."

And what poor work doth a christian make who is cold, indifferent, slothful and lazy in the things which concern his soul and salvation ? He makes a pretence to religion, but how poorly doth he proceed in it who hath no activity, no vigour no fervency therein ? Where he was last year, there he is now, or else gone farther backward : His sins are still as unmortified, his temptations still as powerful and prevailing, his hopes still as low, and his holiness as much interrupted as in years past : He was not fit to appear before God then, and he is no fitter now : He was then in terror at the thoughts of dying, and he is still in the same terror. The slothful christian upon examination finds his faith hath scarce improved one grain, he is no nearer salvation than when at first he believed. Is this the obedience we owe to the command of Christ ? *Luke xiii. 24. Strive to enter in at the strait gate, labour for the meat that endures to everlasting life ; John vi. 27. Regard the advice of the blessed apostle ; Rom. xii. 11. Be ye not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit serving the Lord.* Permit me to ask the lazy christians of our present age, "Is this an imitation of ancient saints, who laboured night and day to get nearer to heaven, and as it were took the kingdom of heaven by a holy violence ?" Let us bestir ourselves then and shake off this lethargy of soul, this dull humour, let us call up all our natural and christian powers into exercise, and *be no longer slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises ; Heb. vi. 11.*

4. "True diligence implies also watchfulness, in opposition to a drowsy heedless temper, a thoughtless security of soul." We must be awake to seize all advantages for our work, as well as to guard against surprizes and dangers. How dreadfully is the sluggard exposed to loss and ruin ? If the sailors sleep in their voyage, they run upon sands and rocks, and lose their ship and their lives. If a centinel sleep in his watch tower, the enemy gains considerable advantage, and seizes some post of importance, or enters the gates of the city. How often hath a whole army been surprized and routed, who lay secure in their camp, and kept no due watch ? We christians are soldiers under the banner of Christ, our enemies are many within and without ; our great adversary the devil is malicious and busy ; if we indulge security and drowsiness, he seizes every unguarded hour to wound, and defile, and distress our souls. Therefore the apostle Peter demands our watchfulness ; *1 Pet. v. 8. Be sober, be vigilant, or*

watchful, for your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour. One unwatchful hour, one slumber in the day of temptation hath given Satan opportunity for unknown mischief, and administered matter to a christian for bitter repentance all his days, Shall we then ever hearken to the enticements of slothful nature? Shall we ever gratify the tempter at this rate to our own certain loss, and to the danger of our eternal ruin."

5. "Diligence yet further implies a constancy in our work, in opposition to looking back, and perpetual avocation by diversions and pleasures." The foolish Israelites were often looking back to the leeks and onions and flesh pots of Egypt, and were in danger of losing the promised land. Where love of pleasure and diversion often interrupts the business we are engaged in, we shall make but poor broken work, and have but little hope to succeed in it; Prov. xxi. 17. "He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man."

And as they can never grow rich in temporal things who are carried away from their business by every diversion, so neither can a christian grow rich in grace, who frequently interrupts his duty to indulge mirth and carnal delights. We must be steadfast and constant in our christian race, and not turn aside from the path of duty to gather this and the other flower of sensual pleasure, if we would finish our course with joy, and so run as to obtain the prize.

6. Another thing implied in true diligence, "is firmness and resolution in our labour, in opposition to all the difficulties which attend our work." We suppose every valuable and excellent design hath some difficulties more or less always attending it; some hardship which must be endured, some obstacles and impediments which must be broke through; but if we are frightened at every shadow or difficulty we shall never fulfil our service nor perfect our design. This Solomon hath often observed: *The sluggard cries, it is cold, and will not go early to plough, and therefore he shall beg in harvest, and have nothing.* He complains *there is a lion in the way, there is a lion in the street,* where the path of duty lies; therefore he sits down in sloth, and keeps himself safe and idle at home. *The way of the sluggard is as a hedge of thorns,* he imagines every step he takes in the path of diligence and industry hath such troubles attending it, such thorns and briars as he calls them, that he cannot break through and therefore he refuses to labour. See Prov. xx. 4. and xxvi. 13. and xxv. 19.

And is not this matter the same in spiritual things? How many are there who cry out of the ways of religion as painful and hard? They are frightened at the duties of repentance, self-denial

and mortification of sin, at cutting off right-hands, and plucking out right-eyes; they are offended at persecution, which sometimes rises against strict godliness; the frowns of the world terrify their hearts, they dare not be singular in the profession of faith, or the practice of virtue: They are ashamed of the worship, and the name of God in the midst of profane and sinful men; they go back, as some disciples did in the days of Christ, and walk no longer with him. But let us remember the divine threatenings, *The man who hath put his hand to the plough, and looks back; Luke ix. 62. my soul, saith the Lord, shall have no pleasure in him; Heb. x. 38.*

7. The last character I shall ascribe to the diligent man is, "perseverance in opposition to fainting and weariness." The man of diligence must hold out to the end, if he expect to have his labour crowned. An imperfect work among men is very little worth: It is the end that crowns all.

And it is just the same in religion, unless we persevere in the duties of holiness, we have no reason to expect the divine reward; but the glorious recompence is sure to us, *if we are not weary in well doing; we shall reap in due time if we faint not; Gal. vi. 9.* St. Paul just before his martyrdom rejoices in this, *he had fought the good fight, in opposition to all the enemies of the gospel, and he had finished his course of faith and holiness: Henceforth saith he, is laid up for me a crown of righteousness; 2 Tim. iv. 7.* Let us animate ourselves by his blessed example, and by the promise of our Lord Jesus to the church of Ephesus; *Rev. ii. 10. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. Let these thoughts awaken our drowsy spirits, and prolong our patience in the work of the Lord, that we may not at last be found among them who draw back to perdition, but among those who believe, and persevere to the saving of the soul; Heb. x. 39.*

Thus far I have been engaged in setting before you the several things implied in diligence or industry, both in matters of this life, and that which is to come; but I have in some measure entered upon my second general head, by often touching upon the happy fruits of diligence, as well as the dismal consequences of all the contrary vices. My remaining work therefore will be very short, and that is to mention in a more express and distinct manner, the blessings which attend diligence in a course of virtue and goodness; and they are such as these:

1. Diligence hath a natural tendency to success, and to obtain the good things we seek. "In all labour saith Solomon, there is profit;" *Prov. xiv. 23.* "He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread;" *Prov. xii. 11.* and "the hand of the diligent maketh rich;" *Prov. x. 4.* But as for "the field of the

thful, it is overgrown with thorns ; nettles and briars cover it ;”
 Prov. xxiv. 30. “ And drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags ;”
 Prov. xxiii. 21.

It is the same in spiritual things, as in the things of nature. Diligence in seeking the knowledge of God shall be crowned with an increase of sacred knowledge ; Hos. vi. 3. “ Then shall ye know the Lord, if we follow on to know him.” “ Give attendance to reading, saith Paul to Timothy, that thy profiting may appear to all ;” 1 Tim. iv. 14. Diligence and labour with your own hearts in weaning them from the world, and a fervent constancy in the pursuits of godliness, is the proper and rational way to obtain the blessings of grace and glory. But add,

2. Diligence hath the rich and special promises of a faithful God to encourage its hope. What David said to his son Solomon with regard to building the temple, the gospel saith the same to every christian ; 1 Chron. xxii. 16. “ Arise and be doing, and the Lord shall be with thee :” And Solomon gave the same advice to his son, and the same promise ; Prov. ii. 3, 4. If thou seekest after wisdom as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou obtain saving knowledge, and shalt not fear the Lord. Give all diligence, saith Peter in the name of Christ ; 2 Pet. i. 5—10. “ Give all diligence, and add christian grace to another, add to your faith virtue, to your virtue temperance, patience, godliness and charity. Give diligence again to make your calling and your election sure ; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall, but an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

3. Diligence and industry are a happy guard against snares and temptations of every kind. When the devil finds you idle, he hath a proper moment to assault you with some powerful temptation : He will employ you in his work, when he binds your hands and hearts entirely at leisure and unemployed ; one that is not awake to his duty, is not awake to his danger, and is easily surprized into mischief : but the wakeful diligent christian is like Nehemiah’s builders on the walls of Jerusalem, *with a weapon in one hand while they laboured with the other* ; Neh. iv. 17. and thus their work went on with good success and safety.

4. Diligence is always making a progress towards its designed end, but the slothful man is in great danger of going backward. The gardener who neglects his daily work, will find the ground which he hath cultivated over-run with weeds again in a little time. If a waterman who rows against the stream be sloth-

ful and drowsy, his vessel will make no progress, but be carried backward continually: So if a labourer hearkens to the enticements of drowsy nature, and learns this slothful language, *A little more sleep, a little more slumber, poverty will come upon him as an armed man*; Prov. xxiv. 33, 34. and rob him of all his gains. Negligent and unwatchful and lazy christians, will for the most part lose what they have gained in the things of religion too: The apostle John in his second epistle, verse 8. guards against it. *Take heed that ye lose not the things which ye have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward.* How many have lost their first zeal, their first love, and their early joys in religion, by a sinful security of soul, and for want of a due concern to grow in grace. It is growth in religion that evidences the truth of it, and secures the comforts of it.

5. The diligent christian is a most useful person in the world, he does the most good himself, and becomes an excellent example to all that are round about him. He lays the sluggard under continual conviction, and puts him to daily shame, if he have any of his senses awake to see, or feel, or take notice. Such a christian animates and encourages all that are near him to the same diligence, as fire kindles fire, and spreads the blaze far and near. Active and lively christians make one another's hearts warm in religion, and help to diffuse the sacred fire round about. The zealous servants of the blessed God, give credit and honour to their profession; but what a shameful thing is it to see some christians idle and careless in the duties of their daily calling, and slothful and lazy in their practice of religion too? The truth is, they do not make religion their practice, but a mere matter of talk and sound; and while they refuse to labour in the station where God has placed them, they disgrace their profession, and expose themselves to the just and severe sentence of the apostle; 2 Thess. iii. 10. *He that will not work, let him not eat*; that is let him starve, for christianity is no just pretence for idleness.

6. The diligent christian finishes his work with peace, hope, and joy. He shall review his conduct and his labours with an inward satisfaction, and a sacred pleasure of soul: his conscience is a joyful witness; he hath not only a safe but an abundant entrance generally administered to him into the heavenly kingdom, and he obtains a fairer crown; for *the Lord the righteous Judge will reward every one according to his works*; Rom. ii. 6—11. He who had one talent, and improved it by gaining ten more, had rule over ten cities: He that gained five talents, had five cities under his government; Luke xix. 17—19. But let us dread the curse of the wicked and slothful servant; Observe the slothful servant is pronounced wicked by the mouth of Christ himself; Mat. xxv. 26. He is to be "cast into utter darkness, there shall be

ng and gnashing of teeth." The slothful wretch at the end days, sees his great work undone, his heart not yet turned d and godliness, and is overwhelmed with horror when in of death and judgment. It is the cry of his soul, "O that ht die the death of the righteous;" Num. xxiii. 10. but is no crown of righteousness for him, no prize of glory; he neither run nor fought, nor laboured so as to obtain it. He s for heaven in vain; his desires are his torment, for they never be fulfilled, desire and despair are misery enough. y soul who hath been faithful, diligent and watchful in every a of life, and has made suitable advances in faith and love, oliness. He waits till his Lord shall come, and he rejoices e, for he shall then receive the glorious sentence from the his Judge, "Well done good and faithful servant, enter ie joy of thy Lord;" Mat. xxv. 21—23. and be thou pos- l of blessedness in the upper world, in proportion to the s I trusted thee with on earth, and to thy diligent and faith- pprovement of every talent." *Amen*.

SERMON LIII.

Christian Fellowship, with its Duties and Advantages.

ROM. xv. 6, 7.—That ye may with one mind, and with one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,—Receive ye one another as Christ also hath received us to the glory of God.

FOR christians to join themselves in particular societies or congregations in order to carry on the great interests of religion appears to be both a duty and a privilege: It stands upon two foundations as a duty, and as a privilege it is attended with excellent advantages. I confess the words of my text chiefly designed to teach us what is the particular rule whereby this practice should be conducted, and who should be the persons thus joined together in holy fellowship, even the Gentiles who are converted to Christ, as well as the Jews: Yet the general duty is plainly intimated viz. that those who profess the name of Christ, should have reason to hope that Christ has received them, should also receive one another into mutual communion in all the social parts and privileges of the christian religion, “that with one mind and with one mouth they may glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In my discourse on this subject, I shall endeavour to set before you these several things:

I. The reasonableness of this practice.—II. Some special advantages that arise from it.—III. The characters of persons more particularly, of whom this is required, and what numbers they should unite together to make a christian church.—IV. The duties of persons thus united in christian societies or churches.—V. I shall mention the officers which Christ has appointed in his churches to perform peculiar services therein.

First, We are to consider the “reasonableness of this practice, whereby it will appear to be the duty of those who profess the religion of Christ to agree together, and form themselves into particular societies.”

The first reason is this, That “without such an agreement to unite together in the practice of christianity, there can be no public worship regularly maintained among christians.”

nor public honours paid to God in the name of Jesus." Now the worship of God in public assemblies is so necessary for his honour in all ages, and under all dispensations, and was so carefully practised among the primitive christians by the authority of Christ and his apostles, that we cannot be excused from it, if we profess ourselves to believe in Christ. This has been made sufficiently evident in a former discourse*. And if there be such a thing as public worship maintained, the light of nature shews us there must be some certain time, and some certain place appointed by agreement among such worshippers, since no one christian that I know of has any authority given by the scripture to appoint precisely the times and places, and magisterially to impose them upon his brethren.

As for the place under the Jewish dispensation, God himself appointed the tabernacle in the days of Moses, and the temple in the time of Solomon as sacred places for public sacrifices, and some peculiar solemnities of worship; but the sacredness of place is now at an end, as our Lord informs us; John iv. 21—24. and even during that dispensation, the synagogues throughout the land where God was weekly worshipped by the people, were built and frequented by the agreement or consent of the people, as the light of nature directed; and the worship of christian churches is more a-kin to that of the synagogues than that of the temple.

As for the time, the first day of the week is the christian day of worship by apostolic appointment: But christians must agree together upon the hour, as well as the day, in order to unite in the several parts of worship.

Without such an agreement of christians among themselves, there could be no celebration of public ordinances in a becoming manner, no united prayers and praises could ascend to heaven, there would be no social attendance upon the word preached, no participation of the great ordinance of the Lord's-supper, which is a part of social religion, a sacred feast or representation of the blessed communion which christians have both with Christ their Lord, and with one another. For this reason they must agree during the place to meet in, "That the whole church may come together in one place," as 1 Cor. xi. 20. and they must agree upon one hour, or "tarry for one another till they are come;" 1 Cor. xi. 33.

The second reason for such a practice is this, viz. "Without an agreement to keep up such societies for worship, the doctrines of Christ and his gospel could not be so constantly and so

* See Sermon XLIX, of Berry-street Sermons, volume II. page 87.

extensively held forth to the world, and there would be no rational hope of the continuance or increase of christianity among men." Particular christians die out of this world from day to day, and there would be few rising up in their stead to support this religion, if there were not public assemblies appointed or agreed upon: It is in these assemblies, the gospel with all the duties and blessings thereof is published to the world; it is here unbelievers may attend and hear the glorious truths of the gospel set forth in a proper light, and the name and memory, the person and offices, the graces and glories of our great Redeemer are displayed among men; 1 Cor. xiv. 23. "When the whole church is come together in one place, there come in those that are unlearned or unbelievers," and when the important affairs of christianity are managed with becoming order and decency, and the doctrines of our salvation are set forth in a happy light, "They that believe not are convinced, the secrets of their hearts are made manifest: they will worship God together with us, and report that God is among us of a truth;" verse 25. Hereby those that are convinced of their sin and danger, and have fled for refuge to lay hold on Jesus as their only hope, are encouraged to come and join themselves to the church, when they behold the beauty of the Lord in his gospel-sanctuary, and the appearances of his power and glory there.

In short, I might add, that there is no public religion, nor worship of any kind, can be well maintained in the world, without such an agreement among the persons that profess that religion: Even heathens, and Turks, and Jews, all sorts of worshippers in every age, think it necessary to agree to worship their God in particular societies, and thereby maintain their religious communion with each other.

It is granted indeed, that where a national religion is established by the authority of the magistrate, and the times, and places, and modes of worship are appointed by him, together with the persons who shall minister therein throughout the several cities, towns, and villages in that nation, there is no such necessity for private persons to form an express agreement among themselves about this matter, if their consciences led them to the same worship and practice which the magistrate requires: Their constant willing attendance implies such an agreement. But I can find no power of imposing this public worship, given to magistrates, among all the principles of natural reason, nor among any of the writings of the New Testament: And those persons whose consciences lead them to differ from this established religion, are then directed by the light of nature, as well as scripture, to form such agreements among themselves, in order to maintain christian worship, and the practice of christianity, as they find it represented in the bible.

The second thing I proposed was to shew you some of the advantages of such an agreement for christian-fellowship among others I might mention such as these :

1. " It gives courage to every christian to profess and practise his religion, when many persons are engaged by mutual agreement in the same profession and practice." We do not love to be singular, and to be pointed at by the world, as standing and acting alone, especially in the affairs of God and religion ; but when a good company unite themselves together for such a sacred purpose, this takes away the reproach of singularity, they all strengthen one another's hands in the ways of the Lord, and they bear up with more firmness of heart against the reproaches of the world.

2. " It is more for the particular edification of christians, that such societies should be formed, where the word of Christ is constantly preached, where the ordinances of Christ are administered, and the religion of Christ is held forth in a social and honourable manner to the world." Hereby every christian knows where to go to hear the gospel preached, and multitudes are instructed at once in the great things that relate to their eternal peace : Hereby those who have known the things of Christ more easily call to mind what they have learned, and are admonished of their daily duty by the public preacher : Here their prayers are united, and their songs of praise ; and such an union of prayers and praises is delightful and acceptable to him who inhabits the praises of Israel, and who has encouraged them to agree in asking mercies from God, and to strive together in prayer. United devotions are much more likely to obtain success.

3. " Such a holy fellowship and agreement to walk together in the ways of Christ, is a happy guard against backsliding and apostacy, it is a defence against the temptations of the world, and the defilements of a sinful age." Having given my name up to Christ in a public manner, how shall I dare to renounce him ? Having joined myself to the followers of Christ, how shall I break those bonds, and depart from them, or disgrace that holy fellowship by any known sin ? Having made a public profession of my avowed obedience to Jesus as a Lord and king ; how can I dare decline his service, or indulge myself in those iniquities which his gospel forbids ?

4. " Christians thus united together by mutual acquaintance and agreement, can give each other better assistance in every thing that relates to religion, whether public or private : " They warm one another's hearts by mutual holy conversation ; they support one another when ready to fall, and raise and restore those that are fallen in a spirit of meekness ; Gal. vi. 1. But as Solomon warns us, *Who to him that falls while he walks alone,*

who shall help him up? Or how can one be warm alone; Ec. iv. 10. Hand joining in hand adds force and strength, assistance and stability to any purpose or design whatsoever; and frequent meeting together gives fellow-christians opportunity of exhorting one another to maintain their common christianity, as in Heb. x. 25. *Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, but exhort one another, and provoke one another to love and to good works.* Christians when they come to mutual acquaintance and agreements of this kind, they afford better help to one another, when under difficulties by advice, and under sorrows they relieve each other by christian consolation and social prayers. They afford greater aid and strength to each other against temptations and dangers, because they are better informed of each others circumstances and tempers. They know one another's wants and weaknesses more, they pity one another with more tenderness, and they guard each other against the common injuries and insults of men. Happy the persons who are thus united in the fellowship of the gospel, and who by practising these duties, and communicating and enjoying these advantages, cast a glory upon the gospel of Christ.

The third general head leads me to enquire more particularly *Who are the persons who should thus receive one another in the Lord, or join together in christian fellowship.* The general direction of the New Testament is contained in the words of my text, that we should receive into this sacred communion all that Christ has received to partake of his salvation, and that we make no other test whereby to receive persons into our particular congregations, than a credible profession of those things which Christ has made necessary in order to partake of his benefits. *Receive ye one another as Christ hath us; Rom. xv. 7.* whether ye be Jews or Greeks, whether ye be *bond or free*, whatsoever different character ye sustain in the civil life, or whatever different nations gave you birth. Whosoever makes a credible profession to have received Jesus Christ and his gospel, and their practice be correspondent to their profession, they are to be received by us, though they may differ in particular opinions, or in particular practices which are of less moment and importance. This is one great design of St. Paul's xiv. chapter to the Romans. In his day there were some christians that maintained a regard to Jewish ceremonies, there were others who thought themselves entirely delivered from all those yokes of bondage; some eat meat with freedom, while others only eat herbs; some observed particular days as holy, while others neglected to observe them; some were weak in the faith, and others strong; but they are all called to receive one another into christian fellowship, and not to make these *doubtful disputations*, a bar to their sacred

union ; *for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost ; and he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men, and therefore he should not be excluded from christian societies ; Rom. xiv. 1, 2, 3—17, 18.*

This I say is the general rule : But it must be confessed, that there are some christians whose sentiments are so directly contrary to others, in matters of worship or discipline, that it is hardly possible they should unite in public worship ; as for instance, he that believes prescribed forms of prayer to be an unlawful thing, cannot join with a society, who never pray but by prescribed forms : He that thinks no man can be a minister, unless he be ordained by the hand of a diocesan bishop, cannot unite in worship with a society whose ministers never had, nor desired such an ordination. But let each take heed how they embrace such limiting principles. There are others who differ so widely in some of the most important doctrines of christianity, that they cannot worship together with any tolerable edification or comfort, *viz.* Those who believe Christ died as a proper sacrifice of atonement for sin, and venture their whole hope of salvation upon it, and wait for sanctifying influences from the Holy Spirit, cannot comfortably unite with such sort of christians as suppose Christ to be only a messenger and prophet sent to restore natural religion to men, and who deny any atoning virtue to his death, or any influences from the Spirit to change their hearts, and make them holy. These are articles which I take to be matters of so high importance in the religion of the gospel, that I cannot advise persons to unite in societies for worship, where they are no better agreed in their principles : The humble and sincere believer of the gospel of Christ, would find his devotion and his edification continually interrupted by such jarring opinions and contests, and the whole work of preaching, prayer and praise would be very disgustful to one part, while it pleases the other. *How is it possible two should walk together, except they are better agreed ? Amos iii. 3.* They agree indeed in the name of christianity, but their real religion seems to be of a different kind.

The general advice which I would give as most conformable to the sentiments of the great apostle, is this, " Let every person take heed that he does not too much enlarge, nor too much narrow the principles of christianity, that he does not make any article of faith or practice more or less necessary than scripture has made it, and that he does not raise needless scruples in his own breast, nor in the hearts of others, by too great a separation from such as our common Lord has received."

I proceed now to consider " how great the number of persons should be, which may properly form such a christian society ;"

and in answer to this question, I must say, it is left very much to the liberty and prudence of men. In general there should be so many as to give it the name of a public assembly : And yet if there are but a few christians within the reach of one another, who can conveniently meet once a week at the same time and the same place for religious purposes, I think these may join themselves in christian fellowship, and the promise of our Saviour belongs to them, *Where two or three of you are met together in my name there am I in the midst of them ; Mat. xviii. 20.*

We might also observe, that no more should usually join together in one society, than can frequently meet together in one place at one time, and be edified by the mouth of one preacher or lift up their joint prayers and praises to God by the lips of one minister : And perhaps the very words of my text may include that meaning, *Receive one another,—that with one mind and one mouth you may glorify God the Father. The Corinthian church met together in one place ; 1. Cor. xiv. 23. And while one spoke in prayer, prophecy, or exhortation, the others were called to silence and attention, verse 31.*

Now a company of christians thus agreeing in the most important articles of faith and practice, and consenting to unite together to worship God through Jesus Christ in all his ordinances and to keep up the christian interests in the world, are properly a church of Christ. Such was the church of Corinth, such the church at Philippi, such the several churches of Galatia, and the churches of Asia, of which mention is made in the New Testament * ; and their agreement to worship and walk together in christian fellowship, is that church-covenant which in the very nature of things is necessary to constitute a regular christian society, and to maintain the gospel in the world in the principles and practices of it : Nor can there be any christian communion maintained in an orderly manner, without such a covenant or agreement as this is, either more plainly expressed, or necessarily implied : It is only the addition of some things which Christ has not required to such a covenant or agreement as this is, that has exposed the name of a church covenant to so many reproaches in the world : Otherwise, I am sure, it deserves none.

* It is granted the scripture sometimes speaks of a church in the house, which is smaller than that of a public assembly, unless it mean that the christians of one place met together in that house for worship : sometimes it speaks of the church at Jerusalem, which in the first formation of it seems to be of a larger extent than could worship in one place, as consisting of many thousand souls : But we must remember, that the national church of the Jews could not be supposed all at once to be dissolved so as to form itself into particular congregations, with all that regularity and order which afterward was observed in single christian societies : or perhaps the word "church" may be sometimes used to signify all the christians that dwell either in one city or in one house, without regard to any such special agreement of walking or worshipping together.

The fourth head I propose, was to represent some of the *ties* which plainly arise from such an agreement of christians walk and worship together, for the support of their religion.

1. May we not say, that "all the duties which the disciples Christ owe to their fellow-christians throughout the world, are particularly incumbent upon those who are united by their consent in the same religious society?" Such as to love one another, to assist, comfort, and succour one another in things that relate to this life, or the life to come; to watch over and govern one another, lest any fall into sin; to admonish one another in love, and to restore those that are fallen with holy tenderness, and in general to fulfil all kind and friendly offices to each other in vindication of their common faith, and in the practice of their religion. We are commanded *to do good to all men, especially to the household of faith*; Gal. vi. 10. and what is due to the churches of Christ on earth, seems more particularly due to the church of which we are members, because these are within the reach of our notice and our assistance, and we expect the same friendly offices from them, since we have mutually given up ourselves to one another in the Lord.

2. "Those who are united by such an agreement, ought not usually to attend on the public assemblies and ministrations that church, where it can be done with reasonable conveniency;" we have joined ourselves in society for this very purpose. It is wanted indeed, that many particular circumstances in life may give a just occasion for persons, more or less, frequently to join with other churches in their solemnities, which it would be too large at present to reckon up; but if upon every trivial humour we absent ourselves from that worship, and those ministrations which we have agreed to support, it has a tendency to destroy that very fellowship which we engage to maintain; and if each take their liberty in this respect, without just reason, to waver where they please, the minister may preach to the bare walls, nor can any ordinances be celebrated with constancy and honour.

I might add also, that the constant attendance upon the same ministry, is the way to obtain a more uniform and regular knowledge of the whole scheme of christianity, since it is to be supposed that there is more uniformity in the sentiments of the same preacher, upon the several parts of the christian doctrine, and that in a course of years he will run through the various articles of faith and practice.

3. It is the duty of persons thus united "to maintain their church or society, by receiving in new members amongst them by a general consent. Now when persons profess that they believe all the necessary and most important articles of the christi-

tian faith, when they declare they have solemnly given up themselves to Jesus Christ as their Saviour and their Lord, according to the requirements of the gospel, and when they engage to walk in all the ordinances of Christ, and desire to join with that particular society, it is the business and duty of the members thereof to receive such professors," supposing always that their good character in life gives a probable witness to the truth and sincerity of their profession. My text bids the converted Romans *receive one another in the Lord, as Christ has received them*, and every church should receive such as desire to join with them upon these principles.

4. "In order to keep the church pure from sin and scandal, they should *separate themselves from those that walk disorderly, who are guilty of gross and known sins*;" 2 Thess. iii. 6. They should reprove them with just severity, as the offence deserves; and if the crime be such as makes void their profession, they should be cast out of the church, or excommunicated, as the Corinthian offender, who committed incest, was cast out by his brethren, when the church was gathered together at the order of the apostle; 1 Cor. v. 4, 5,—7—11—13. *They must put away wicked persons from among them*, lest they be charged with encouraging or indulging iniquity. When there are settled elders or ministers among them, these ought to go before the church, in a way of advice and direction according to the will of Christ, and by their lips persons should be received into, or cast out of the congregation: This is called the "discipline of the church." Yet it is still to be deemed an act of the church; for Paul's epistles, which are written to the churches require them to receive worthy members, and they are required to cast out those who are proved to be unworthy: Therefore this sentence inflicted on the Corinthian sinner is called the *punishment that was inflicted by many*; 2 Cor. ii. 6. and in the 7. and 8. verses, the church is commanded to forgive and receive him again upon his deep repentance.

5. "It is necessary that officers be chosen by the church, to fulfil several services in it, and for it." What person will take upon him constantly to speak in prayer, and be as the mouth of the people to God? Who shall preach, and be as the mouth of God to the people? Who shall baptize and administer the Lord's-supper? Who shall take care of a place for worship, or provide bread and wine for the Lord's table? Who shall collect and distribute the money of the church to the minister or the poor, if no particular persons are appointed for these purposes? But how many sorts of officers belong to a christian church, and what their distinct services are, shall be shewn under the next general head.

6. "It is the duty of those whose circumstances will afford it, to contribute of their earthly substance toward the common expences of the society;" that is, for the provision of the place of worship, the maintenance of the minister, the support of the poor, and for every thing that relates to the outward preservation and interests of the church: And each one should give according to his ability: This is but a piece of common justice, and it is sometimes fit to tell them so.

7. Shall I add in the last place, "That every thing of church affairs ought to be managed with decency and order, with harmony and peace?" So the apostle directs the Corinthians; 1 Cor. xiv. 40. and chapter xvi. 14. *Let all things be done decently and in order: Let all your affairs be done with charity: So in my text, with one mind, as well as with one mouth glorify God.* It is true indeed, every man has a will, and particular sentiments and inclinations of his own; but the most common and peaceful way of determining public affairs, is by the will and inclination of the major part manifested by a vote: And in matters of lesser moment it is generally wisest and safest to submit to such a determination of the majority, where it may be done without sin: But it is a very desirable thing, if possible, to do nothing without the unanimous approbation of those that are concerned. If there are differences arising, those who dissent from the major part ought to be treated with all tenderness in order to convince and persuade them to consent. But if any thing be determined by the majority, which they cannot comply with, they may peaceably make their remonstrances; and if they please, be dismissed from that society, or depart.

The fifth general head leads me to enquire "who are the officers which Christ hath appointed in his churches?" The names of the officers are these two, which probably include all the rest, *bishops and deacons*; so they are called; Phil. i. 1.

Bishops and elders in primitive times are both called *overseers* in the Greek, and seem to be the same officers, for St. Paul gives Titus the several characters of a bishop, in order to direct what sort of persons should be chosen for elders. Their business is to teach and instruct, to go before the people in performing acts of worship, *to give themselves up to the ministry of the word and prayer*; Acts vi. 4. and to exhort and govern the flock, not by their own will, nor by rules of their own invention, but only by the general rules that Christ has given, which must be applied to particular cases by their prudence, and in matters of moment they should do nothing without the consent of the society. What the difference is betwixt pastors and teachers, and whether there be any elders who only are called to rule, but not in a stated manner to teach or administer ordinances in the church, I cannot now tarry to enquire or determine.

The other officers are called deacons, the institution whereof you find in Acts vi. 1—6. and whose business it is to take care of the poor, and serve tables, that is, to see that the table of the Lord, the table of the poor, and the table of the minister be supplied; for the apostle informs us that the poor must be relieved, and *they which preach the gospel must live of the gospel, so has the Lord ordained*; 1 Cor. ix. 14. and other things which relate to the convenience of such a society in their public meeting, are generally supposed to come under the care of the deacons*.

When a christian society is furnished with such officers, it seems to have every thing within itself that is necessary to the being or well-being of a church of Christ. Here are all things that are needful, which are within the power of man, for the preservation of piety and purity among them, and for the continuance of the same religion with decency and honour in a constant succession, so long as the gospel shall call in new converts out of this sinful world.

It remains only that I make a few reflections upon the present discourse.

Reflection I. "How beautiful is the order of the gospel, and the fellowship of a christian church? How strong and plain are the foundations, and the grounds of it? It is built on eternal reason, and the relations of things, as well as on the word of God." How happy it is that the very light of nature dictates to christians far the greatest part of those duties which church fellowship requires, supposing still that the revealed doctrines and sacraments of christianity are first known and acknowledged. The peculiar positive prescriptions relating to christian churches are but few, whereas the general duties are such as reason and the light of nature seem to propose and approve in all voluntary religious societies whatsoever. If a deist, who professes nothing but natural religion, once came so far as to receive the christian faith and the sacraments, his reason would lead him into almost

* Now all these officers must be chosen by the church. Whatsoever may be pretended to be done by the apostles themselves, or what directions soever are supposed to be given to Timothy or Titus toward the settling of churches, or ordaining of officers, by virtue of their extraordinary gifts in the primitive times, without an explicit declaration of the choice of the people recorded, yet there is no authority given to any person that I can find, to make themselves, or any other persons elders or deacons in a particular church, without their free consent: And indeed in those very primitive days, the choice of the people was plainly required towards the making of deacons; Acts vi. 3. *Look ye out among you men of honest report, &c.* though the apostles are said to ordain them *by prayer and imposition of hands*, verse 6. And in the earliest histories and records we have of these matters, the people's choice or consent was required to introduce elders or bishops into a church. Nor indeed is it proper that the souls of the people, nor church's money, should be intrusted with elders or deacons imposed upon them by others.

is of christian communion, which I have described. It is a mixture of the needless and fanciful inventions of men, plain and common dictates of the light of nature and a public religion, and the imposition of these things of science, that has been the disgrace and ruin of many churches, and is a high misdemeanour against Christ, our Lord and King of his church. Reason and revelation are the only principles of his religion, and of the government of his kingdom.

How little do they value the true interests of the christian, the public honour of Christ and his gospel, or the peace and comfort of their own souls, who neglect this holy ordinance?" There are twenty little excuses that some persons make against uniting themselves in fellowship: But let us do its office, and examine sincerely whether such excuses will be a sufficient apology in the great day. A late eminent divine well known to some of us, *viz.* Mr. Nathaniel Taylor, in this direction to those who have given up themselves to Jesus Christ. "Join yourselves, says he, as members of a particular church of Christ or other. For the better support of his body, our Saviour has appointed the erecting of particular churches. And wherever a sufficient number of christians are called, it was the constant practice of the primitive church to unite in such societies as stated members of them, under the direction and conduct of those pastors and teachers, which by their own consent the Holy Ghost had set over them to rule them. This is a constitution of Christ, which is directly opposed by a generation of loose and rambling christians, that content themselves with bare hearing, and that do it in a very odd way. For they are a sort of volatile auditors, who are only frisking to and fro, who can fix no where. Were all christians of this humour, there could be no such thing as a particular church, which Christ has appointed for the edifying of his church: And how they can rationally expect to flourish either in peace, while they live in a direct opposition to a manifestation of our Lord Jesus, which was not more an effect of his wisdom and goodness, I wish men seriously to consider. Are any of you so self-sufficient that you do not desire the assistance of your fellow-christians to counsel, admonish, rebuke, exhort, comfort, strengthen, and help you? Are there none of the churches of Christ that are worthy enough? None of them that have latitude or strictness for you? None of them worthy enough for you to be self-unto? When our Lord hath given such variety of churches and ministers, is there none of them whose abilities suit the taste and please your curious palates, that by settling under them you may be edified? I may say to such persons as Constantine

once did to such a self-conceited man, "Take a ladder and climb up to heaven by thyself alone." In short, a society of believers walking together in gospel order, is like the excellent composition of syllables, words, and sentences, that have a great deal of sense and signification in them; but a separated and divided christian that will join himself to no church, is like a single letter or disjointed syllable, that is perfect nonsense."

III. "How criminal are those persons who break the beautiful order and harmony of a church of Christ for trifles?" Whose fanciful humours, or whose imposing spirit raises up discord and contest in a well settled and peaceful church; some are peevish, because the church will not consent to let them have their own will, or because others will not obey their assumed power. Some affect to make divisions upon every little occasion, out of unreasonable pretences of purity and order, where scripture gives no plain rule. Whatever varnish may colour over such practices in this world, yet such humourous and unreasonable disturbers of the peace shall receive no thanks from our Lord Jesus in the great day, whether they be pastors or people.

IV. "When we behold a society of christians flourishing in holiness and honourably maintaining the beauty of this sacred fellowship, let us take occasion to raise our thoughts to the heavenly world, to the church of the first-born, who are assembled on high, where everlasting beauty, order, peace, and holiness are maintained in the presence of Jesus our common Lord. And "when we meet with little inconveniences, uneasiness, and contest in any church of Christ on earth, let us point our thoughts and our hopes still upward to that divine fellowship of the saints, and the spirits of the just made perfect, where contention and disorder have no place." There the glories and the graces of the Redeemer, who is the head of the church, are diffused over all the happy assembly: They adore and love their God, and their Saviour with supreme fervency, and they love one another with pure affection; their hearts and souls are one, and they rejoice in the love of God, and in the presence of the Lamb for ever.

SERMON LIV*.

To Encourage the Reformation of Manners.

Ex. xvii. 11.—And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

THOUGH the design of my discourse be derived from this sentence in the history, yet it is necessary that the scene of the whole action be drawn, and the field of battle spread before us; then we shall see this passage in its true light, and the discourse will proceed in a more regular conformity to the words; nor can I describe the fight with Amalek so well as Moses has done: Let us read the account which this ancient and divine historian has given, beginning at the eighth verse.

Verse 8. *Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.* 9. *And Moses said unto Joshua, chuse us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: To-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in my hand.* 10. *So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.* 11. *And it came to pass when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.* 12. *But Moses's hands were heavy, and they took a stone, and put it under him; and he sat thereon: And Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.* 13. *And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.* 14. *And the Lord said unto Moses, write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: For I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.* 15. *And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi, that is, the Lord is my banner.* 16. *For he said, because the Lord has sworn, that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.*

Not only the ceremonies of the Jewish church, but the civil affairs of that nation, in many instances, were typical of the

* Preached at Salter's-Hall, to the Societies for Reformation of Manners, in the Cities of London and Westminster, October 6th; 1707.

christian state : Their release from the house of bondage, and their march through the wilderness to Canaan, was a shadow of our rescue from the slavery of sin, and our travels through this desert world to the heavenly country. Their rebellions and murmurings, their fiery serpents and destructive plagues which swept them away by thousands, were but a figure of our sins and sorrows, our backslidings and divine judgments. This is evident to those who will read and believe what St. Paul writes to the Corinthians ; 1 Cor. x. 1—11. Where, after he had briefly recounted their transgressions and punishments, he asserts, verse 11. that *all these things happened unto them for examples, or types as it is in the original ; or these things fell out typically, τυπικως* as the Alexandrine manuscript in the royal library bids us read it ; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the end of the world are come.

The enemies they met with in their way, represent those sinners that vex the christian church in its journey through this mortal state ; and Amalek may well figure out the biggest impieties, the most daring and profane wretches, against whom concerns a christian to make his utmost efforts : For these were the people that came first out against Israel, just after their escap from the hand of Pharaoh : They came out with violence and without any provocation ; they were those against whom the Lord swore he would have everlasting war ; verse 16. or such whose hand was lifted up against the throne of the Lord, as some translate this phrase. It is a description of sins and sinners of bold and impious character, that fight directly against heaven and holiness, against the light of nature and the laws of God and nations : Such as the Lord hath resolved that *the remembrance of them shall utterly be blotted out* ; verse 14.

It is against such iniquities, and such transgressors, immorality and wickednesses of the biggest size, that you have taken up arms, who appoint and attend this season of worship ; and in soul shall rejoice if ye may be this day animated to pursue the war. Now let us take a survey of the several persons that are placed in their proper posts and offices in this warfare against Amalek. Here is Moses, Aaron, and Hur, Joshua, and the chosen men of Israel.

Moses the law-giver, the supreme magistrate : “ He was king in Jeshurun when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together ;” Deut. xxxiii. 4, 5. He gave orders to Joshua to fight the Amalekites, while himself stood on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in his hand. This may be called a rod of authority and command, whereby his orders were continued : It was a sceptre in the hand of Moses, and the most powerful one that ever was held by a prince : It was

a rod for signal, like an ensign or banner to encourage the soldiers: It was a rod of faith, for by faith alone it could produce wonders:—wonders of destruction upon Egypt, wonders of division upon rocks and Red seas, wonders of deliverance for Israel, and all this without any natural force of its own; for it received all its power from faith, and from the presence of divinity with it. It was lifted up constantly from an eminent place where Moses stood, whence the holy army might see it, and obey orders, and renew their courage in battle. Though the hands of Moses seem to have been lifted up alternately, and not together, yet because the lifting up of the hands sometimes in scripture signifies prayer, therefore the constant fervency of intercession may be also implied here; and no doubt but these earnest requests to heaven, which this man of God offered upon the mount, while the people were fighting below, had a mighty influence on the labour and success of the day.

Blessed be God, we have a Moses in the midst of us on the top of the hill, a queen of a manly soul upon the throne of our British Israel: She has by her royal proclamations given order to fight with Amalek, to oppose and suppress the armies of iniquity: She still holds up the rod of command; and it may be well called the rod of God, not only because all authority is derived from God as the original source of government; but because here it is held up in his quarrel too. It shall be called a rod of faith and of power, for it has wrought wonders at a distance: This the fields of Blenheim witness, and the plains of Ramillies; wonders of rescue for the German empire, and wonders of liberty for mankind. Her hand is still stretched out against the enemies of heaven at home and abroad; and we have still reason to believe, that it is lifted up in addresses to heaven by faith and prayer, that all the adversaries of the Lord may be overcome.—O may her life be precious in the sight of the Lord, and guarded by the angel of the covenant, as the life of Moses was! May her days be many, as the days of Moses! Deut. xxxiv. 7.—May her eye never grow dim to the true interest of our Israel, nor her natural force and resolution to fight the battles of the Lord be ever abated!

Aaron is the next person mentioned here. Aaron the high-priest, though, perhaps he was not at this time invested with that office, yet being designed for it, we may take him now under this character; he was to assist Moses in bearing up his hand on the one side, as Hur on the other: We have also the ministers of the gospel in our age attending this holy warfare: Those whom the favour of her majesty hath advanced near to her royal person support her hands in this design, encourage her zeal to lift up

this standard against sin, and assist her to pray for victory: Nor are these, who lie at a distance from the throne, but still within the verge and shadow of its protection, less zealous in their assistance of the war, or less fervent in pleading with God for success. O may our Aarons never grow weary of encouraging the work of reformation, and giving their utmost aid to the pious design of our supreme magistrate! May they still revive and quicken the languishing diligence of all that have engaged in the same cause! And wheresoever men are joined in societies, to build the house of God, or to demolish the houses of satan, there let it be always said, that "with them are the prophets of God helping them;" Ezra v. 2.

Hur follows the mention of Aaron, and his post is to support the other hand of Moses against Amalek: His character seems to be a prudent man, and a considerable counsellor; Ex. xxiv. 14. when Moses left the camp of Israel for a season, "behold," saith he to the people, "Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them." The rod of power lifted up by the civil magistrate must be well managed by the hand of zeal, and the hand of prudence. Ministers and counsellors are the supports on each side to exhort to the work and advise the best methods of performance. All persons and societies that are contriving means of reformation, fall under the character of Hur; such are those gentlemen who have formed a scheme for carrying on war with sin and sinners, and brought their methods to a regularity and consistence; they have made the execution of them practicable, and much easier than at first. Our praises are due to the God of wisdom that such men are found in the nation; that the prudent man is not cut off, nor the counsellor perished from amongst us: O may their pious consultations be continued in their stated seasons! May they be executed with daily vigour, and attended with growing success!

Joshua is the chief person concerned in the execution of these orders of battle against Amalek; he ventures into the field, and fights the enemy. The inferior magistrates of every kind and degree bear a resemblance to his office, and should wear the image of his Spirit; courage and resolution becomes each of you that act according to the several ranks of your authority; fear not the rage nor the threats of Amalek, of the most profligate and haughty sinners; remember you have the warrant of Moses for what you do: The supreme magistrate ceases not to lift up the rod.

The chosen men of Israel are the last characters I take notice of here; they assist Joshua in the performance of his divine orders; such are those brave and generous spirits, whether of

larger or meaner outward circumstances, who pursue sin and sinners with the peril of their lives, and lead them captive to courts of justice that they may be punished. In vain had Joshua received his commands for battle, if no man of Israel had ventured into the field to assist him; had he gone alone, perhaps he might have slain a few enemies, and then perished himself; in vain would a magistrate attempt to suppress a nation of sinners if he had none to aid him; but few, very few can come under the notice of his own eyes, and by the fear of numbers he might well be discouraged from punishing those few. If there were none to discover the enemies, or to guard himself, he could scarce fulfil the sentence of the law against them; but when Moses, Aaron, and Hur, Joshua and the chosen men, all stand firm and maintain their posts, then Amalek is discomfited, and a nation of sinners rooted out.

There was a time indeed when Moses, upon the banks of the Red-sea, said to the people, *Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord*; Ex. xiv. 13. And they stood still and the salvation appeared: But God doth not always work miracles of deliverance without the use of instruments: Here Joshua and Israel are required to take up arms for their own defence; and if the captains or the soldiers had fled from the battle, Amalek had prevailed as well as if Moses had ceased to lift up his hand. I may venture then to lay down this great truth as the foundation of my following discourse: "When a war with sin is begun in a nation, it must be carried on without ceasing, or iniquity will prevail." Every one must stand to his post and fulfil his charge, lest the troops of the reformation be routed, and sin with all its legions overspread the country.

To render this proposition more evident to the mind, and more powerful over the will, I shall take this method:—

I. Prove that sin will prevail, if the war be neglected which you have happily begun, and carried on thus far.—II. Set before you some of the dreadful consequents of prevailing iniquity.—III. Remove the discouragements that may be ready to make your hands hang down in this work.—IV. By a few encouraging hints, endeavour to raise any that are sinking, and to strengthen all your resolutions in this glorious service to God and your country.

First, We may prove that iniquity will prevail if the war be neglected by these three considerations:

1. Consider that the nature of fallen man is turned aside from God, averse to all that is holy, and prone to wickedness: And if divine grace doth not renew the heart, the life will grow old in transgression, and abound in guilt. Where the root is

troyed them ; remember they will give you no quarter, and therefore you must give them none.

The *second* thing proposed, is to shew you what will be the dreadful consequence of prevailing iniquity : But what tongue can sufficiently describe them, or what ears endure the description ? When sin reigns and triumphs over a nation, the consequences are fatal and infinite, ruinous and everlasting. The destruction extends far, it reaches to the flesh and spirit, it involves posterity with the present age, and has a terrible influence upon all the evils of the world to come ; if we take but a little prospect of a few of them, it may serve to awaken our fear, and provoke our drowsy zeal to activity that we may prevent them.

I. Great dishonour to the name of God, and perpetual affronts to the Divine Majesty will abound amongst us. If Amalek prevail, the God of Israel will be blasphemed. If the authority of man and human punishments, which are visible and sensible, be not employed to restrain sinners, they will grow up to a contempt of the authority of God who is unseen, and despise his most awful threatenings ; and because their execution is delayed, his law will be hourly and impudently violated : If magistrates who behold wickedness will not punish it, the all-seeing eye of God will be called in question, and his judgment-seat disbelieved ; *how doth God know*, will the wicked say, *can he judge through the dark cloud ? Thick clouds are a covering to him that he seeth not, and he walketh in the circuit of the heavens*, that is afar off, above us, and takes no cognizance of our actions ; Job xxii. 13, 14. *The fools will say in their hearts there is no God* ; Ps. xiv. 1. Then by degrees his providence will become a jest, and all his invisible terrors a matter of derision. Now who is there of us willing to have our ears filled with such language of hell, with public and loud curses against our heavenly Father, our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier ? Can we bear to have all that is sacred and divinely dear to us, exposed to mockery ? All that we infinitely value, named with contempt ? All that we fear and worship, treated with insult and ridicule ? When God's holy name and attributes are made the song of the drunkards, our hearts may grieve within us, and our consciences will smite us inwardly with a sharp reproach, that we never assisted the reformation : While rivers of tears shall flow down your eyes, your lips will take up this doleful reflection, "Alas ! How much share have I in the guilt of these wild and open blasphemies of my God, because I never did any thing to prevent them."

II. Universal difficulties and discouragements will attend the practice and profession of piety ; for the more men improve

in wickedness themselves, the more will they hate all appearance of religion in others; and they that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall be sure to suffer persecution; 2 Tim. iii. 12. When the fools have said in their hearts there is no God, they will eat up his people as they eat bread; Ps. xiv. 4. All religious discourse shall be banished from conversation, and be put out of countenance with bitter raillery: This indeed is already too frequent, and pious conference is almost forbidden amongst us; but if sin further prevail, godliness will be afraid to appear in any of its forms: virtue must hide its head, and religion will be driven into corners. Profaneness has grown so bold these forty years and more, that a saint has been a word of scoff and reproach; in due time every thing that looks serious will become a scandal, and if there be any Lots amongst us, their souls will be vexed with the impure conversation of sinners; 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8. A man shall hardly be able to attend upon the public worship of God, but he must receive abuses in his way thither; the high way of holiness will be unoccupied, the travellers to Zion will be forced to walk in by-paths, and the frequenters of the house of God will cease in our Israel; Judges v. 6, 12, 13. but I hope our Deborah is risen, she is risen a mother in Israel, to prevent it; Awake, awake, Barak, arise every son of courage and authority, every man of prudence and zeal, arise, and lead this captivity captive; the Lord make you to have dominion over those mighty iniquities that would destroy all religion.

III. From the discouragements that will attend on the ways of God, a great decay of piety will ensue among some of the serious professors of it: Continual molestation will weary out the spirits of christians in a great degree, and because iniquity abounds the love of many will wax cold; Mat. xxiv. 12. Now who of us is willing to bear this reflection, "Religion is almost driven out of the land, and I have done little to keep it in: Godliness is baffled and lost, and I had not courage enough to stand up for God amongst the men of reformation: Amalek has beaten Israel out of the field, and I never drew sword against that cursed nation; or when I had struck a stroke or two I laid down my arms, and suffered Amalek to prevail."

IV. It will be a scandal to our country to suffer sin to grow rampant and sovereign in the midst of us; we shall bring a scandal upon the gospel that we profess, and a dishonour upon the holy name of christians that we bear: If the sins of heathenism multiply amongst us, we shall be a reproach to the christian faith. Have we no tenderness for the name of Christ? Shall we permit him to be accounted a minister of sin, by suffering the works of the devil, which he destroyed, to be built up again by bold transgressors? Bold men indeed, that sin against the light

of nature under the shining revelations of grace! In vain have we been famed for light and knowledge, in vain for piety and experimental godliness, in the days of our fathers; but now we grow a by-word among the nations, and an impure proverb: He swears like a Briton, he is as drunk as an Englishman, as lewd and profane as a Londoner: Surely it will not be very grateful to our ears, if such odious forms of speech should arise in neighbour-kingdoms. *Righteousness indeed exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people;* Prov. xiv. 34.

V. Not reproaches only will attend us, but real and multiplied mischiefs will afflict our civil interest, public and private. The public affairs of a nation must suffer certain detriment where wickedness roves loose and unrestrained: If the flood-gates of sin are opened, confusion will rush into the government like a deluge. Men that break the bonds of natural religion and of morality without controul, will grow lawless and ungovernable: When the yoke of a God and of natural conscience is shaken off publicly, the gentlest yoke of man will not long be endured; they will stand at defiance with the best of governments, they are fit under to receive every spark of ambition, they are ready for insurrection and public tumult: It is not religion, but wild enthusiasm or immorality, that sow the seeds of treason, and turn subjects into rebels. If I might address any of the inferior governors of the nation, I would say, are you willing that your authority should be mocked, and your forms of power and justice be made a laughing-stock? Are you willing that your seats of judgment should be insulted and thrown down? If not, see that you maintain them, by pronouncing sentence upon the wicked, and take care that it be executed; let it be done with speed, lest the contagion of vice spread amongst numbers, and grow too mighty to be subdued: Wickedness burns as the fire, and sometimes it flies suddenly through a community, as a flame through the trees of the forest, or through the buildings of a city, if timely care be not taken to extinguish it; it spreads like a young gangrene, if the limb affected be not cut off, the vital powers will quickly be too weak to resist the growing mischief. Let justice be exercised toward bold transgressors, for justice sometimes *preserves the king as well as mercy and truth; and though his throne is said to be upholden by mercy, yet a wicked king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them;* Prov. xx. 26—28.

Private families and particular persons will very sensibly suffer in their health, in their estates, and in other comforts of life, if iniquity abound. *Whoredom, wine, and new wine take away the heart;* Hos. iv. 11. that is, waste the understanding of

1, and turn them into fools and idolaters, as the next words join it; which in our language signifies, that lust and drunkenness weaken the minds of men, blind their consciences, and make them atheists of them, I need not mention the wound and the discoloration that such sinners shall get, and the reproach which shall not be wiped away; Prov. vi. 33. for the foregoing verses speak of something more dreadful; *the adulteress will hunt for the precious; he that practises this sin lacketh understanding, for he destroys his own soul*; verses—26 32. Fathers, what will you say when you see your children debauched in their principles, and ruined by want of industry? When you find atheism prevail in their hearts, irreligion in their lives? When they break the bars of paternal government and will no more be reprov'd? When they have leap all the fences of restraining grace, and make haste to destruction? This they have learned of those evil companions whom you never endeavoured to reform by just punishment. What will you say, fathers, when you follow your sons to an early grave, and putrefaction enters into their bones before the season; you that never did any thing to stop this growing plague among those who have infected your own children? What will you say, fathers, when you see your young heirs, now grown to the size of your hopes and wishes, seized and drawn away to execution and the gibbet, for crimes which you never took care to suppress in other men? Mothers, what will ye say?—I must forbear to address the tender sex in such accents of prophetic sorrow; to present your eyes with such prospects as would touch your passions too sensibly; it would make the wound in your souls too deep, and melt you into tears; let a remembrance of such mournful scenes excite you to contribute something towards the general reformation. Ye wealthy citizens, the danger may come when you shall be scarce secure in your own dwellings, but be robbed of your treasures by nightly villains that will satisfy their lusts by rapine, and make provision for their safety by plunder and violence: You will confess the judgment of God is just in it, though the sin of man be great; for that you never gave one penny to carry on the wars of the Lord with the Amalekites. The Amalekites have now fallen upon you, and rifled you of many a pound.

VI. Fearful judgments from God will ensue; *For the wrath of God will be revealed from heaven, sooner or later, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*; Rom. i. 18. Fire and brimstone may come down upon an island as well as upon the cities of the plain; other countries are capable of volcanic eruptions, besides Naples and Sicily, and the dominions of antichrist; with the breath of his mouth the Lord may raise an earthquake that shall sink Great Britain into the sea,

and it shall be found no more. Perhaps God may be now, as it were, arguing the case, as with Ephraim and with Israel of old; Hos. xi. 8. *How shall I give thee up, London? How shall I deliver thee, Westminster? How shall I make thee as Admah, How shall I set thee as Zeboim?* Which were twin sisters of Sodom and Gomorrah, and involved in the same vengeance; Gen. xiv. and xix. 24, 25. *O that the heart of the Lord may be turned within him, and his repentings kindled together, that he may not execute the fierceness of his anger!* Yet let not us say peace to ourselves, if unrestrained villainies abound amongst us: Why should England be so fond and partial to itself, as to believe that it should be privileged by heaven above all kingdoms in all ages? Why should we flatter ourselves that we only shall be indulged to sin with a high hand, and without punishment? We hate the doctrine of indulgences, and yet we act as under the influence of such a persuasion. Shall the countries around us drink of the cup of his indignation with various mixture, and we still be excused from tasting? The Lord of hosts has many armies of judgment and desolation at his command; the variety of plagues on Egypt is not a thousandth part of his artillery, nor of the kinds of terrors that are treasured in his magazines; he can draw his sword of pestilence, and give it this commission; *Go and slay a third part of men:* he can send the sword of our enemies amongst us, who will neither spare nor pity; he can let France in upon us like a flood, and Lewis the XIV. will be as zealous a servant of the Lord in such work, as Nebuchadnezzar was when God sent him to *punish Jerusalem and the nations*; Jer. xxv. 9. When the French dragoons insult us, and our necks are put under the feet of our enemies, we may then perhaps remember and repent that we did not arise for the Lord against evil-doers, and tread down the enemies of his holiness.

Or, if the thunders of God lie still for a season, and his lightnings be not kindled; if plagues and famines, and foreign armies be restrained from our coasts, and peace and plenty dwell in our borders; God has judgments of a severer kind to inflict upon us, though they are more silent and less affect our senses. He can give us up to the lusts of our own heart, and send judicial blindness: He can consign us over to the power of Satan, to our beloved lethargy and spiritual death: He can suffer the devil to *sear our consciences*, and to inspire us from hell to *work all uncleanness with greediness*; Eph. iv. 19. Our understandings may be sold into the hands of strong delusions, and the wisest of us be left to believe a lie: or God may continue the messengers of his gospel in the midst of us, but give them a new commission, even that which he gave to the prophet Isaiah for Israel, that

we shall attend our exercises of divine worship : A drop of this of vengeance lighting on us, " will turn our eyes into dark- and our hearts into nether mill-stones ; and after all this, all indignation may be poured out upon the land, in most terrible instances, nor his anger be turned away from us, but stand stretched out still." Thus he dealt with the Jews his people ; let us read it and fear the parallel ; Is. vi. 10, 11. " I will make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, shut their eyes ; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long : And he answered, until cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without inhabitant, and the land be utterly desolate." The foregoing chapter will inform us of the sins that procured this threatening ; it will be well if we do not find our names or characters there.

I must not break off this part of my discourse without mention of the final consequent of prevailing iniquity, and that is, that the inhabitants of such a nation shall go down to hell by the jaws of hell ; and England, that hath been lifted up to heaven by her favours, shall be thrust down to the bottomless pit for her ravaged abominations. *Eternal death is the wages of sin ;* Rom. vi. 23. and can we bear this thought, that the place of rest shall be thronged with our neighbours and acquaintance, the dominions of hell peopled out of the land of our nativity ? multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision, when the heavens shall be awakened, when the Lord shall sit there to judge the nations round about ;" Joel iii. 12, 14. What a terrible thought is it, if almost all England should be placed at the right-hand of the Judge in that day, and fall under the sentence, *Depart ye cursed ?* And perhaps numbers of our own kindred, seduced by the growing vices of the nation, shall stand amongst the guilty, and expect the vengeance. Let a natural compassion touch our hearts here, and move us by proper means to put a stop to spreading wickedness. Let us use our utmost efforts to quench that fire which will burn to the low-hell.

The *third* proposal was to mention the discouragements that attend this work of reformation, and to try to remove them.

I. Reproaches and scandals have been cast plentifully upon the societies for reformation : These are ready to sink the spirits of such as are engaged in the work, and affright others from joining their assistance. But have you *so learned Christ*, that you shrink at his service, and retire because *the world hates you*, that he gives you ill language ? Consider the Captain of your Salvation, what a sea of malice and reproach he passed through, when he came down from heaven to take upon him the work of

should not effectually reduce the transgressor, yet it is often found of necessary and happy use for the welfare of a whole community, by deterring others from the same crimes.

3. They complain that you are "partial, and have a respect of persons. Some you prosecute without mercy, and you indulge an escape to others who are equally criminal." Answer them that you pursue vice impartially, wheresoever you find it, and that you follow those methods that may most effectually reclaim mankind. Tell them that you make no distinction between transgressors of high or low degree; you put no difference between the guilty, whether they belong to your own party and profession, or to another. Assure them that in this case you are unwilling to know a friend or a brother, even as the sons of Levi, when they girded on their swords in the camp of Israel, and consecrated themselves that day to the Lord, every man upon his companion, his neighbour, his brother, and his son; Ex. xxxii. 26, 27, 29. But the apostle Jude seems to direct you to make a difference in other respects with compassion and fear, treating those more severely *that are mockers and sensualists walking after their own ungodly lusts*; Jude 18, 19, 22. The very design of the work of reformation seems to require that a distinction be made between young and old offenders, between the bashful and the impudent, the trembling transgressor and the obstinate wretch, that has no sense of guilt or shame: Some may be reclaimed for ever, by one admonition or reproof, others must be sharply chastised to make them feel conviction. Yet it needs divine prudence to practise these directions aright; and sometimes you must be forced to make no distinction at all where nature and virtue seem to desire one, lest the enemy should take occasion to revile your conduct. May the God of wisdom and counsel be ever near you, and direct you to pursue your glorious designs by the most successful and unrepachable methods!

4. You are charged with tempting others to sin that you may accuse them. But this slander is so malicious, and so inconsistent with your design, that your enemies can persuade but few to believe it. The standing rules of your societies bear witness against it, and your constant practice refutes the lie. It is easy to accuse in general, and fling impudent falsehoods in gross upon the fairest reputation; but you have made frequent and bold appeals to your reproachers, and none of them have been able to fasten the charge by any particular proof upon any of the members of your societies.

Allronts and railings you must sometimes expect to meet with; *blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and speak all manner of evil against you falsely, for the sake of Christ and his name; rejoice and be exceeding glad*; Mat. v. 11. Bind the re-

proaches of Christ to you, as your ornament and glory. Go on dauntless against such oppositions. If you know how to encounter these I have mentioned with courage you may contemn all the rest. Adore that God that has kept the honour of your societies hitherto : and so supported their credit, that the spite of all the powers of darkness, and the smoke of hell hath not been able to sally your reputation, or sink your esteem amongst the men of wisdom and virtue.

II. Another discouragement you meet with proceeds from the magistrates. Some of the inferior rank refuse to assist you in seizing the criminals whom you have discovered : And some in higher stations that should punish the vicious, rather brow-beat and discountenance the reformers. But our God be praised that there are some of higher and lower rank that join their hearts and their hands with yours. Their zeal and power are engaged in the wars of the Lord against sin : May their names be honoured upon earth, and their reward be great in heaven ! But let such as appear on the side of sin blush and be ashamed that they should use the authority which they receive from God, to countenance or favour the enemies of his holiness : Let them know that there is " a higher than the highest on earth, that beholds the perverting of justice and judgment in a province ;" Ec. v. 8. Let them be put in mind of that awful judgment-seat, before which all mankind must stand upon a level ; where their commissions cease for ever, and their distinguishing ranks of place and power are known no more. Though it hath been said, " ye are Gods, yet ye shall die as men ;" Ps. lxxxii. 6. Remember therefore the tribunal to which you must give up an account of your magistracy. What will you say to the Judge, " whose eyes are a flame of fire," when he shall demand of you, did " ye indeed speak righteousness on earth ? Did ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men ;" Ps. lviii. 1. Have ye stood, " for the praise of them that do well," and been " a terror to evil-doers," or have you " bore the sword in vain ?" Wherein have ye appeared the " ministers of God," if ye have never " executed wrath upon him that doth evil ?" Rom. xiii. 3, 4. Then shall the sentence of the Lord go forth against those that have justified the wicked for cowardice or for covetousness. For to " justify the wicked is an equal abomination in the sight of God as to condemn the righteous ;" Prov. xvii. 15.

III. The loss of time and the expence of money in the prosecution of vice through the courts of justice, is more than your private circumstances will bear. This I confess is a discouragement to some, but we may find some relief for it. It is true you are not to neglect the necessary duties that you owe to

your families, and let your own household starve, while you are endeavouring to ruin the household of Satan. But there are many leisure hours of life that may be employed in this holy warfare; and the time spent in this service will turn to good account in the days of eternity. As for the expence of money which is necessary to carry on this war, there are some hundreds of gentlemen and ladies in the present assembly, that can answer this objection much better than I. My best method of answering it, is but to persuade you, my honoured friends, to attempt and try what you can do towards it. One line under your hands, or a single item in your will, is an answer more to the purpose than whole sheets of my writing, or than if I should continue my discourse till the sun go down. The charge of the prosecution of lewd houses is very great, as I am informed, and had the societies more assistance of this kind the reformation would be carried on more sensibly. Let me address the richer part of this audience: Will it not be a joyful prospect on your dying bed to think that the battle grows strong against sin when your heads lie down in the dust, and that by means of the sinews you have added to the war in your last testament? Will it not be a hopeful evidence of your hatred of sin, that you contend against it, even in the grave, and maintain an everlasting fight?

IV. The danger and risk of life in this cause is another discouragement: But was there ever any war without danger, or victory without courage! Besides, the perils you run here are almost infinitely less than those which attend the wars of nations, where the cause is not half so divine. The fields of battle in Flanders, and almost all over Europe, have drunk up the blood of millions, and have furnished graves for large armies: but it can hardly be said that you have hitherto *resisted unto blood striving against sin*; Heb. xii. 4. In a war of more than twelve years continuance there has but one man fallen. The providence of God has put helmets of salvation upon your heads. Some of you can relate wonders of deliverance and safety, when you have been beset by numbers, and their rage has kindled into resolutions of revenge: the Lord has taken away their courage in a moment, the *men of might have not found their hands*; thus he has caused *even the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he hath restrained*; Ps. lxxvi. 5, 10. Read over this psalm, and with divine valour pursue the fight. But if your life should be lost in such a cause as this, it will be esteemed martyrdom in the sight of God, and shall be thus written down in the book of the wars of the Lord. Believe me, these red lines will look well in the records of heaven, when the judgment shall be set, and the books opened in the face of men and angels.

The **FOURTH** head of my discourse shall address you with some hints of encouragement, and I shall not much enlarge upon them, since the review of the excellent sermons that have been published on this occasion may administer to you more spirits and vigour to promote this reforming work, this war with national iniquities. Consider,

First, what abundant success you have already had in these pious labours; you have seen part of your hopes already accomplished. Wickedness is put out of countenance: Impiety is not so public as once it was, nor religion so much affronted. We may now walk the whole length of the city, and our ears not be afflicted with one oath or blasphemy. There are not so many violations of decency in the streets, nor inroads upon modesty and honour. Virtue is not so much ashamed to appear as once it was, nor afraid to wear its own colours. The remainder of your work is attended with greater ease: You have been successful in the first onset; proceed then with pleasure, and finish the glorious war. Let others be encouraged to list themselves in this service, which is now grown more tolerable since the forerunners have broke down the strongest bars of difficulty, have made rough ways plain for those that follow, and have borne the burden and heat of the day. Consider again,

Secondly, What an influence you have had to save the nation from overflowing iniquities, and perhaps also from overflowing scourges. Surely you have been some of those that have mourned in secret for all the abominations that were done in former years in the midst of the land, and no doubt there is a divine mark set upon your foreheads, which the destroying angel shall read, if ever he be sent *through the midst of the city to slay utterly the old and the young*; Ezek. ix. 4. But ye have been some of those that hitherto have stood in the breach, as Phinehas did, when the anger of the Lord has been breaking in upon the camp of our Israel. *Ye have been zealous for his name sake. Ye have executed judgment, and turned away the wrath of the Lord*; Num. xxv. 11. And as we have reason to believe your interest in the court of heaven has been considerable on the peace of the nation; so it is unknown what valuable service ye have done for particular souls. Perhaps there are some that bless God at this day for the first inward convictions of sin they received by your providential discovery of their vices. Perhaps there are some now in heaven, whose stupid consciences you first awakened, and made them more susceptible of the impressions of the gospel. Go on then, according to the advice of Solomon; Prov. xxii. 13, 14. *Withhold not correction from the child, for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.* Go on with this design to *convert the*

sinner from the error of his way. Thus shall ye save his soul from death, and by the discovery of a few, ye shall hide a multitude of sins; James v. 20. Consider,

Thirdly, That you are engaged on the side of God, you are fighting his battles, and the inscription of your banner is *Jehovah-nissi*. Think on the high honour that he hath bestowed upon you by translating you out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son, and employing you in his service. Remember that you were once on the side of sin, and rebels against heaven, *alienated from the life of God, and enemies in your mind by wicked works; Col. i. 21.* O give him the glory of his reconciling and renewing grace; and when you behold sinners wallowing in their pollutions, let each of you cry out with wonderful thankfulness, "Lord, who or what am I, that thou shouldst draw me out of that sink of sin in which the world dwells! That thou shouldst pluck me as a brand out of the fire! That thou shouldst make so sweet a difference betwixt me and others, who am by nature a child of wrath, even as they! O why was not I suffered to run to the same excess of riot and be exposed to the same punishment and shame!" While you are endeavouring to reclaim others, let your hearts offer up many a grateful sacrifice of praise to God for yourselves: Adore his restraining mercy and recovering love. This will maintain a right frame of spirit within you, and a true tenderness for the souls of those whom you punish: Rest not till you enjoy the brightest and most delightful evidences of regenerating grace in your own souls; this will make all your future labours for God more abundant, pleasant and easy. Consider also,

Fourthly, That God is engaged on your side. He manages his providence, he sends his ministers, his gospel, and his Spirit to reform the nature of men, and to destroy sin from the earth. Be often upon your knees with your hands lifted up to heaven and engage the continuance of divine presence with you: Proceed and pray heartily for your own success: Wrestle with God in supplication, that sin his enemy may be overcome, and the sinners whom you prosecute may be reduced to piety, and saved in the day of the Lord. Let the hand of prayer never hang down when the rod of battle is lifted up against Amalek, for it is only divine assistance that ye can prevail. Ye have the blessing of the Lord upon you for your encouragement, and the hearts and prayers of all good men with you, though you have not all the hands. There was a bitter curse of old pronounced by an angel against Meroz, merely for a neglect of the divine warfare, I pray heartily that it may light on none of our heads; Judges v. 23. "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitter the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the

rd, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." It is much more pleasant to me to read the blessing that follows, and apply with a little variation to our present purpose; verses 24, 26. Blessed above women shall Anne our sovereign be; blessed all she be above women in the tent, or on the throne." She puts her hands to the work of reformation, and her right-hand is up the rod of God against profaneness and immorality. Blessed are all those that assist her in this work, according to their several ranks and capacities. My heart and the hearts of all my hers and brethren in the ministry, are towards the governors of this city, that offer themselves willingly amongst the people for his service. " Bless ye the Lord ;" verse 9. Consider,

In the *last* place, for your encouragement, that ye are engaged on the side of certain victory; for sin must be destroyed forever. The "old serpent that deceives the nations must be cast out." The "new heavens and the new earth must appear, wherein dwelleth righteousness." It was doubtless an encouraging word to the Israelites in all the troubles that ever they met with from Amalek in following ages, that the "Lord himself would have war with that people from generation to generation, and that the name of Amalek should be blotted out from under heaven. Though Amalek be the first of the nations, yet his latter end shall be that he perish for ever;" Num. xxiv. 20. Therefore the commission of the Lord to Saul ran thus; 1 Sam. xv. 19. "Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then will ye not arise and obey the voice of the Lord," and contend against obstinate sinners under the banner of our blessed Redeemer? Assurance of conquest should give spirits and courage to the battle. Whosoever "makes war with the Lamb, the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings;" Rev. xvii. 14. "Out of his mouth goes a sharp sword to smite the nations of the ungodly, and on his head are many crowns;" Rev. xix. 12, 15. Cease not then to lift up your hands against iniquity till it be blotted out from under heaven. Be faithful to the death in maintaining the war with sin, and ye shall receive a crown of life and righteousness;" Rev. ii. 10.

PREFACE TO SERMON LV.

WHEN I had just delivered this plain sermon from the pulpit, it was a great surprize to me to find myself surrounded with importunities to make it more public. Nor can I impute this to any thing but to the affectionate zeal and concern of my auditors about all events that relate to the royal house of Great Britain, and to a mind well prepared by the late important occurrences to receive instructions of piety from a common discourse without art or ornament.

I must acknowledge, that when any great and momentous changes arise in the world, it is my custom, in the course of my ministry, to excite my hearers to a pious notice and improvement of them. And when, upon the death of our late gracious Sovereign, I observed among my acquaintance so just and sincere a joy for the peaceful succession of a protestant prince to the British throne, I was desirous to turn the stream of it into a religious channel, and to awaken their thoughts to a more solemn and distinct observation of the hand of God, both in putting a sudden period to the reign of one excellent king, and the immediate advancement of another: But I have always had an aversion to send any of these composures to the press. I know several of my brethren are much better qualified for such services; and after almost thirty years spent in the ministry I have never yet published one sermon on such political occasions.

But the requests of many persons multiplied so fast upon me at this time, that I found myself constrained to submit my own inclinations, and resign them up to the power which my friends have over me. Perhaps the voice of the people in this respect may be the voice of God.

Had I designed to present the world with a discourse relating to this great event, I think I should have chosen a different text, and taken much more time in the composition. But such as it is, I must now commit it to the candour of my readers; and humbly ask of God to bless my first essay of this kind to the service of the souls of men, that in all occurrences they may learn first to pay a religious veneration to the hand of God, the supreme and eternal King, and then that they may give all due honour to the memory of our deceased royal benefactors, and may yield all affectionate duty and submission to those whom the kind providence of God has been long preparing for the throne, and has now exalted to that sublime dignity and important station. May divine wisdom and mercy ever guide and defend them! May the almighty God pour out his richest blessings on their royal persons and their issue, in a long and glorious succession, and render them the guards and honours of christianity and Great Britain, so long as the sun and moon endure. *Amen.*

June 23, 1727.

SERMON LV. &c.*

The solemn and important occurrences of the last week call us to a serious notice of the hand of God in them: The death of our late gracious Sovereign, and the happy accession of his present Majesty, have diverted my thoughts from the subject which I lately proposed, and have determined me to entertain you this day with the words of the holy prophet.

ISAIAH v. 12—And the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: But they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.

IN the reigns of several of our former princes, we had a just and melancholy apprehension of popish darkness and tyranny breaking in upon us at their death. The peaceful and regular succession of a protestant heir to his Father's throne, is such a blessing as hath not been known in Great Britain for a hundred years past†: It might well be expected then that it should be received with universal joy and gladness of heart. The occasion for it is proper and glorious: Nor will I censure the moderate use of a feast, and a song, and instruments of music, to express this inward and becoming joy: Nor doth the prophet in my text forbid them as unlawful things; but he gives it as the character of the profane part of mankind, that upon all occasions they give up themselves to sensual merriment, with an utter neglect of the providence of God.

In such events as we behold this day, the man of wisdom and piety looks all around him: He takes a religious notice of the death of a preceding prince, which makes way for the introduction of his successor, and he points his eye to the hand of God in the sudden change of our rulers. The true christian assumes the language of the prophet Daniel with a devout temper of mind, *Blessed be the name of God for ever, for wisdom and might are his: He changeth the times and the seasons, he removeth kings, and he setteth up kings; Daniel ii. 21.* Whereas the formal professors of christianity, or the vicious part of the people, shew their mirth by *enflaming themselves with strong drink; and the*

* Preached at Berry-street, June 16th, 1707, on the death of George I. and the Succession of George II.

† The last instance of this kind was when Charles the First succeeded his father James the First, in the year 1625, and indeed this was the only one, except when Edward the Sixth came to the crown in the room of Henry the Eighth, his father.

harp and the viol are in their feasts, but they regard not the will of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands. This is the crime which the prophet severely reproves, and for which he pronounces divine threatenings in the following verses.

To make a right improvement of the present providence and the text, I shall enquire,

I. What sort of notice we ought to take of the dispensations of God, and especially in the affairs of nations.—II. I consider, What is the guilt and danger of disregarding the will of God herein.—III. I will apply these things particularly to the present events.

First, "What sort of notice we ought to take of the dispensations of God?" I answer briefly under three general heads

1. "We should make a solemn observation of what is sad and afflictive in the events of divine providence and learn a instructive lessons thereby." *If the life of a sparrow be the object of divine superintendency, if a sparrow fall not to the ground without our heavenly Father; Mark x. 29.* much more should we direct our thoughts to the operation and influence of God in greater incidents of the life and death of man, and the important changes that depend upon them. *When the judgments of God are abroad in the earth the inhabitants of the world will not be righteous, or at least they ought to do it; Is. xxvi. 8, 9.* *Is there any evil in the city, any sorrow attends a nation, but the Lord hath a hand in it? Amos iii. 6.* *The voice of the Lord hath been heard, and the man of wisdom will see his name, will hear the voice, and him that hath appointed it; Micah vi. 9.* The man of wisdom will enquire, "What have I done to provoke the Almighty to send down his judgments from heaven? What abuse of his mercies have I been guilty of, to provoke the great God to remove them from me? What share have I had in the common guilt of a nation, that may have awakened the anger of God against any instances of public sorrow?"

2. "We should raise our hearts to a delightful notice, and a grateful sense of the mercy of God in his providences." The business of religion is not all sadness and mourning. We are bound to take notice of public joys, as well as of common extensive calamities. A christian may rejoice in the light of heaven and the sun-beams, as well as observe the clouds, and thunder and storms; but he must remember they all come from the same hand. The wicked of the earth make themselves merry amidst the comforts of life, without any notice of the God that gives them any thank-offerings to his name: But a sincere christian will receive his blessings from the hand of his heavenly Father. He looks on them as the distributions of divine love, he becomes them sanctified by the covenant of rich grace, and thereb

tastes a double relish of sweetness in them. Common and public blessings afford him a private and delicious sensation beyond what the thoughtless herd of mankind partake of: *The stranger intermeddles not with this joy*; Prov. xiv. 10. When he drinks of the sweet streams of delight here on earth, he traces them to the fountain head in heaven, and as it were bathes himself in the immense ocean of goodness. *This God is my God, my heavenly friend, and he will be my God for ever and ever*; Ps. xlviii. 14.

3. "We should make a humble enquiry into the various duties, both toward God and man, which divine providence calls us to, at special seasons, and under special circumstances." It is the language of a soul that walks with God, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* Acts ix. 6. There is not a day nor a hour but brings a duty with it; not a change of providence but calls for peculiar practices of piety. We are placed here in a state of service, and God requires that our eye be directed to him hourly, *as the eye of a servant to his master, or a handmaid to her mistress*, so speaks the royal Psalmist; Ps. cxxiii. 2. We should watch every motion of the right-hand of our God, and all the progress of his footsteps in his government of the world, that we may learn our proper business thence; "that in the time of prosperity we may rejoice in the Lord, and in the hour of adversity we may set ourselves to consider our ways and humble ourselves before him;" Ec. vii. 14. It is the word of God that appoints us the general rules of duty and religion; but it is providence that leads us to apply these rules, and to put them into daily practice. Thus having enquired what sort of notice a christian ought to take of the hand of God in the events of life, we proceed to shew,

In the second place, "what is the guilt and danger of neglecting this pious practice: And that may be comprized chiefly under the four following heads:

1. Those who take no notice of the operations of God in the affairs of human life, "abuse their reason and their better powers, both as men and as christians." Our eyes and our ears, and other senses of the body, are given us to take notice of the outward objects that surround us, which are the springs of pain or pleasure; and these we enjoy in common with the beasts of the earth: The birds and the fishes, the creeping things, and every little insect, employ their corporeal powers for the same purposes; but man was made with nobler principles, and capacitated to discover and discern the hand of God his Creator, and to observe his supreme direction of all the affairs of mankind: And if we consider ourselves as christians, we profess still a diviner principle of converse with God. How mean, how ignoble and degenerate

a thing is it then, for men who profess christianity, to look no further than the objects of sense, and sink themselves to the rank of the brute creation? Man, though he be raised, by the station of his nature, to a more honourable character than the rest of the animals; yet if he remain without understanding, and thoughtless of his God, *he becomes like the beasts that perish*; Ps. xlix. 20. *Brute beasts, which, as the apostle says, are made to be destroyed*; 2 Pet. ii. 12. *So men that regard not the operation of the Lord, nor consider the work of his hands, the Lord will destroy them and not build them up*; Ps. xxviii. 5.

2. Those who disregard the work of God in the events of human life, “they deprive the great God himself of that honour which he demands and expects, especially from his more important providences.” Do not his sublime wisdom, his extensive goodness, and his almighty power, display themselves gloriously in his providential government of mankind? And is it not with this design, that his intelligent creature man should take notice of this display of his glories? To what purpose are all the manifestations of his mercy and of his judgment among men, if the sons of Adam disregard them all? Will not the supreme Governor of the world resent such a stupid and sottish conduct? Does the great God write his own name in every leaf of his two great volumes of nature and providence, and shall his creature man take no notice of it, and refuse to read it? Will he for ever bear with creatures that neglect to take notice of the name and works of their almighty Maker?

3. “They bereave themselves of the rich advantages that may be derived from such converse with God about the events of human life.” If we were but wise and curious observers of the conduct of providence, what divine experiments might we obtain of the wisdom and of the grace of God; and lay up a treasure of sweet and solid foundations for encouragement and hope in days to come? The royal Psalmist assures us of blessed advantages to be derived from a skilful notice of divine providences; Ps. cvii. 43. *Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord. They who learn to know his name, by a wise attendance to his works, will put their trust in him*; Ps. ix. 10.

If we overlook the hand of the Almighty in the events of human life, we lose much of the spiritual profit of awful and afflictive providences, and much of the sweetness of temporal mercies. Such a sinful neglect will also lead us by degrees to a woeful omission of our daily duties, and bring us into great danger of degeneracy, and backsliding, into a carnal and worldly frame of spirit: Whereas if we make it our business to watch the hand of God in the occurrences of the world, this is indeed

living by faith, as seeing him that is invisible; Heb. xi. 27. and we are much better prepared by such a converse with God on earth for a more intimate blessed converse with him in the world of sight and enjoyment.

4. Those who regard not the works of the Lord, provoke him to deprive them of all the blessings of life, and to abandon them to utter ruin. How can they ever hope that the Lord will bestow repeated mercies upon them, when they take no notice of his power and his hand in the blessings they have already received? How can they expect to enjoy the continuance of present comforts? "Israel did not know that I gave them corn, and wine, and oil, therefore I will return and take away my corn in the season thereof, and my wine in its season, and will recover my wool which was given to cover their nakedness;" Hos. ii. 8, 9. If this be our practice, we may justly expect to be left of God, and bereaved of the mercies that relate to this life and the life to come. If we like not to retain God in our knowledge, and to glorify him as God, we may justly fear, to be given up to a reprobate mind and to final destruction; Rom. i. 21, 28. Let such stupid and regardless sinners read the threatenings of the Lord against such brutish people in the words that follow my text. "Therefore my people shall go into captivity, because they have no knowledge; their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst: Therefore hell hath enlarged itself; and opened its mouth without measure, and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it."—A just vengeance on such impiety! I proceed now to

The third general head which I proposed, and that is, to "apply the sense of my text to the particular event of the last week." And I shall divide the circumstances of this great event; viz. the death of one king, and the succession of another, together with the notices we should take of it, under the three particulars before mentioned, viz. We are called to consider what there is in it of an awful and afflictive kind; what blessed mixtures of mercy attend the afflictive providence, and what are our present duties, both to God and man, which are derived thence.

I. Let us consider what there is in this providence that is awful and afflictive, and what lessons of serious instruction we may draw from it.

1. Here is the death of one of the greatest men upon earth: A king whose dominion was spread from sea to sea, and who reigned over several nations: A prince who held the balance of Europe, and determined the superiority to which side soever he inclined: One that was arbiter of peace and war among the po-

tentates of the world. Yet behold he is subject to mortality and the common stroke of death ; Ps. lxxxiii. 6, 7. " I have said ye are Gods," because the power of magistrates bears some resemblance to that of the God of heaven : Therefore they are called " the children of the Most High ; but they must die like other men. "It is the hand of the Lord hath wrought this, in whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind ;" Job xii. 9, 10.

The lesson that we derive from this view of things is, to " take heed lest we depend too much on the life of the best of princes." Though we derive many blessings through their influence, yet we must remember they are not immortal. Let God alone be the solid and everlasting rest and refuge of our souls, whose life is eternity, whose kingdom reigns over all, and his dominion is for ever and ever ; Ps. cxlvi. 3, 4, 5. " Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help ; his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish," and all our dependencies are vain and frustrate. " Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God, who made heaven and earth, and sea, and keepeth the truth for ever ;" verse 6. Is. ii. 22. " Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of ?" God alone is our immortal hope.

2. We may remark in this event, the sudden death of this great man in a journey to his native land. He set out from his palace in Great Britain in a state of health and vigour, with a firm constitution, and strength above the proportion of his years : But ere he arrived at the place which he designed, he was smitten with a mortal faintness, and hurried away from the earth in an unexpected hour : He was arrested in his journey by a fatal messenger from the King of kings, a messenger whose name is Death, and whose commission admits of no delay : a messenger who lays his cold hand on princes, and bears them away resistless through the midst of their guards, to their long home, and the unseen world. Vain was the skill of physicians in that mournful hour ; the zeal and fondness of a brother's love was in vain. He arrived at the palace of Osnaburg, the habitation of his dearest brother, and only gave him the sad opportunity to see a dying monarch, and take his last long leave of so near and so desirable a relative.

What lesson shall we learn now from the suddenness of this great event but to " awaken our own souls to a constant readiness for a removal." *Be ye always ready,* says our Lord, *for ye know not when ye shall be called, whether at even or at midnight, or when the cock crows in the morning ;* Mark xiii. 35. Whether

we shall be summoned away at once from our own homes, or when we are travelling in distant lands. Let us remember we are still borderers on the grave, and the eternal world, and we are always within a moment's reach of the invisible state of the region of spirits. It is but the wink of an eye, the cessation of the pulse, the stoppage of our breath, and we are gone beyond the power of medicines, and the art of man to recal us. Who would venture upon a journey without having his soul insured in the hands of Jesus the Saviour?

There is another reflection that we may derive from this circumstance of the death of our late sovereign, and that is, how often have we ourselves been preserved in journeys, when our gracious monarch died in the midst of his travels? How have we left our habitations in peace, visited our friends in distant parts, and returned to our dwellings in peace again? But this great man was cut off on a sudden, before he reached the place designed! How often have our friends gone forth from the midst of us, and been brought back with safety and joy? Our king went from us and returns no more; here is the sovereignty of Divine Providence; here is the interposing will of the Almighty: Let us remember then to take the will and providence of the great God into our consultations, *when we say, to-day, or to-morrow, we will go into such a city, and continue there a season, and return again: whereas we know not what we shall be on the morrow: What is your life? It is even a vapour that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away; we ought therefore to say, if the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that, according to our purpose; James iv. 14.*

3. Let us remember that this great event carries in it the appearance of a huge affliction to Great Britain, for it is the death of a king whose happy accession was a glorious deliverance of our nation from slavery, and a defence of our religion from popish superstition, tyranny, and blood: We have lost a great and glorious benefactor, under whose government we had enjoyed the blessings of peace and plenty for so many years together. At his accession to the crown he scattered our fears and filled every soul with gladness: He crushed a dangerous rebellion in our land in the beginning of his reign; and by the wisdom of his counsels at home, and the terror of his arms abroad, he maintained peace among the nations. This is he concerning whom we are ready to say, that we shall sit many years under his shadow in our native land, enjoying the comforts of life, and the privileges of the house of God. But he is smitten, his life is vanished, and he is gone from the earth: Our deliverer and our guardian is removed from the midst of us, he will deliver and defend us no more.

The lesson of instruction which we derive hence is this, The great God doth not stand in need of the greatest of men to carry on his own work. O! the divine magnificence of the government of God, who can prepare and qualify instruments for his own service, and employ them for a season for blessed purposes, and lay them aside again at pleasure, without the least interruption to his important designs! If the blessed God had stood in need of a man, for the support of his interest in the world, and for the guard of our nation, one would be ready to say, surely our gracious departed sovereign would have been continued in the midst of us, and would have been preserved yet many years on the British throne. *But the Lord seeth not as man sees*; 1 Sam. xvi. 7. *His thoughts are above our thoughts, and his ways are above ours, as the heavens are above the earth*; Is. lvii. 7. He hath seen fit to cut short the life of our king, the guardian of our liberties, and the defendèr of our faith, and yet we trust he intends to save Great Britain, and to preserve his churches in the midst of her: He can do it while king George our deliverer lies asleep in the dust and silence.

4. Among the many personal excellencies of this great man, mercy, goodness, and love were wrought into his very constitution; they discovered themselves even to the eyes of strangers in the very features of his countenance: Every one that saw his face, declared they saw the evident traces and signatures of benignity and goodness there: And these virtues shone so much the brighter, by how much the higher station they were placed in. Gentleness and love to mankind, and friendly benevolence, are excellent dispositions in any man, but when they are joined with majesty, they imitate the glories of God himself, and carry an illustrious resemblance of our Maker. The death of such a sovereign, who sat on the throne with meekness, and love, and compassion attending on each side of him, is a great and heavy loss to a free-born nation.

5. He was a prince without pride. His whole conduct made it appear, that he regarded the good of his subjects more than his own grandeur. He seemed to have no superior airs about him; no supercilious looks; but was affable in his whole deportment toward those who were so much beneath him. He had nothing of that restless and mischievous quality of ambition, that takes every opportunity to grasp at more power, and to seize on the ancient rights and the freedoms of even a loyal and obedient people. The happiness of his subjects seemed to be his constant wish and highest joy.

6. He was a prince who delighted to reward his friends, and would never forget past services: Of this we are witnesses

in a special manner, who worship God according to our consciences, in a way something different from the national establishment: he knew the heartiness of our zeal for the protestant succession, and our activity for his interest according to our limited and narrow powers before he yet arrived at the throne; and the repeal of some hard and severe laws which stood in force against us, and the increase of our liberties, must be ascribed in some measure to this generous principle which reigned in the heart of our deceased sovereign. And it must be said to the immortal honour of King GEORGE, that this is no very common character among the princes of the earth.

7. Among his other excellent dispositions it ought never to be forgotten, that he had the common welfare of protestants much at heart, and upon every occasion interposed in their behalf. He could not bear to see his brethren, in the profession of the same faith, ill treated by popish princes, and unjustly burdened by the persecuting powers of this world. He knew conscience was a sacred thing, and that the empire of it belonged only to God; and as he would not assume a power over it at home, nor impose yokes of bondage on any of his subjects, so neither was he patient to see this antichristian spirit prevail over mankind abroad, wheresoever it was possible for him to procure a redress of such grievances. His own counsels, his wise orders to his ministers, and his royal letters to foreign princes, bear a glorious witness to this part of his character.

It must be told also, to the immortal honour of his name and memory, with what zeal he sought the union of protestants among themselves. How readily he employed his good offices to relax the bonds of imposition and severity in some of the reformed cantons of Switzerland, that conscience might have a larger liberty in the modes of professing the same faith and worship. Surely the man who laboured so gloriously to procure this freedom for christians abroad, must be influenced by higher views than those which are merely political, to maintain and promote a just liberty of conscience among his own subjects.

To conclude, he was a prince who sought to oblige all that he had to do with, and to make them easy and happy; but for those who would not be wrought upon by the condescensions of his love, he knew how to keep them in subjection. The church of God in the world, the protestant kingdoms, and the nation of Great Britain, have sustained a great and certain loss, when such a governor, such a benefactor, such an extensive blessing is taken from the earth.

II. We proceed now to the second thing remarkable in the late event of providence, and that is to consider "What mercies

are mingled with this awful dispensation, that we may raise our souls to a delightful and grateful sense of them."

1. That a prince of so many excellent qualifications reigned so long over us, and that we enjoyed the blessing of his wise and peaceful government for such a number of years. And here it becomes us on this occasion to call to mind the former years of our distress and danger, and the surprising pleasure of our first deliverance. Blessed be the name of our God that he raised up such a successor to the British throne, such a defender of the faith; such a glorious deliverer of the nation from the imminent perils under which we lay, wherein property and religion, liberty and life, were all exposed. Blessed be the hand of our God that interposed in so signal a season, and confounded all the devices of our enemies; he blasted their presumptuous hopes at once, and overwhelmed them with a huge and fatal disappointment: *The snare was broken and we escaped*; Ps. cxxiv. 7. The protestant succession obtained, and King GEORGE was raised to his appointed throne, and all that is dear to us was rescued from the hands of popish tyranny, which was ready to invade us.

Let us recollect with pleasure the mercy of our Lord, who inspired his predecessor King William, of glorious memory, to lay the foundation of the protestant succession to the crown of these kingdoms. Then he prepared a healing balm for the wound which he received at the death of our late sovereign, and made a happy provision against a thousand distant dangers. Let us give glory to our God, who prolonged the life of our late king, and made him the author of numerous blessings for almost thirteen years together: A large space of the life of man, wherein we enjoyed our civil properties in peace, and our religious privileges were confirmed to us by the constant favour of our prince! Though in the beginning of his reign, the enemy made their utmost efforts against us, by lifting up axes and hammers against our places of worship, because of our inviolable attachment to his interest, yet his wise and steady conduct soon suppressed those riots, and the law secured us against future fears.

2. It must be acknowledged as an instance of divine mercy that our king was not taken from the earth by the hands of violence. A bloody death had been a much more formidable appearance. This would have filled our hearts with dismay, lest a secret train of mischiefs should have been contrived and broken out to our great confusion. Blessed be the name of our God that guarded his precious life from day to day, and continued him to a good old age, though he had such a multitude of enemies on earth and in hell. The agents of Rome are never wanting to

strive the destruction of all those that support what they call the northern heresy, and the powers of darkness are engaged on our side. Yet this great man came to his grave in peace, and died as David did, at a comfortable length of years, full of days, peace and honour.

3. It is to be reckoned among our mercies, since he lived so long as to see the seeds of discord sown among the nations of Europe, and the first efforts of a war in Spain, that he lived also long enough to lay the foundations of an extensive peace. It is worthy our notice that the empress of Muscovy, who was known to be in a contrary interest, died but a few weeks ago, whereby it is supposed some of the foreign potentates were more powerfully and speedily induced to accept the preliminaries of a treaty of peace. Blessed be the God of peace that our sovereign lived to see these preliminaries signed: Had he been taken off the stage of action but a few weeks sooner, perhaps the peace and the treaty had been greatly retarded, and our enemies might have prosecuted the war with double vigour. Times and seasons, life and death are in the hands of God, and we have often seen that he hath marked out and limited the extent of the reigns of princes, to answer wise purposes in his own government of the world, and his gracious designs toward Great Britain and the churches of Christ.

4. It is an instance of divine mercy beyond all expression, that we have such an illustrious prince for a successor: One so is not only a firm protestant by the influence of his education under such a Father, but from his own knowledge and choice he entirely prefers the reformed religion, and is a constant professor of it. Blessed art thou, O Britain, for *thy king is the son of nobles*, descended from a race of sovereign princes; trained from his youngest years to the sublime art of government. Or do we come under the woe pronounced upon *the land, whose king is a child*, a minor under age, that wants a ruler to be set over him. Our present sovereign hath attained to a sufficient number of years, and a large share of experience of human affairs, and has made wise observations of the various occurrences among states and nations, that he may sway the sceptre of our land with great prudence and success.

It is to be numbered also among our mercies, that King James the Second is no stranger to our nation, having lived many years in the midst of us, and in this he hath a rich advantage beyond his immediate predecessor. Now if our late excellent monarch, who was at first so much a stranger to us, became, through the mercy of God, so wise and happy a ruler, how hopeful a prospect may we have of the present and future government under the administration of his royal son and successor who has

studied our laws, has given diligence to understand the customs of the land, and acknowledges the excellency of our constitution. How happy are we in a prince who has professed in his royal declaration, that "our laws, our liberties and religion are most dear to him:" And whose affection to his people is so conspicuous, that he hath gained the hearts of some of his subjects, who could scarce conceal their enmity to his predecessor.

Nor should I be just to my text on this occasion, if I should not take notice of that religious sense which our present sovereign hath expressed many years ago, of the interposing providence of God in counterworking all the mischievous devices of Rome and hell, and bringing the protestant succession in the illustrious house of Brunswick to take effect in the person of his royal father*. He is not one of those that attribute the revolution of kingdoms to chance, but he regards the work of the Lord therein, and the operation of his hands.

5. It should be added to the rank of our mercies also in this event of providence, that the king succeeds to the throne of his father in so much tranquility and peace. No tumults nor insurrections, no rising sedition, no clashing of arms. The rebellious party are discouraged and broken, their hearts sink within them, and their men of might have not found their hands:— We trust their number is greatly diminished, and will decrease continually. George the Second succeeds to the British throne with so general a satisfaction and applause, that we hope it will soon become universal. May the God of heaven fulfil our hopes!

6. It is a very remarkable part of our joy, that we are also blessed with a queen of an excellent character, and a spirit of uncommon goodness. One who hath been trained up not only to practise religion, but to understand it too. One who hath not wasted her life in the gaieties and softnesses of a court, but hath pursued solid knowledge in the things of nature, and the affairs of morality: One who hath learned the rules of virtue sufficient to teach them as a science, but who teaches them with more honour and success by her own daily practice; and is not diverted by the splendid temptations of a palace from the richer improvements of the mind.

Blessed be God for a British queen who hath shewn such a sincere zeal and love to the protestant religion, as to refuse the imperial crown of Germany, lest she should be entangled or defiled with popish superstition; and who takes a peculiar pleasure to train up her royal offspring in all the paths of virtue and piety. May divine mercy succeed her care! She is a princess whom we hope the providence of God hath raised up to the royal dig-

* See Mr. Derham's dedication of his "Astro-Theology."

nity, that she may become a more powerful and extensive pattern of every virtue and every grace, and may help to correct the manners of the nation, and the degenerate customs of the times by her illustrious example.

7. Among the blessings of this day we must not forget the numerous race of young princes which, we trust, are born to secure and perpetuate our happiness. Children in a more general sense are the blessing of the Lord; but a numerous progeny in a royal house, who shall be all trained up in the protestant faith, are a peculiar favour of heaven to Great Britain. What a happy prospect is it, that our late sovereign left such a large posterity behind him? Had his life been single, or like that of king William, not blessed with royal issue, how dreadful would our present case have been? In what dangers and contests had he left the succession to his throne? And our nation might have felt the fatal effects of it, groaning under popish darkness, and wallowing in blood.

Who can review such a multitude of mercies as these are, but must have his heart filled with joy and thankfulness to God the Ruler of the world? And how happily are our deepest sorrows for the death of our late king alleviated by such a view of blessings in a glorious succession? Blessings for present and future ages! I am now come to

The last general head of my discourse, and that is a humble enquiry into the various duties that naturally arise from the present event: Most of them may be summed up under the following particulars:

1. "A proper and becoming sense of our loss." Shall so great a prince be taken away from this earth, and so valuable a blessing from our nation, without an awful and solemn sense of the hand of God? Though he had arrived at the age of sixty-seven years, which is almost the term of the life of man, yet the vigour of his constitution, and his healthy frame of nature, seemed to promise us several more years of protection and peace under his government: But the all-wise God hath cut off the thread of his valuable life, and disappointed our hopes. And while we stand in awe, and adore the sovereign hand of providence, that he hath deprived us of so excellent a prince, it becomes us to pay all due honours to his memory, even though his throne he supplied with so excellent a successor. *All Israel mourned thirty days for Moses their leader in the plains of Moab, though they had Joshua to succeed him, who was full of the spirit of wisdom: Deut. xxxiv. 8, 9.*

2. "Such a providence as this should shake us off from our dependence on any creatures," and fix our hope more entirely on God: *He only is the king eternal, immortal, and*

incisable; 1 Tim. vi. 13. "He is the King of kings," who disposes of their breath, and their sceptre, and their dominions as he pleases; but he reigns for ever and ever, and his kingdom stands to all generations. This duty was hinted before: I add therefore,—As christians, it becomes us on such occasions to remember Jesus, the Son of God, whose title also is the *Lord of lords, and the King of kings*: Into his hands are committed all the reins of government in the upper and the lower worlds. *He hath the keys of death and the grave*; Rev. i. 18. In his hand is the life of princes: they reign but under him, and according to his pleasure. He numbers the days of their life, and the years of their dominion; and he dismisses them from this world when they have finished the work to which he ordained them, and raises up others in their stead, to carry on his own and his Father's wise and eternal scheme of councils. *He is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever*; Heb. xiii. 8. *and of his kingdom there is no end*; Luke i. 33. Though he be the child that was born of the virgin, the Son that was promised to Abraham, and given in mercy to the world, yet he is also *the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace*; Is. ix. 6. Let our eye be directed to him. Let us live upon him as the King of saints, and the King of nations. And amidst all the changes and revolutions of this lower world, let us remember that Sion is still safe under the eye and care of Jesus the King.

3. "Let us manifest our gratitude to God for these great and important blessings which are mingled with the present awful event," and let our thankfulness be expressed in such a manner as becomes the professors of piety and strict religion. It is God that has ordained all things so well for us in this nation, who established the protestant succession at first, and hath made it to take effect once and again: It is he hath placed all things in so happy a situation to dry up our tears, and to allay our sorrows. To him be a thousand thanks and honours offered by the nation and all the churches.

And in order to manifest our thankfulness in a more eminent degree, let us enquire wherein we have mis-improved the peace, liberty, and other numerous blessings of the former reign, and awaken ourselves to all holy diligence in a wise improvement of our present mercies. O! let us not indulge riot, luxury, and vanity, nor waste the blessings of heaven in the follies and iniquities of life. Let us not practise the crimes which my text severely reproveth, nor indulge sensual merriment with the neglect of God and religion: But as temporal mercies surround us in a sweet succession, let our love to God our supreme Benefactor be perpetually increased, and our duties of piety be ever multiplied.

4. That divine providence which has called our present mo-

narch to the throne, "demands all dutiful affection and obedience to be paid him with our hearts and hands." *As we fear God, and love our brethren*, so let us honour the king, for these three commands are joined together in the New Testament; 1 Peter ii. 17. Reason and scripture unite them all. Let us submit ourselves to him with all cheerfulness, as one whom God has appointed to be the guardian of our religion, and our liberties, and all that is dear to us. Let us ever speak of him with honour, and not mention his name without a becoming respect. With a just impatience let us frown upon all *tale-bearers*, and discourage every *whisperer*, those secret and vile instruments of public mischief. Nor let us give countenance to sly and private insinuations against the dignity and honour of our sovereign. Let us reverence and love him as one that is exalted to be the *minister of God for our good*; Rom. xiii. 4. It is on him, under God, that our eyes are fixed. It is in him that our hopes of happiness centre. Under Christ Jesus who is the Lord of glory, we must look upon GEORGE the Second of Great Britain, as the chief guardian and support of the protestant religion in the world.

5. "Let us offer our daily and ardent prayers to God for his long life, prosperity and peace." Addresses to heaven for the Divine Presence with him, should be joined with all our vows of allegiance. We read in Joshua chapter i. 17. that when the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh surrendered themselves to the conduct of Joshua in the room of Moses, they joined a hearty petition to the Lord for him; *According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee, and all that thou commandest us we will do: Only the Lord thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses.*

When Solomon was placed on the throne of his father David before he died, David is supposed to write the lxxii. Psalm, which may be a proper pattern for our present petitions in this manner: *As thou gavest our late king "thy judgments, O God, so give thy righteousness to the king's son: Let him judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. Let him save the children of the needy, and break in pieces the oppressor: Let him come down like rain upon the new mown grass, as showers that water the earth. In his days let the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace be derived from his posterity so long as the moon endureth; as his dominions are extended from sea to sea, so let him have a spreading influence from the rivers of Great Britain unto the ends of the earth; let those that dwell in distant lands, bow before him, and let his enemies lick the dust; let him live and reign a length of years, and all due tribute be given him; let prayer be made for him continually,"* and may he be ever engaged in

works of blessing to the world, that he may receive daily and perpetual praises.

And as the Spirit of God eminently designed Solomon in this Psalm, as a type of Christ, so let us pray that our sovereign may imitate our blessed Jesus in all divine virtues, and in the sacred qualifications of a ruler; that his throne may be surrounded with wisdom and established in justice: "In his majesty let him ride prosperously with truth, meekness and righteousness attending him;" Ps. xlv. 4. May every princely virtue and grace dwell in his heart and shine through all his actions. May his authority and his royal example join together to work wonders of reformation among the higher and the lower ranks of mankind: And may probity of manner be always a necessary step of access to the king's favour.

O may he be wise as an angel of God, to discern between good and evil, between his sincere friends and fawning flatterers! Grant, O Lord, that he may daily increase in sagacity and happy penetration to discover the true interest of the land, and be ever steady and resolute in the pursuit of it. Let him see his own interest inseparably connected with the interest of his people, and pursue them together with glorious success. May the protestant powers abroad acknowledge him as their common father, and their superior friend; and may even the distant posterity of our nation join with the generations to come in foreign lands in paying honour to his memory, as the chief support of religion and liberty in this lower world.

And since God hath blessed us with a queen consort, let her also have a large share in our best wishes and our pious address to heaven. Long may she live a transcendent blessing to the nation and the world; and fulfil with honour all the promising prospects that her sublime character and virtue in a less exalted station have given us. Let the prophecy of Isaiah be eminently fulfilled in our day, that a "king become our nursing father and a queen our nursing mother;" xlix. 23.

The various branches of the royal family demand a share also in our prayers; that plentiful influence from heaven may descend on them all, and that they may be trained up under such parents, for all the high stations to which providence may design them in future times; that blessings derived from the most serene family of Brunswick may be diffused through the nations of earth; and especially that the heirs of the crown descended from this illustrious house may sit on the throne of Great Britain long and perpetual succession, may gloriously maintain religion and virtue in the land, and promote the blessed Redeemer's reign age to age, till time shall be no more. Amen.

DEDICATION.

To the Church of Christ assembling in Berry-street, London.

Dear Christian Friends, beloved in our Lord,

HAVING dedicated to you my first volume of sermons, printed twenty-six years ago, I thought it proper to address this to you, being the last I am ever like to publish, that I might testify to the world the continuance of my sincere affection for you; and signify to you my ardent desire to do what I can, in my present weak state of health, to promote the welfare of your souls.

The "Essay on the Powers and Contests of Flesh and Spirit," which is added at the end of these discourses, has been written many years ago, and I hope it may be made useful, through the blessing of God, to lead private christians to form a right judgment in many things relating to their spiritual concerns.

As I trust all these papers contain the truths of God, which I have thus recommended to you, so I am persuaded you will find them exactly conformable to the New Testament, in all your reviews and studies of that blessed book. It is there my hopes of eternal life are fixed; and in this hope, I trust all of you will be found walking stedfastly in the same faith, by the same rule, till you are at length made happy partakers of the same salvation.

The great harmony which has subsisted betwixt me and my dear and worthy brother and colleague, the Rev. Mr. Samuel Price, for more than forty-three years, without an interruption, has been very comfortable to us, and a considerable blessing to you. May the Spirit of God render his continued labours amongst you, in the gospel, very serviceable, for your further establishment and growth in grace! With this design, I commit these discourses to the providence of Christ, and commit him and you also into his hands, to whom I doubt not, you have often surrendered yourselves.

And let me intreat you, as a church of Christ, not only to suffer, but to regard the word of exhortation, which, as your aged pastor, whose voice you may probably hear no more, I would now in a solemn manner leave with you, *viz.*

Continue to be of one mind, live in peace, be careful to practise all the duties of holiness and righteousness, keep close to God by humble fervent prayer and dependance, seek his face, for direction, and a blessing in all your affairs.

To the God of almighty power, and infinite wisdom and grace, I commend you, who is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified.

Finally, my beloved friends, farewell. May the love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be ever with you. *Amen.*

I am, with much respect, under very declining circumstances of life,

Your affectionate friend,

and faithful servant in the gospel,

ISAAC WATTS.

*Stoke-Newington, }
Jan. 13, 1746—7. }*

and the safety of the state are not concerned : Now these privileges and powers are not impaired by any article of the religion of nature.

This was the notion of the wiser and better heathens by the light of nature, and therefore you do not find them usually quarrelling about their gods, and bringing one another before courts of justice, because of their contentions and differences in matters of their religion : Nor would the magistrates bear it. This appears in the case of St. Paul, at Corinth ; Acts xviii. 12, 16. "And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment-seat, saying, this fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you ; but if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it ; for I will be no judge of such matters : and he drove them from the judgment-seat."

But then Gallio was much to blame in the 17th verse, where he took no cognizance of the Greeks beating Sosthenes, an innocent man, being the ruler of the synagogue ; which was a crime against the peace of the city, and an offence against the government, which Gallio ought to have resented.

But however the civil magistrates among the heathens had nothing to do in matters of pure religion, yet the Jews were continually running to the civil magistrate with their charges against those who opposed their religion, or any part of it. And this is the plain and apparent reason of it : The government of the Jews was a theocracy ; God was their king as well as their God ; the law that he gave them *by the hand of Moses* was the law of their secular affairs as well as the rule of their religion ; and therefore the high priest was made a judge in many civil affairs as well as religious. Their religion and their civil government were so interwoven, by God's being their king as well as their God, that there were many crimes in religion to be punished by the civil magistrate, by the appointment of God himself ; which makes the case of the Jews different from the case of all other nations under heaven : For no people ever had God for their civil and political governor and lawgiver, but the Jews alone.

Christianity does not claim, or assume, or pretend, to any such privilege or power : It does not alter this matter from what the light of nature hath determined : It introduces no new civil government, but leaves all these matters as it finds them ; and since the Judaic state and government are abolished, there is no magistrate on earth hath power to require or command, to

to reprove or punish, any further in matters of religion, than to see that the state suffer no damage, and the peace of mankind, and the government be secured.

But this hath been the unhappiness of christians almost in all ages since christianity began, they have been cited before magistrates, and punished even by their fellow-christians, as well as by the Jews and heathens, for those notions and practices wherein the magistrate hath no power. This the Jews began to see very early, and the Roman governors and heathens have carried it on; and christian magistrates have carried this matter to the height, but it is in the antichristian church. They have done this by bloody persecutions, racks, torments, and murders of the best of their fellow-christians, where the very light of nature dictated to the best and wisest of heathens, that they had no power or authority; and it is a plain confession of this, where Festus and Gallio were not willing to meddle; nor would Pilate himself, who crucified Christ, have done it, if the Jews had not almost constrained him; as sufficiently appears in the history of the death of Christ. Let us remember then, that the religion of Christ is not built on the wisdom or power of man, nor doth it need such a support. All that christianity wants, is to have the persons, and property, and peace of its professors, secured against the outrages of wicked men. Its own truth and excellency, and divine authority, will make its own way into the world by the assistances of the blessed Spirit, where human powers do but let it alone, and preserve it from the unrighteous violence of its neighbours.

Second observation. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the chief article, and the grand point, which private christians and ministers are solicitous to maintain, in the vindication of their religion. This was the point that stood forth to view, and shewed itself with such evidence in the debate between St. Paul and his accusers, when Festus gave them a hearing, that it makes a special remark on that, as though it were the most conspicuous and remarkable article of their contention. Peter and Paul were the two chief preachers among the christians, who are recorded in scripture, and you find them continually insisting on the resurrection of Christ. It was chiefly the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead that was the matter of Paul's supposed heresy and crime, as Festus understood the matter. This was the great point of contest.

I. Reason. Because this article of the resurrection of Christ is a most effectual proof of his divine commission. This point, whether Jesus Christ, *who was dead, is now alive*, or no, is a question of such importance, that the christian religion stands or falls with it. *It is certain Jesus Christ was once dead; this the Jews allow, this Festus takes for granted: Jesus was certainly cruci-*

fied, a spear run into his side, his heart's blood was let out, he was buried, and Pilate the governor, and the priests sealed up the sepulchre, to guard it against all possible fraud of stealing away the body. Now if he be not risen again, his religion is not true, his pretences are vain; he was not sent from heaven, nor is he a prophet or messenger of God. St. Paul grants, if *Jesus be not risen, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins, and we who preach a risen Jesus are false witnesses*; 1 Cor. xv. 14, 15. But on the other hand, if Jesus be alive, then his religion is divine. Let me just mention these two reasons for what I say.

1. It is an undeniable proof of his divine commission, because the prophets foretold this resurrection concerning the Messiah, though in more obscure language, and darker expressions. Now if he had not risen from the dead, then Jesus had not been the Messiah whom the prophets foretold. See Acts xxvi. 6, 8. for thus St. Paul pleads: "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers;—Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? 1 Cor. xv. 4. Paul owns that he was dead, and "that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." Acts xiii. 32, &c. "The promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus from the dead." Is. liii. 9—12. "He poured out his soul unto death. He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days." Ps. xvi. 10, 11. Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thine holy one to see corruption: Thou wilt shew me the path of life.

But on the other hand, if he did rise from the dead, this is a thing which a mere man could not do by his own power, nor would the holy and all-wise, and true and faithful God, suffer any evil powers to do it for the vindication of an impostor; and therefore he must be the true Messiah.

2. It is also a most effectual proof of his commission from God, because Jesus Christ foretold this concerning himself John ii. 18, 19, 21, 22, *viz. that he should rise from the dead*: Mat. xvi. 21. The miracles which Christ performed were very great, and sufficient to prove his divine authority: But since he gave forth such a prophecy concerning himself, if this prophecy had never been fulfilled, it would have weakened the force of his miracles, and given us reason to suspect what power they came from. This his rising from the dead was the great and crowning miracle that gave confirmation to all the rest.

Now considering this resurrection from the dead, to be foretold by the prophets, and by himself in his life-time, this was as great a testimony as could be given of God's approving him as a prophet sent from heaven: For it is the peculiar property and

work of God to raise the dead. See Rom. iv. 17. This is God's eminent prerogative. Surely he must be no common favourite of heaven, on whom the great and almighty God bestows such a privilege; Acts iii. 13, 15. *Ye have killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.*

II. Reason. Because as his rising from the dead is the great proof of his mission, so the resurrection of Christ is the great foundation of the christian's hope; which will appear in several particulars, *viz.*

1. This was a testimony of his having answered the end for which he died, having made full atonement for sin, and his being released from the hands of punishing justice; Acts ii. 24. Rom. iv. 25. Rom. viii. 34. He took our sins on him, he did bear the punishment of our iniquities; 1 Pet. ii. 24. *he bare our sins in his own body on the tree, &c.* And death is the wages of sin. Now when he had taken our sins on him, unless he had made full atonement and expiation for sin, he would have lain under the power of death still; but being raised from the dead, it appears that divine justice hath received full satisfaction for sin; and the way is open for the justice of God to receive sinners into favour.

2. This is the beginning of his exaltation and his power, to bestow all the blessings of the gospel, sanctification, salvation, and eternal life; as well as all the gifts of the Spirit which confirmed his religion. See Acts ii. 32, 33, 36. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses: 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 this, which ye now see and hear: Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus—both Lord and Christ;" Acts v. 31. "Him hath God exalted with his right-hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.—His government, his intercession, his coming to judgment, all depend on this; and his power to bestow heaven on his disciples, as well as his power to punish the wilful, and obstinate, and impenitent, who renounced or rejected his name, his gospel, and his salvation.

3. This Jesus Christ, risen from the dead is the prime foundation of our most glorious expectation, it is the pattern and pledge of our final hope and blessedness: "because I live ye shall live also," saith our blessed Lord: John xiv. 19. xii. 26. "Where I am, there shall also my servant be;" 1 Cor. xv. 20, 49. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept: As we have born the image of the earthly, so shall we also bear the image of the heavenly:" 2 Cor. iv. 14. "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise

up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." See more; John xiv. 2, 3. "I go to prepare a place for you,—that where I am there ye may be also." Eph. ii. 5, 6. "Even when we were dead in sins, God hath quickened us together with Christ,—and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Occasional reflection. If you are furnished with convincing arguments that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, then you may be assured your religion is true; though there may be twenty little cavils that you cannot easily answer: You may be assured also, that all the blessings of this religion are approved and ready for his faithful followers.

Is it certain that Jesus is risen from the dead? Then my sins are fully atoned for and forgiven, if I trust in him, and give myself up to him; Rom. viii. 33, 34. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right-hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us; i. e. as appears from the foregoing verses, for all those who believe or trust in Christ.*

Then he hath all power to sanctify and save me, if I commit myself into his hands; Eph. i. 17, 19, and ii. 1, 5, 8. *You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. We are quickened together with Christ, and saved by his grace; i. e. We who have trusted in Christ; Eph. i. 12.—Then I shall be raised from the dead, as sure as if it were done already; for he is the pledge and pattern of the resurrection of all his followers; Rom. viii. 11. If the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.—O happy souls, who have given up themselves sincerely to this all-sufficient Saviour, and can apply these consolations to themselves, which are written in 1 Cor. xv. in many glorious and comfortable expressions.*

Third observation. Paul would not have affirmed Jesus Christ, who was dead, to be alive again, without very good proof of it.—Here these two things are to be considered, or enquired:

1. Why Paul would not have affirmed it without just grounds.—2. What particular reasons Paul had to believe it, or what good proof he had of it.

Enquiry the first. Why Paul would not have affirmed it without just grounds. These are some of the considerations to make this evident, viz.

1. He was a man of good natural parts, of great sagacity as well as good learning, and he could not so easily have been im-

upon in any thing of that importance, which was done in Jerusalem, and the chief city of it, in his own day and time, when he had abundant opportunities to have searched into the truth or falsehood thereof, and his whole nation was set upon the land and severest scrutiny into it. Now that he was a man of great wisdom and knowledge, the good sense and reasoning which appear in his writings, sufficiently testify this character. He was a good man when he was converted, and he was brought up in Jerusalem, at the feet of Gamaliel: He must have great opportunities of enquiring concerning the history of the life, doctrine, death of Christ, and of the report of his resurrection, among Jerusalem countrymen.

2. He seems to be a very sincere and faithful honest man: his whole conduct shews, if we consider: He appears to have an honest zeal for his religion whilst he was a pharisee, as well as after; diligently and openly pursuing what he professed: No flaw was found in his morals: No charge of hypocrisy; Acts xxiii. 1. *I have lived in all good conscience before you until this day.* Nor are his morals impeached by his worst enemies.

3. He was once a fierce and violent enemy to Jesus Christ, his name, and his gospel, and his followers. Gal. i. 13. *I persecuted the church of God and wasted it.* Acts xxvi. 11. *And exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.* 1 Tim. i. 13. *Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious.* This was sufficiently witnessed by his countrymen the Jews. It hath been sometimes said by unbelievers, that testimonies of the resurrection of Christ came from his friends, and that you have none of the heathens, or converted Jews, bear witness to it. Here is a professed Jew, a violent enemy to christianity, who bears strong and constant witness to it. But it could never be supposed that he should convert an enemy and an unbeliever of christianity, after he believed that Christ was risen from the dead, and thereby so evidently proved that he was the true Messiah.

4. He spent his whole life afterwards with much zeal and industry, in publishing this truth, that Jesus Christ was risen from the dead, and the doctrines which depend on it. He preached the gospel to a multitude of towns and cities among the heathens, where were utter unbelievers, besides his vindicating this doctrine among the unbelieving Jews.

5. He exposed himself to perpetual dangers and difficulties, to many persecutions, by affirming it, and even to death; and that without any hope of riches, honours, or pleasures in this world; Acts xx. 23, 24. *The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none*

of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Now put all these things together, and can it be supposed that any man, a wise, an ingenious, and learned man, faithful and sincere, an enemy to christianity, and of the name of Christ, should be so effectually convinced of the truth of the doctrine of Christ, and of the facts which support it, as to spend his life in preaching this gospel, and to die for it, if he had not abundant ground to believe it. And if Paul believed it with such evidence, we may venture to believe it too.

DISCOURSE II.

The Divine Commission of St. Paul examined and established.

ACTS xxv. 18, 19.—Of one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

THE SECOND PART.

SECONDLY: The next thing to be enquired is, what special and particular reasons Paul had to believe the resurrection of Christ, and thus constantly to preach it. Here I shall not run through all the various proofs of the resurrection of Christ, which are often summed up together on this occasion; but only mention those which convinced St. Paul, and gave him this full assurance, that Jesus was risen from the dead.

1. He saw Jesus Christ after his resurrection, and spake with him more than once; Acts ix. 4, 5. *And a voice said unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.* And xxii. 17. *While I prayed in the temple I saw him, saying unto me, Make haste, &c.* 1 Cor. xv. 4—8. *He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that, of above five hundred brethren at once; after that he was seen of James: then of all the apostles; and, last of all, he was seen of me also.* He appeals to this sight of Christ, for the truth of the resurrection of Christ. It belongs to the character of an apostle, that he must be one who had seen the Lord; therefore he partly proves his apostleship that way; 1 Cor. ix. 1. *Am not I an apostle? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?* The first time he saw Christ, after his resurrection, was on the road to Damascus, when there were several with him accompanying him on the road, who were also surprized with the descending glory, though they were not permitted to hear the words. He saw him again; Acts xxii. 17, 18, 21. when Christ sent him to preach to the Gentiles.

2. He felt a wonderful change in himself, both in his body and soul, after he had the first vision of Christ: He was struck blind, and after three days had his sight restored, by the laying on of the hands of Ananias, a christian, according to the vision which was given him; Acts ix. 8, 18. He had a new scene of things set before his understanding, even the whole scheme of christianity. Some suppose that in the three days of his blindness, he was taught the gospel. And accordingly it is said; Acts ix. 20,

22. *That he straightway preached Christ in the synagogue, that he is the Son of God; Gal. i. 1. Paul an apostle, not of man, nor by man, but by Jesus Christ. He had a new heart given him, and was made a new man. I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. God called me by his grace, and revealed his Son in me; Gal. i. 15, 16. And of an enemy he became a friend, and preacher of the gospel; Gal. i. 11—16, 23.*

3. He found strange powers communicated to him, and he could speak many unknown languages, and gave this gift of tongues to other men; he could heal the sick with a touch of his hand, or a word of his mouth: he could make the lame to walk, as at Lystra; Acts xiv. 8, 10. and strike men blind with a reproof, so Elymas; Acts xiii. 11, 12. and could raise the dead; so Eutychus, Acts xx. 10, 12. and besides all this, he had a power of communicating these miraculous and healing gifts to christians; which eminently appears among the Corinthians; to which he appeals in his disputes with them; 1 Cor. xiv. 18.

Now was it possible for a man who felt such amazing changes wrought in him, and such amazing powers communicated to him by Jesus Christ, to doubt whether Christ was risen from the dead, whether Jesus were alive or no? Or would God have communicated such powers to a man, who went about to preach the resurrection of Christ, if Christ had never been raised from the grave? Would God have afforded such favours to a man who preached the christian religion, if it had not been true and approved of God?

Nor could St. Paul be deceived in his frequently exercising these powers, nor could he deceive others by pretending to them, nor could he appeal to men who enjoyed them, if he had not received them and bestowed them. He appeals, in his public epistles to the Corinthians and Romans, two large assemblies in two noted cities; Rom. xv. 18. 2 Cor. xii. 11. These letters were to be read by the churches, and they published his vindication. And let it be observed too, that several among the Corinthians were his professed adversaries, and had set themselves up against him, and endeavoured to deny his apostleship. 1 Cor. ix. 1, 2. *If I be not an apostle to others, I am unto you; for ye are the seal, or proof of my apostleship, by receiving divine gifts from me.*

4. Upon closer examination of the bible, St. Paul found, that Christ's rising from the dead was agreeable to the revelations that God had made to mankind in former ages, agreeable to the prophecies of the prophets his predecessors, and particularly agreeable to the explications of those scriptures by his forefathers, and the promises contained in his own native religion, and in the books which teach it; Acts xiii. 30—37. and eminently in that

great type and figure of him, Jonah the prophet, who lived again after he had lain three days and nights in the belly of the whale, in the heart of the sea; Mat. xii. 39, 46. Which was fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ.

5. By conferring with others of his own nation, and his own religion, who were well acquainted with Jesus Christ in his lifetime, he found the same truth confirmed by them; for they had seen Jesus Christ, and eat and drank with him after he rose from the dead: So Peter and James, as Gal. i. 18, 19. And they confirmed the same doctrine by their testimony to him, and by gifts and miracles, as well as by their own personal knowledge.

6. He saw the blessed and amazing effects of the resurrection of Christ among the Gentiles, who were once grossly ignorant idolaters, devoted to gross superstitions, slaves to every lust, and given up to all abominations; as they are described Rom. i. 18, &c. Gal. iv. 8. Eph. iv. 17. 1 Cor. vi. 11. But they were changed by this gospel, and made *new creatures*.

Before I proceed any further, I would make two or three Remarks.

Remark 1. Which of all the infidels of the Jewish or heathen nations, which of all the unbelievers and apostates in a christian land, ever could pretend to bring such powerful and convincing arguments against the resurrection of Christ, as St. Paul had for it? Who hath ever attempted or presumed to prove that Jesus Christ continues still among the dead, by such effectual arguments as Paul had to prove that he is alive? St. Paul's own reason exercising itself on these arguments, could not resist the power of them, but he became a captive to the force of this reasoning, and a rational believer, and a zealous preacher of a risen Jesus.

2. How necessary it is for christians, whose life and hopes depend on the New Testament, to be well satisfied that St. Paul was in the right, and that St. Paul's doctrine is true. For it is evident, that a great part of our religion, at least in the clearness, and fulness, and glory of it, is derived from his writings. His writings make up near half the New Testament.

Many of the articles of our religion would be less plain, and more doubtful, if we did not borrow light from Paul's writings. Many a comfortable expression which our souls rest upon would be lost and useless to us, if we are not satisfied of the truth of what St. Paul tells us, as one commissioned by our risen Saviour. Many a sweet and powerful promise, on which christians have lived and died, would lose its sweetness and its force, if we doubt of the truth and authority of the epistles of St. Paul. What would some of you have done without several chapters, and many verses in them? as Rom. iv. and v. 8, 12, 14. I mean particu-

larly with regard to the doctrine of original sin, derived from Adam, and the salvation by Christ, his priesthood, his royalty, and the use and benefit of afflictions; Heb. xi. xii. &c. Our resurrection from the dead, and our eternal happiness; 1 Cor. xv. and 1 Thess. iv. and many others?

And of how great advantage is it to us, that St. Paul has foretold in plain language, the rise and characters of Antichrist; 2 Thess. ii. 3—12. and the destruction of that state, to forewarn us, and to give us comfortable hopes and expectations. It is matter therefore of great and heavenly importance, for us christians to be well established in the belief of St. Paul's conversion, his faith, and his apostleship, and for this end we shall do well to remember these proofs and arguments which convinced him that Jesus was risen from the dead. Other holy writers have told us more of the life, actions, death, and resurrection of Christ, in the particular circumstances thereof: but St. Paul has told us more of the blessed consequences of these transactions. And let it be always kept in mind by us, that he was in a special manner the apostle to the Gentile nations, of which Great-Britain is a large province, and a remarkable part; so that in his writings he speaks directly to us, and we are bound to attend to him.

3. It is very reasonable to conclude, we may safely believe what St. Paul believed and taught about this subject of the resurrection of Christ. For if we have but reason to believe that this was Paul's character, faith and practice, and these are the reason of his belief, what should discourage or stagger us?—Let us sur up the force of this argument and put it together.

Here is a wise, learned, sincere, honest man, bred up a Pharisee in a strong opposition to Christ, and the doctrine of his resurrection, zealous for another religion, even the religion of his fathers and his country, who yet saw reason to renounce all his ancient prejudices, and submit to receive this new and strange doctrine, who believed and professed this gospel, which he once grievously persecuted, and afterwards preached it, with much fatigue, danger and suffering, supported it with courage, and constant divine zeal and piety, and the practice of every virtue through his whole life, gloried in his perpetual sufferings for it, lived upon the comforts derived from it, died in defence of it and sealed it with his blood, and left it as a chief treasure to those whom he loved best in this world, even to the churches of Christ.

Now we have not this account of Paul from mere hearsay and tradition, but we have his own testimony to all this in his writings, which have been delivered down to us through many ages and no man of sense can reasonably doubt whether they are his writings or no, any more than we can doubt the writings of Julius

Cæsar, or Seneca, Livy, or Virgil. I add this further: Concerning the vigour and spirit of his writings, and the force of argument contained in them, we have the testimony of some of his greatest adversaries, as he himself represents the case. His letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; and he was not ashamed to appeal to themselves, and threaten them, that he would make it appear that his practice towards them should have as much force and power as his letters had, when he came the second time to visit them; 2 Cor. x. 10, 11. And we have the testimony of two others, particularly Luke the physician, in his history of the Acts of the Apostles, who was a fellow-traveller with him; and Peter, who was another of his countrymen, in his epistles, bears witness to him and to his writings: besides the testimony of all the christian writers from the beginning of christianity; 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16. Which writings of St. Paul are dignified by St. Peter himself, with the name of the scriptures, ver. 16. they being both men inspired by God, and of chief repute among the apostles.

I proceed now to enquire, what were these blessed effects on men in the heathen world, whereby Paul's doctrine of the resurrection of Christ was further confirmed and established.

And here I might talk largely of the idolaters, that were turned from their superstitions to the worship and love of the true God, of their abandoning their former vices, and the superstitions and sinful customs of their nations, and the reformation of their lives and manners, to goodness and holiness, &c. but I shall confine myself only to those effects which bear a more apparent relation to the resurrection of Christ; and such are these that follow: (*viz.*)

1. How many dead sinners were made alive to God, and virtue, piety and universal holiness, by preaching this doctrine of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? What encouragement for hope of pardon for the worst of sinners, in this blessed doctrine of a dying and a rising Saviour? What an assurance of full atonement made to the justice of God, in that Jesus, who, in death, took our sins upon him, is now discharged from the dead, and his dismissal from the grave is a full token and proof of it. *He died for our offences, and rose again for our justification*; Rom. iv. 25.

If Christ be yet under the pain of death, as the apostle argues, 1 Cor. xv. 17. and be not risen, *then our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins*: But if he be risen, then our faith and hope are confirmed, and our sins are atoned for, and our souls are pardoned, if we trust in him.

O how many guilty consciences are made easy, and that upon solid grounds, by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead? He is *a God of peace, and reconciled to sinners, who brought Jesus Christ*

3. Let us remember, that whatsoever advantages or blessings we can derive from the death of Christ, they all depend on his resurrection. His being dead will be of no avail to our souls either for *pardon*, or *sanctification*, or future happiness, unless he be risen again; 1 Cor. xv. 14, 17. *And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain—are yet in your sins.* Rom. iv. 25. *Jesus who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.* When we meditate on a dying Saviour in any of his ordinances, let us remember, the Lord is risen; he hath fulfilled that dreadful atonement for sin in his death; he is accepted of his Father, as he has thereby manifested, that there is a way opened for the pardon of sin, and our salvation. He hath conquered death and the devil; he hath laid a foundation for our rising from the grave; he will fulfil in heaven what he hath begun on earth: his throne shall consummate the work of his cross. *If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life;* Rom. v. 1

4. If Jesus being dead, and alive again, is so momentous a point, so important an article in our religion, then we may remark, that some of the chief evidences of the truth of our religion, are nearly connected with some of the chief glorious benefits, and excellencies of it; for they are all built on the same foundation, even the resurrection of our blessed Lord. These are not merely strange pieces of history, but such doctrines are built on them, which are the life of our souls.

The resurrection of Christ confirms our religion: *First*, it gives sufficient proof that God, whose prerogative it is to raise from the dead, approves what Jesus taught: *And Secondly*, Jesus Christ himself foretold his own resurrection; as I said before. And it lays a foundation for some of the chief doctrines, blessings, and duties of our religion which St. Paul preached without end; *viz.* our trust in this risen Saviour, our faith in his intercession in heaven, and coming to God by him; our dependence on his government, our resignation of ourselves to him, our expectations of the Holy Spirit, and his graces, from him, our courage in death, and our joyful hope of a resurrection at eternal life.

5. What continual matter for holy meditation should the two things furnish us with, *viz.* the death and resurrection of Christ, especially in all our addresses to God? Heb. x. 19. and i. 14. How delightful and encouraging are these ideas, in all our sacred and religious transactions with God, in life and in death. *We have boldness to enter into the most holy place by the blood of Jesus, and have such an High-Priest over the house of God to introduce us.* How divinely agreeable in all our behaviour, is our conversation in this world; Gal. vi. 14. By the death

Christ we are dead to this world, by the death of Christ crucified to it, and the world crucified to us. Col. iii. 1. We should live as those who are above, whose hearts are on high, *where Christ is at the right-hand of God.* Under our carnality and earthly-mindedness, let us govern ourselves by these meditations. Let us remember we are dead to sin. Under all our temptations to sin; Rom. vi. 2. let us be upon our guard, remembering our being united to Christ; in his death and his life.

If at any time we fall under doubts of the truth of our religion, let us look up to a risen Jesus. What better supports can we have under all our afflictions, sorrows, fears, weaknesses? Rev. i. 18. *He who was dead, is alive, and lives for evermore.* Amen. Under the apprehensions of death; 1 Cor. xv. 57. *Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory over death and the grave by a living Christ.* O what a shame is it for professors of a dying and a risen Saviour to be dead-hearted in religion, which is our sublimest hope; to be carnally minded, or to be afraid of death?

6. If Jesus being dead, and being alive again is so great and important an article of our religion, and as it were the foundation on which it stands, then how wisely hath he ordered it in his gospel, that we should have a constant memorial appointed us both of his death and his resurrection? Of his death in the Lord's-supper; 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. and of his resurrection in the Lord's-day; Rev. i. 10. it is the rising of Christ that gives a blessed name to this day; Acts xx. 7. John xx. 19, 20. 1 Cor. xvi. 2. On the first day of the week Christ appears in his holy ordinances, and saith, Peace be unto you, as he did to the apostles.

The primitive christians celebrated both these institutions on every first day of every week, that is, the christian sabbath, and the Lord's-supper. We all agree to celebrate one of these, viz. his resurrection, every week on the first day; but how few are there that celebrate the memorial of his death in a constant attendance at the Lord's-supper, in comparison of the multitudes who call themselves christians? O let us take pleasure in these sacred memorials, and practise them both with steadiness and constancy, in remembrance of Jesus, who was dead, and is alive.

Let us remember at the Lord's-supper a dying Saviour, and call to mind the great desigus of his death, as many as we can, viz. to witness the truth of his gospel; to fulfil ancient predictions of his death and his resurrection; to teach us to die as an example; but above all, to make atonement for our sins, and lay a foundation for pardoning grace, and our hope of acceptance with God. Let us remember every Lord's-day to raise our thoughts to the heavenly world: where *Jesus is at the Father's right-hand*; Col. iii. 1, 2.

7. Let us reflect on this delightful circumstance of our own death, and the new life of Christ, that, in both these, he was our *Pattern* and *Forerunner*; 2 Tim. ii. 8, 10—13. *If a die with him we shall also live with him*; Heb. vi. 20. Must we lie down in death? Jesus, the Son of God, went through the dark valley before us, and lay down in the grave, and sanctified it to us for a sleeping place; 1 Thess. iv. 13—18. His death was attended with much more terror from God and man than ours is or can be. His death hath taken away the sting from ours. Did Jesus rise again from the dead? So shall we, we are his sincere followers. He is our head, *the first-born from the dead*; Col. i. 15. and our example. Rom. viii. 11. *The same spirit shall quicken us, whatsoever nation we lived in, Rome or Jerusalem, Asia or Corinth, or Great-Britain, or in what age soever!* 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23, 49. 2 Cor. iv. 14. And it will be a divine joy to meet holy Paul, our great apostle and our teacher among the holy saints, who has gone through so many deaths and dangers, to acquaint us with this gospel.

Was it so strange a thing to tell us, that one dead man even Jesus, should be alive again after his death? How strange and glorious a sight will it be, when all the dead in Christ, thousands and ten thousands, shall be made alive, with their Lord Jesus at the head of them. Rejoice for ever in the Lord, and comfort yourselves with this divine consolation *Amen.*

DISCOURSE III.

The Difference between the Law and the Gospel.

In several Sermons preached at Berry-street, December, 1731.

GAL. iii. 21, 22.—Is then the law against the promises of God? God forbid; For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law: But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise of faith by Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

I HAVE long had a design to explain this text to you, because it seems to be a key, whereby we are let into the sense and meaning of this apostle, in his long and laboured arguments about the law and gospel, in his epistles to the Romans and the Galatians, and in the constant distinction that he there observes between them.

These Galatians, who were converted to the faith of Christ, had been closely beset by some zealous judaizing christians, who would fain have had them circumcised, and engaged to keep the Jewish law; chap. vi. 12, 13. The apostle, who well understood the liberty of the gospel, would not suffer them to be thus imposed upon; and therefore he argues, he allures, he threatens, he denounces, he uses all the proper methods of an apostle, and a preacher of christianity, to establish them in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, and to guard them against yielding a title of compliance with the Jewish ceremonies and bondage.

He shews them, in this chapter, that the *promise* was given to Abraham, the great believer, with all the blessings of salvation contained in it, and to all those who imitate his faith, by trusting in the gospel of Christ; for *they are the seed of Abraham* ver. 8, 9. And the law curses and condemns sinners; Gal. iii. 10. but it does not, it cannot save them; ver. 11. And that the law which came in four hundred years after the promise to Abraham, could not disannul the promise or make it of none effect. The question arises then in the 19th verse; to what end then serveth the law? The answer is, to shew them their sins, and to keep alive a sense of sin among them, till Christ should come, who was to remove sin. Then comes in the objection of my text, *Is not the law then against the promises?* Is not the promise to Abraham contradicted by the law given to the Jews? No; by

no means; for they were designed for two different purposes. The law was given for special and peculiar reasons in this life, to the Jews. The promise was given to Abraham and through him, to all Gentile as well as Jewish believers for eternal life. Whereas, *if there had been a law given which could have given life, i. e. eternal life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise of faith by Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.*

Let us first examine the meaning of the words and phrases in my text.

Quest. 1. What is meant by law in general, and the law here spoken of in particular?—Answ. A law is the will of a superior, signified to us, or laid within the reach of our knowledge; which, if we obey, we are pronounced righteous, and obtain a right to any blessings promised to the obedient; but if we disobey we are guilty, and are laid under a sentence of condemnation.—I say, the will of a superior, signified to us, or laid within our reach, because the Gentiles having not the revealed law of God, are a law to themselves; because the great and general rules of it, are so far written in their hearts and consciences, as that they might be found out by reason and diligence, and honest enquiry; and in this sense they are set within our reach.

A law of God requires that the obedience of the creature be perfect, without defect, persevering to the end of the time which God hath appointed; and it must be also personal, or performed by himself, not by a surety or substitute. A law of God is such a constitution of God, as pronounces righteous those who fully comply with all its requirements; but it accepts of no less than it requires, nor does it own any thing for righteousness which is not perfect. Rom. ii. 7. "Who by patient continuance in well-doing, (*Greek*, continuance in a good work, or working good) seek for glory, honour, and immortality, eternal life." Gal. iii. 10. "The man that doth them shall live in them." James ii. 10. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." The Jewish law given at Sinai is the particular law here meant in the first part of the verse: The law which was given four hundred years after the promise: even the whole law of Moses, given to the Jewish nation.

Quest. 2. What is this promise? Answ. The promise to Abraham, that all the nations should be blessed in him: that he and his seed should be heirs of an inheritance, and that God should be their God. It is, in short, the gospel of salvation contained in the promise given to Abraham. See Gal. iii. 8. "The scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thy seed shall all

nations be blessed." And it is called the promise, to distinguish it from the law of Sinai, and indeed from all proper laws : for as I shall shew, the gospel does not save us in the way of a law ; and therefore is not a proper law.

Quest. 3. What is meant by the law's giving life.—*Answ.* The word is ζωοποιεῖν, which more naturally signifies quickening, or bringing a dead thing into life, by putting a spirit or life into it, or by making it active in a vital manner : And so it might seem to imply giving new spiritual life to those who are dead in trespasses and sins. But the whole context rather constrains us to construe it, the giving a title to eternal life and happiness to men in a judicial or legal manner. This no law of God can do, as the apostle here asserts.

Quest. 4. What is meant by righteousness?—*Answ.* A justifying righteousness, or a sentence of justification, a rectitude in the court of God, a freedom from punishment, and a right to life, which is the natural and proper effect of perfect obedience to any law of God given to men. But this blessing may be given also another way, viz. by the free grace of God, without any such obedience or righteousness of our own working.

Quest. 5. What have we to understand by the scripture concluding all under sin?—*Answ.* It signifies that the scripture, or the word of God, declares that all mankind are sinners, *there is none righteous, no not one* ; Rom. iii. 10. And as sinners, they are under a sentence of condemnation by the law of God, whatsoever law they are under, whether the law of nature, or any laws of revelation : forasmuch as no man hath ever perfectly fulfilled any law that God had given him, and therefore all are come short of justification and life, *all are fallen short of the glory of God*, promised to obedience. See this at large, both declared, pronounced, and argued ; Rom. iii. 9—20. *By the law shall no flesh living be justified, &c.*

Quest. 6. What is that promise given by the faith of Christ to them that believe?—*Answ.* The promise of salvation, and the inheritance of heaven, typified by the land of Canaan, given originally and eminently to Abraham and his seed, and continued to those who are his spiritual seed, viz. who believe or trust in Christ, who is the Messiah promised to Abraham : *For by faith in Christ we are made the children of Abraham* ; Gal. iii. 29. *i. e.* as we are imitators of his faith, so we are invested in his benefits ; *i. e.* those who imitate Abraham by trusting in the mercy of God through the Messiah, now he is come in the flesh, as Abraham trusted in him before he came, are accounted in the sight of God, the children or posterity of Abraham, and are partakers of those blessings of the inheritance of eternal life, which was promised to Abraham, under types and figures of the land of Canaan ; Gal. iii. 7, 8, 9, 29. And as

Abraham was made a child of God by trusting in the ancient promise, so we are made *the children of God by faith*, or trusting in Jesus Christ, the Messiah; Gal. iii. 26.

Having explained the words so particularly, I come to lay down these observations:

I. *Observ.* There is a constant and happy harmony between the several revelations of God to men. The promise to Abraham, or the gospel proposed and preached to him, is not contrary to the law given by Moses to the Jews. The law signifies the precepts of God revealed or discovered to men, more particularly to the Jews.

The gospel is the promise of the special blessings of God revealed or discovered to men, particularly to Abraham of old, and to us in a plainer manner, in these latter days.

Here I shall shew, in the *first* place, that the law and the gospel, *i. e.* the precept and the promise, cannot contradict one another; for they both run through all the different dispensations that ever God gave to the children of men since the fall. *Secondly*, The law and gospel do not contradict one another, for they are two different discoveries of the mind and will of God, made to men for very different purposes.

The law, since the fall of Adam, was given for the discovery or conviction of sin, and to shew men not only their duty, but also how exceeding sinful their natures are, and how unable they are to fulfil their duties perfectly; and therefore to lay them under a sense of guilt and condemnation. The promise, or gospel, was given for the relief of guilty man, whom the law had condemn'd, and to provide a righteousness, or justification, and life for them, who, according to the law, had a sentence of death pass'd upon them. Therefore the law is called *the ministration of condemnation and death*, and the gospel *the ministration of the spirit and righteousness, or of justification and eternal life*; 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8, 9.

I confess, if the law had been given for the same end as the gospel, if the law had been given for man ruined and sinful, to obtain life and salvation by it as well as the gospel, then they might have been supposed to contradict one another, and the objection in my text had stood firm, and we could not have easily and fairly answered it; but since they are given for different purposes, they are but different revelations of God, which are made happily subordinate one to another, and their different ends and designs are both obtained. The law convinces and condemns sinners, and the gospel relieves and pardons them, justifies and saves them. See Rom. iii. 20—22, &c. Gal. iii. 10—14.

Object. 1. But doth not St. Paul himself say, that the law was ordain'd for life? Rom. vii. 10.

w. 1. Perhaps St. Paul might mean only to shew his opinion, that he thought *it was ordained to give life*; Rom. i. 13. But supposing this to be the real design of the law, it signifies no more than that the law was designed to give life and happiness to every one that fulfilled it; Rom. ii. 7. and x. 5. But in Gal. iii. *it is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* The law could have indeed given life to Adam, if he had continued to obey it; and could have given life still, if men were perfectly innocent, and obedient; for the law is not weak in itself, or unable to give life, only through the infirmity of our flesh, to fulfil the law since the fall of Adam, by whom sin entered into our nature, and death entered into the world by sin: Rom. viii. 3, 4. *The law could not do, in that it was weak (not in itself, but in the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh) (as a sacrifice) for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.*

w. 2. The Jewish law was brought in to shew how sin abounded; Rom. v. 20. Gal. iii. 19. *The law entered in, that sin might abound, or might appear to abound, for by the law the knowledge of sin;* Rom. iii. 20.

ect. 2. Were none of the Jews saved, to whom the law was given, and who were under this law? Were not all condemned by it?

w. Yes, they were all condemned by this law in the eyes of God, considered as the Lord of souls or consciences; for the law broke it in several instances: Nor could the services required *purify their consciences*; Heb. ix. 9. But several were saved by the promise to Abraham, i. e. by the gospel which was contained in the five books of Moses, and was intermingled with the declarations of the law: the promise of the gospel, or the gospel, was not annulled but continued, confirmed and ratified by the revelation of Moses; Gal. iii. 17. The law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot annul it, that it should make the promise of none effect." Rom. iii. 21. "The righteousness of faith," or justification by the gospel, "as witnessed by the law and the prophets." So Adam was saved; so David by the grace of God in the time of promise; Rom. iv. 3, 6. But "not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh (no man living) be justified;" Rom. iii. 20. Gal. iii. 16.

we now recollect the explication of the words, *law giving righteousness*, in short, that we may more easily apply them in reading what follows, and so proceed to the next objection.

Observ. II. God would have appointed the justification of fallen man to have been by some law of his giving, if any law could have given such a poor sinful perishing creature justification, or a title to eternal life.

And the reasons for it may be these :

I. Because God is not wont to change his methods of government, where he sees them effectual to attain the ends of that government. He is an unchangeable God, and doth not need second thoughts to mend his own first contrivances, or to change his conduct towards man, unless the case of his creatures and the nature of things require it. The law which was given at first to man in Paradise, and in innocency, had continued the same instrument of the government of God, if the case of fallen man had not required an alteration. But God was not willing all mankind, who were condemned by the law, should be utterly ruined, and perish in their folly; and therefore he changed his dispensation. The law could not give life, because it required more than fallen man could perform; and therefore, through the weakness of a man's fallen and corrupted nature, the law became incapable of justifying man; i. e. it was weak to justify man by reason of the flesh, and to pronounce a sentence of righteousness or justification on him, because he was a feeble, guilty, disobedient creature. He had sinned already, and his passions and fleshly appetites were too strong for his reason, and are rising up continually against the commands of the law, and therefore God brought in the gospel, and gave promise to our first parents as soon as they fell, and made his gospel as well as his law, the instrument of governing his fallen creature man. *There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared*; Ps. cxxx. 4. i. e. that there may be piety and religion maintained in the world.

2. If the law could have given life to fallen man, righteousness or justification should have been by the law, that God might magnify this original law, and make it honourable. This would have shewn it was not only a law fit to govern innocent man, but to recover fallen man too. The law hath a great glory in it, in that it is the transcript of the holy name of God; it is *holy, just, and good*; Rom. vii. 12. and it would have been a great honour put on the law, if it could have recovered a sinful ruined creation.

If fallen man could have performed this law, and answered the demands of it, here had been a glorious display of all the wisdom and majesty, goodness and holiness, which first made the law of God, exemplified in the recovery of a poor, fallen, perishing creature by this law of his. But this could not be. The law was weak, and insufficient for this purpose, through the flesh, i. e. through the weakness of fallen man.

3. If the law could have given life, righteousness should have been appointed and obtained for fallen man by it; because God would never have been at the expence of a gospel, if there had been no need of it, to recover fallen man, and to do that which the law could do. God does not lay out his thoughts or counsels, nor his riches of grace, in needless things, or in useless contrivances. Now if the law would have attained this end, viz. the justification and salvation of man, then the gospel had been needless: then all these glorious riches of grace, and these counsels of wisdom, and mysteries of mercy, had been in vain.

Surely if the law could have done this work, the blessed God would never have sent his own Son out of his bosom, upon such a long journey to this sinful providence of his dominion, to this lower world, to take flesh and blood upon him, and to be exposed to sufferings and labours, reproaches and shame, pain and anguish, and death; if the law could have done the work of the salvation of man without it. God hath more value for the peace, and honour, and life of his Son, than to expose it at this rate; but it is plain from scripture, that the Son of God was sent into the world to do *that which the law could not do*; Rom viii. 3. These treasures of wisdom and goodness, these riches of grace, which appear in the gospel, were all hid out to save a ruined creature, whom the law could not save; otherwise Christ *died in vain*, so the apostle saith expressly; Gal. ii. 21.

Observ. III. No law could give life and salvation to poor fallen man.

Here let it be considered, that all laws are either moral, i. e. drawn from the nature of God and the creature; or they are positive; i. e. such as are appointed merely by the will of God, for particular purposes, and in particular seasons or circumstances. Again, moral laws are either such as belong to all mankind in general, whether innocent or sinful, or they are such as belong only to sinful and fallen man. Now none of all these sorts of laws can save sinful mankind. Let us prove it thus:

1. Moral laws, such as oblige all mankind in general, are contained in a due love to God and man; but fallen man can never be saved or justified by this law, because all these moral laws of God require perfect obedience, and cannot justify us without it. God is a most holy, a most wise, and righteous God; a most perfect being; and the relation between God and creature, requires the creature should honour him, and obey him in perfection, and without any defect.

The moral law did require this perfection in the state of in-

nocence ; and, as it is taken into the constitution of the gospel, it does not diminish its requirements : It still requires perfection of obedience in all instances of thought, word and deed, and that without defect or intermission. The gospel doth not abate or lessen the requirements of the law, but it shews a way to relieve us when we have broken it, or cannot fulfil it, and the reasons are plain.

If the law did not now require perfection of obedience, but only sincere imperfect obedience, then the creature, if he were but sincere and honest, would have fulfilled the law, though he were not perfectly holy. And then imperfection of obedience would have been, as it were, established by the law, if it could obtain salvation for fallen man. Then also the imperfections of obedience to the law would not have been sin ; for if they were, they could not have made up a saving righteousness.

The gospel is a constitution of grace, which accepts of less obedience from man than the law requires, and pardons the imperfect obeyer for the sake of Christ the Mediator ; but still the law requires perfection, which mankind cannot pay. Now that man cannot pay it, is evident, not only from the conscience of every man in the world, for if it be awakened to see the extent of the law, it must condemn itself ; but the scripture expressly asserts in many places ; Rom. iii. 10. *There is none righteous, no, not one ;* Ec. v. 20. *There is not a just man on earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not ;* 2 Chron. vi. 36. *There is no man who sinneth not.*

2. Moral laws, such as belong only to sinful man, and oblige him, can never justify a sinner or save him. Let us enter into particulars : The requirements thereof are repentance for sin, sorrow and shame for past follies, and a displeas'dness with self for being guilty : trusting or hoping in the forgiving grace of God, praying to him for pardon and grace, and universal watchfulness against every temptation, under a sense of former failings. This the very light of nature and reason teaches a sinner, as well as the word of God requires it. But this law cannot justify any creature, and that for two plain reasons.

1. Because all our repentance, or new endeavours after obedience, cannot make atonement for our past sins. A righteous governor doth not suppose, that the tears, and sorrows, and repentance of criminals and malefactors, make any satisfaction to the public for his crimes, nor make due reparation to the government for his offences ; nor are sufficient to procure pardon for criminals. A penitent criminal is often executed to fulfil the demands of the law, and to secure the authority of the government. And what trifling things are our sorrows, to answer for the dishonour done to the law of God our Maker ?

2. Because even our repentance itself, our hope or trust in

grace, our prayer for mercy, our endeavours after new obedience, are all imperfect: whereas the law requires a perfection even of this sort of duties, a perfect hatred of sin, a perfect displeasure with self on account of it, perfect sincerity in every thought, word and action, and perfect watchfulness in guarding against temptation, and striving after new holiness. But how shamefully do we fail in these, and destroy our claims to justification and life, even if we were to be tried only by this part of the law which requires repentance at the hand of criminals? We see then that no moral law can justify us.

3. Let us come to positive laws, i. e. such rites, and forms, or ceremonies, as are appointed by the mere free-will of God, for particular purposes; such as sacrifices, circumcision, washings, baptism, the Lord's-supper, &c. These cannot justify us, because it is not in the power of any positive rites or ceremonies we can perform, to make up for the neglect of moral duties, or the violation of moral commands. They were never given for this end, nor appointed for this purpose. Heb. x. 1, 2, 5. *It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.* Nor can circumcision cut off the vices of the heart. No, nor can baptism wash us from our spiritual defilements. Nor can the Lord's-supper give us spiritual life and nourishment. It is not outward performances of any kind can stand instead of real holiness, much less can they answer for our past iniquities. No law of commandments, written in ordinances, can give righteousness and life to a sinful creature; for they were never ordained for that end.

Quest. What were they ordained for then? *Answ.* 1. To shew us what sinful and defiled creatures we are, who have need of such washings, &c. and to give intimation that we are worthy of death, who need such sacrifices by the death of so many living creatures, to make atonement for our sins, and to die in our room?

Answ. 2. To give some typical hints that there is grace to be obtained of God, and there is a way for atonement for sin and salvation provided for sinful man.

4. The last reason why no laws can justify or save fallen man is this: viz. All laws, whether moral or positive, may command, but they give no power to obey, and therefore cannot give life. It is the promise that gives life. It is the gospel and grace of God that enables us to obey the law, even so far as the best of men do obey it in this life. The law commands, but it gives no strength to obey; Rom. v. 6. *When we were without strength Christ died for us, to obtain life and strength, to yield obedience to the law from principles of faith and love.* It is the gospel that brings spirit and life with it, to incline our hearts to obey the law. Gal. iii. 2. *Received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* Heb. viii. 10. This is the covenant that I

will make—after those days,—I will put my laws into their mind and write them in their hearts.

Object. But is it a righteous thing with God to give man a law which cannot be fulfilled, or perfectly obeyed by him? *Ans.* 1. It is righteous to give innocent man a law, which at first was well able to fulfil; and this law continues in its force and demands, though man hath lost his innocency, and by his will-crimes hath rendered himself unable to fulfil this law. The fall of the creature, and his own rendering himself unable to fulfil his Maker's law, doth not make void the law of his Maker, nor abolish its commands.

Simile. Suppose a servant hath an order from his master to carry a message to his neighbour, if instead of going into the neighbour's house whither he was sent, he goes into an alehouse or tavern, there drowns his senses and his natural powers in liquor, that he hath so weakened himself, that he can neither walk nor speak; he can neither go to the place where he was sent, nor deliver his message: I would ask, doth his master's command cease, or is his command abolished? and is his authority at an end in this instance, because his servant hath rendered himself incapable of fulfilling it, either with his feet or his tongue? This would be an easy way to cancel a master's law and commands, if the wickedness of a servant could have that effect.

Now apply this to the case between God and man, and whether God may not be justified in continuing his law in its perfection of demands, though man hath lost or weakened his power to obey. Surely the moral law of God stands in force, requiring perfect obedience both of men and devils, and all intelligent beings, how feeble and impotent soever they have made themselves by their own crimes; For it is a law that arises from the nature of God and the creature, and from the relation that is between them and therefore it is an everlasting law.

Ans. 2. But God is still farther to be justified in this matter; for though man hath weakened himself by his fall, he is not utterly lost his natural powers, his natural ability of obeying the law. He has an understanding, he has a freedom of will, to choose good and refuse evil; but his will is so obstinately bent upon sin, vanity and folly; and his passions are grown so headstrong, that he will not give himself the trouble to subdue them. He willingly lets them bear him away from God: He is unwilling to obey; and this is called a moral inability. Now God does not require such duties by his law, as through the weakness of flesh, and the strength of appetite and passion in this frail creature man is morally or immediately unable to perform, though he has a remote or natural power. An infinitely holy God cannot command that we should never sin, never transgress the r

righteousness, never break his pure and holy law; and yet, through the many infirmities of human nature, it is morally impossible we should perfectly keep this law, and live without sin. This Dr. Whitby himself (as much as he indulges the Arminian sentiments) confesses in his comment.

God doth not therefore lose his authority or right of commanding perfect obedience and perfect holiness, though man by his folly and sin hath rendered his will averse to God, and his evil appetites and passions strong and ungovernable: So that upon the whole, it is plain, *the law is holy, and just, and good,* and yet cannot pronounce any man righteous, nor adjudge him to eternal life.

favourable dealings with Adam after his fall, and which promise was accepted and received by Adam's trusting or hoping in this grace.

If Abraham is saved, it is in a way of grace and forgiveness, which was promised under the title of that seed of his, *in whom all nations should be blessed*; and in that language of mercy, that God would be his God, and would give him an inheritance, of which Canaan was a type and figure. And Abraham believed, or trusted in this, *and it was imputed to him for righteousness*; Rom. iv. 3. i. e. unto his justification and acceptance.

If David was saved, it is in a way of grace and forgiveness; Psalm xxxii. 1, 2. *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity*; Rom. iv. 6, 7.

If christians are saved, it is in a way of grace and forgiveness still, which was promised to Abraham, which is revealed more particularly by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came to confirm and to fulfil the former promises, and to obtain this pardon by the sacrifice of himself. And by his own perfect obedience and sufferings, he laid a foundation for the justification of sinful creatures. If they are saved, it is not by their performing the law in any sense, but by trusting in forgiving grace, revealed and manifested through Jesus Christ. It is by trusting in another, and not in themselves; as Rom. iv. explains, from ver. 17, to the 22d.

It is not in a way of claim of righteousness and eternal life, but in a way of humble dependance on grace. *The Pharisees boasted that they were righteous, and despised others.* Luke xviii. 9: The young ruler, in the gospel, speaking of the law of God, said, *all this have I kept from my youth*; Mat. xix. 20. The Jews sought for justification by the works of the law, and rejected Christ. Rom. ix. 31. But St. Paul, *by the sight of the law, is dead to the law*: i. e. to all hopes of righteousness and life by it; Gal. ii. 16, 19. and seeks to be pardoned, accepted, and justified, by trusting in what Christ hath done and suffered on his account. And so all christians. Rom. iii. 22. And in this sense the gospel *justifieth the ungodly*; Rom. iv. 5. i. e. those who have no righteousness of their own to plead, whose best obedience is all defective.

Quest. But doth this gospel save and justify a man that hath no regard to the law of God? How is his obedience to the law or holiness secured, if a man be justified, or pronounced righteous, and acquitted of sin, and accepted to eternal life, by believing or trusting in the promises of grace? Surely many wicked men will say, "I trust in the promise of pardon through Jesus Christ;" and is this enough? is there no security that these believers shall be obedient to the law, as far as they can, though

they cannot obey it perfectly? *Ans.* Yes, there is abundant security for their diligence in duty to the law, though they can never work out a righteousness for themselves, to be justified by the law. Let these reasons be considered :

1. It is the great design of the gospel to restore us to holiness as well as to happiness : and therefore the law, in the commands of it, runs through all the gracious dispensations of God to fallen man, as I have shewn you : And God will have no regard to them in a way of grace, who have no regard to his law in a way of obedience. The law constantly requires and points out our duty, it shews us our sin, it lays us under condemnation, and makes us seek a refuge in the gospel of forgiveness. Now the gospel is not prepared, for such as knowingly and wilfully renounce the law of God, which is holy, and just, and good, and who persist in this practice, and abandon the commandments of it.

Can it be ever expected, that the great God should pardon and save those rebels through Jesus Christ, who knowingly and wilfully persist in their rebellions? God forbid. The very light of nature will not suffer us to believe this. This would be to *make Christ the minister of sin, and to build again the things which Christ came to destroy* ; Gal. ii. 17, 18. For it is the design of all the blessings of the gospel, to make us conformable to God and to this law, which is the unchangeable image of his holiness. The great design of it is to make us practise *love to God and our neighbour, which is the fulfilling of the law*, as far as our state of frailty permits ; Rom. xiii. 10.

The design of the grace of God in Christ Jesus is, *that we might be holy, and without blame before God, in love*. Are we chosen in Christ? It is *that we may be holy* ; Eph. i. 2, 3. Doth God forgive us? It is *that we may fear, and love, and serve him* ; Ps. cxxx. 4.—*There is forgiveness with God, that he may be feared*. Are we redeemed with the blood of Christ? It is *that we might be a peculiar people, zealous of good works* ; Tit. ii. 14. Doth the grace of God bring salvation to us? It teaches us to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live righteously, soberly and religiously, in this present evil world* ; Tit. ii. 11, 12.

We are under the law still unto Christ, as it is the rule whereby Christ governs his church, while he pardons their failures and imperfections : But we are not under the law, as it is the rule of judgment, and condemns all that have not fulfilled it. We are freed from the curse of the law, but not from the obligation to obedience. So the apostle, 1 Cor. ix. 21. All believers have this freedom from the curse of the law, that from a new principle of holiness and love, they may fulfil the commands of the law, as far as our present circumstances will admit : Rom. vii. 6. *But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein*

we were held ; that we should serve God, not in the spirit of terror and bondage, but in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter, i. e. by a new principle of holiness, wrought in us by the Spirit of God, as a principle of love and obedience.

2. The gospel gives us encouragement and strength to fulfil the duties of the law, and engages us to hope in God, that we may love him, please and serve him, as a forgiving and reconciling God, which the broken law, with all its commands, threatenings, and terrors, doth not, and could never do. The law speaks only condemnation and death. *As many as labour for life under the law, and would be justified by the law, are under the curse, and may despair of life ; Gal. iii. 10.* Now despair is no spring of obedience, and hopeless labour is very feebly and negligently performed ; but hope is a powerful and lasting principle of holiness ; 1 John iii. 3. *And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure : 1 Tim. iv. 10.* Therefore we both labour and suffer reproach ; i. e. in doing the will of God ; *because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.* The devils go on in sinning, because they despair ; but man hath hope set before him, that he may be encouraged to obedience, and allured to pursue holiness from a principle of love and gratitude. If we are made new creatures, how can we choose but love and honour the law of God, who hath saved us by his gospel, and changed our unhappy state from sin and death, to hope and joy. Besides, it is the gospel that gives us *the sanctifying spirit*, as I said before ; Gal. iii. 2, 14. and Heb. viii. 10. *This is that new covenant according to which he writes his law in our hearts.*

3. No *faith* in the grace of God will justify men, *but that which worketh by love ; Gal. v. 6.* and produceth the good fruits of obedience. *Abraham obeyed the call of God ; James ii. 22, 26.* And in this sense his works wrought together with his faith, towards his justification. Not that his imperfect works, in themselves, do any thing to justify him, but his sincere imperfect works were the effect of his faith, and proved his faith to be alive, and true, and saving. Things are said to be done in scripture, when they are declared or manifested to be done : So Abraham is said to be justified by works, when his works declared and manifested his faith, whereby he was justified ; James ii. 25, 26. David's faith in forgiveness was such as was accompanied with sincerity and piety ; Ps. xxxii. 2. *In whose spirit there is no guile.* It requires confession of sin, repentance, humiliation, and new watchfulness ; ver. 5, 6. Gal. v. 6. *It must be such a faith that purifieth the heart, and works obedience from a principle of love ; Acts xv. 9. Tit ii. 5, 7, 8. They who believe in Christ Jesus must be careful to maintain good works.*

4. Without repentance and a change of heart, so as to love

d to obey the law of God, we can never be fit for that happiness which God promises, and which the creature wants: Without holiness of heart we can never be prepared for heaven, which consists in the blissful vision of God; nor indeed are we capable of it. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" Mat. v. 8. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" Heb. xii. 14. Indeed none can be truly happy but those who are sanctified and assimilated to the holy Jesus. A child of Satan, and an enemy of righteousness, and of the law of God, can never be happy in the midst of the children of God, who have the law written in their hearts, and are ever practising obedience to his law in perfection.

Holiness indeed is a part of salvation, which consists in a release from the bondage of sin, and the power of it in our own hearts, as well as from the guilt and punishment of it in our persons. And the man who professes to receive the gospel of Christ, and hope in God for salvation, he doth not know what he professes, if he does not hope for holiness, and long for it, and desire it. If he goes to trust in Christ as a Saviour, merely from the wrath of God and hell, he doth not accept of Jesus, as such a Saviour as the gospel represents him; i. e. a Saviour from sin; Mat. i. 21. as well as from hell and wrath.

Lastly, Remarks drawn from the whole text, thus opened, explained, and proved.

Remark 1. See why St. Paul always denies justification to be obtained by the law, i. e. by any law whatsoever; (*viz.*) because none have fulfilled, or can fulfil, any moral law of God in perfection, and a law requires perfect obedience, in order to justification by it: Nor is it in the nature or power of it, to justify those who are under it, and yield not perfect obedience. *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them*; Gal. iii. 10. The epistles to the Romans and Galatians are full of this doctrine. Whether it be the law of nature; Rom. ii. 14, 15. or whether the law under which the Jews were, which includes the moral, ceremonial, and political precepts of it; Rom. iii. 19, 20, 23. *all have sinned, and are short of the glory of God. By the works of the law, no law whatsoever, no flesh shall be justified. Man doth not, cannot, obtain life by any law; it cannot give life.*

In this sense all laws are laws of works: *Do this and live*, is their language and sense. *The man that doth them, shall live in them*; Gal. iii. 12.

2. See here to what a wretched and deplorable state of guilt and misery are we fallen, that no law which God can make, in our circumstances, can save us. God cannot make a law which doth not require perfect holiness, in thought, word, and deed: *Ye cannot make a law which allows sin and imperfection: For*

this would be, as it were, to establish iniquity by a law, which the holy God cannot do. The holy nature of God, as governor of his creatures, cannot but command them to be perfectly holy, under whatsoever gracious dispensations he may place them, for the relief of their guilt, and weakness, and distress. His law still commands what fallen impotent creatures cannot fully obey; and therefore we are miserable.—What a hideous ruin hath the first man brought into human nature, and spread over all this lower creation? It hath weakened all our powers, hath turned our hearts away from God, hath debased our inclinations to sense and flesh, and vanity, and made God's own rational creatures incapable of being made happy, by any law that he should give them, when taken in the strict and proper sense of a law.

3. Even the gospel of Christ, considered as a mere law, as requiring duty, and promising a reward upon full performance, cannot give life to sinful man: For whether you take it in a large sense, and consider it as including the moral law, taken into the hand of Christ the Mediator, still it diminishes not its commandments; it requires perfect holiness, and abates nothing in its demands. Or whether you take it in a more limited sense, as requiring faith and new obedience, sincere diligence and watchfulness, yet considered as a law, it requires the practice of these duties in greater perfection than the best of saints or christians ever practised them; otherwise they would not sin in coming short of what the gospel requires; and therefore they cannot give life, if God should strictly judge us, according to these gentle commands of the gospel. And therefore you find, when the apostle speaks of justification according to the gospel, he is positive, peremptory, and universal, in his exclusion of all works of the law, from justifying us; as in Rom. iii. and Gal. iii.

He calls the gospel therefore “ a promise, the grace of God, the new covenant, &c.” that he may not be supposed to speak of it as justifying us, under the notion of a law. He never calls the gospel a law, but in such a rhetorical or figurative sense, by way of catachresis, or a very strong metaphor, *the law of faith*; as in Rom. iii. 27. It is as if he should say, if we must call it a law, it is a mere law of faith, or trusting in the mercy of God.

Quest. 1. What is the gospel then? and how doth it justify us and give life? *Ans.* Not as fulfillers of a law, and thereby obtaining a claim to life, but as depending upon mere mercy. The gospel is a constitution of the blessed God, whereby he accepts less obedience at our hands than the law requires; and that not to make up a righteousness for our acceptance, but that God may receive us through grace, for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ, who wrought a perfect obedience, or complete righteousness, to answer that law; and died to make atonement for our sins, and redeemed us from the curse of the law, which we had

deserved. This is the express language of the gospel taught us by St. Paul; Rom. iii. 23, 24. *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God; i. e. of that glory which we should have obtained by a perfect obedience: But when we are justified, it is done freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.* The law condemns us as sinners, and we must be sensible of this condemnation. The gospel shews us, that we must trust or depend merely on forgiving grace, and not pretend to any righteousness of our own, and to claim life by obeying the law ourselves. It is by our faith or dependance; not by our works, and any claim of merit. The whole strain of the apostle's writing to the *Romans*, hath this view in the five or six first chapters.

Quest. 2. Is it not therefore matter of blame for us, to call the gospel a law? or the new law? *Answ.* The word law, when taken in a strict sense, for the will of a sovereign prince, revealed and requiring perfect obedience of his subjects, and pronouncing a subject righteous only upon this obedience, is the true notion and idea of a law: In this sense the gospel is not a law, for it doth not pronounce any persons righteous, and accepted to the favour of God, on account of a perfect obedience, performed by them to any command, which was given them.

But if a law be taken in a large sense, for any constitution of a governor, whereby he graciously accepts at our hands less than his law requires, and pardons those offenders who are sincerely willing and desirous to obey his law, and who trust in his mercy; then the gospel may be called a law. *Torah*, in the Hebrew, is used in this large sense for the gospel; Is. ii. 3. *Out of Zion shall go forth the law, &c.* and other places.

And *Νομὸς*, in the Greek, may be enlarged to such an extensive sense also: But originally it signifies, that which distributes to every one their due reward, according to their merit, or their services; and in this sense the gospel cannot be a law. St. Paul does not usually call it so; nor can I think it the best way for ministers to represent it thus. Yet, after all, it is but a sort of difference in words, if we do but explain the things in the right manner, and guard against those errors which we are liable to fall into on either side. Nor would I be angry with any man, who considerately and sincerely thinks this the best way of representing and explaining the gospel, any further than to say, that St. Paul did not think it the best way; and I am much of his mind.

4. How much should our souls bless God, for the introduction of the gospel into the world, at the first promise; and even for all the promises of this *new covenant*, especially in this

last, and best, and brightest edition, and *the administration it by Jesus Christ, and his Spirit?* As it is expressed and explained in Heb. viii. 10, 12. Have we not sometimes had an awakening and painful sense of guilt? Have we not thought ourselves sinners, and feared the eternal anger of God and cried out for salvation, from the condemning sentence of the broken law.

And when we have resolved, and watched, and laboured again to fulfil the holy law of God, and failed in many instances have we not bewailed ourselves, as weak and impotent creatures as well as under the guilt of so many offences, repeated and abounding? O what abundant reason have we to bless God for the gospel of his grace, through Jesus Christ, wherein our only hope lies, and all our salvation! Even all our hopes of pardon and acceptance with God, as well as all our strength to do the will of God, and obey his law, so far as Christians are enabled and expected to do in this life. Let us fly from the law and its curses, and condemnation, to the refuge and hope which the gospel has set before us, and live there daily, by faith in our Son of God the Saviour; for there only lies our safety from the wrath of God, and eternal destruction.

5. What a glorious harmony will appear in the review of the dispensations of God at the last day, between the law and the gospel! The law was the instrument of God's government of his creatures, and the rule of his justice, from the beginning of the world to the end: But the gospel is the instrument of his grace for our salvation. The law is the rule, guiding and teaching all the saints in the ways of holiness, convincing of sin and condemning all sinners, and driving them to seek refuge in grace: And the gospel is the noble and divine remedy for discovering that grace, whereby alone we can be saved.

And why may not these sentiments be part of our transporting and beatifying contemplations in the heavenly state? It is generally agreed by our divines, that the various providences of the life and state we have past through in this world, whether they have been painful or pleasant, shall be the matter of a delightful review and meditation; especially so far as they have been the happy means of our sanctification, and our preparation for the final blessedness of the heavenly state. I am well assured there will be abundant matter of joy and thankfulness, found in these different dispensations of God, in his *bringing many of us to glory*; and there will be ample instances of his provident care, and glorious examples of his righteousness and his grace in a thousand particular transactions of the blessed God, and our Lord Jesus Christ his Son, with the children of his grace: And perhaps there shall be such discoveries made to us, of the righteousness and the grace of God in his holy law and his gospel.

among these divine transactions, as will elevate our souls into higher raptures of gratitude and joy, and furnish our tongues with pleasant and everlasting hallelujahs.

The saints in that day shall cheerfully and thankfully recount the awful voice of God in the commands and terrors of his law, since these are the blessed means of awakening their stupid consciences, and of stirring them to a hasty flight to Jesus and his gospel, as the only and all-sufficient *refuge* of sinful and guilty souls. Happy creatures! who turned their eyes to his face, when they were thus self-condemned, and trembling for fear of the immediate execution of the divine threatenings of his law. How glorious and delightful will be the moments of these souls, when they shall review the first glimpses they had of divine grace, of the salvation and hope which was to be found for them, in the encouraging language of the gospel and the promises! What new songs will arise to the Redeemer, in this review of those past events! What echoes of praise to *him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb*, while the inhabitants of the blessed world are pursuing, and tracing out backward, the ancient steps of the grace of God, towards their recovery from the sin and ruin of the first Adam, and their entering into the covenant of salvation, *through Jesus Christ, the second?* He was the ever-blessed anti-type of the first Adam, the great Head and Lord of life and everlasting blessedness, to all who are sanctified and saved. *Honour and glory, and power, be to his holy name, for ever and ever. Amen.*

DISCOURSE V*.

The early Appointment of the Atonement of Christ manifest

Rev. xviii. 8.—The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

THE FIRST PART.

IN order to make the sense of these words easy and plain, must take into our counsel three other texts of the New Testament: viz. I. 1 Pet. i. 18—20. “Ye know that ye were redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,—but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb, without blemish and without spot.” Ver. 20. “Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in the last times for you.” This shews us, that this Lamb was Jesus Christ, who was offered a sacrifice for the sins of the world, and thereby takes them away; John i. 29. II. Acts xv. 18. “Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world. And therefore this great work, of redeeming sinners by the death of his Son Jesus, as 1 Pet. i. 20. was also known to him. III. Rom. iv. 17. “God quickeneth the dead, and calleth the things which be not, as though they were:” i. e. speaketh some times of things not yet done, as though they were done; therefore this Lamb is said to be slain from the foundation of the world, because it was by virtue of his death many other things were appointed.

God hath, before the foundation of the world, ordained things that regard the salvation and recovery of man, from the ruins of his fall. Sometimes the holy scripture speaks of the things, which were originally designed and decreed, as though they were actually done, though perhaps it was many ages afterwards, before these things had any actual being. It is in this sense that our Lord Jesus Christ is said to be “the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world;” i. e. he was decreed and determined to be the Saviour of mankind; and for this end he was appointed to be a sacrifice of atonement of our sins, even “before God laid the foundation of the world;” Eph. i. 4, 5. He appeared as *the Lamb slain* for this purpose, and with this design, in the eye of God, who sees all things in one single view.

* Sermons preached at Berry-street, December 1744, and 1745.

whether they be things past, present, or to come. God the Father kept Jesus Christ his Son ever in his eye, in this view, through all his transactions with the children of men.

It is generally supposed that Adam stood in the state of innocence but a few days at most, or a very short time after his creation, though our Lord Jesus Christ came not into this world, nor took flesh and blood upon him, of the substance of the virgin Mary, till about four thousand years afterwards. Many ages ran out amongst the inhabitants of this world in that time, and even some of the transactions of God in his own eternity, before the foundation of the world, are reasonably supposed to be derived from this very idea, in the mind and appointment of the blessed God; because he had originally appointed, that Jesus Christ should in due time take flesh and blood, and be offered as a sacrifice for the sins of men.

Here we shall first enquire, what are those early transactions of the blessed God in eternity, or in time, which may be supposed to have been any way influenced by this view of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the answers are these:—

1. It was in this view that God at first decreed and designed to save and recover any part of fallen man from their ruin, sin, and misery; and chose thousands of the race of sinful mankind to be restored to his favour and to his image: Eph. i. 4, 5, 7. "Behold my servant whom I uphold: mine elect in whom my soul delighteth;" Is. xlii. 1. That so God might have a proper atonement made for all their sins, by our Lord Jesus Christ, in order to be reconciled to them, and to reconcile them to himself that they might be holy and without blame.

It would be too long at present to enter into this enquiry, why God required an atonement for sin, or why his justice and his grace would not unite in the salvation of fallen man without it: The great God thought it unbecoming his supreme majesty, and his character, to deal thus in a way of absolute mercy with men; and as he has determined it so in his word, this is enough for us to acquiesce therein: As Heb. ii. 10. "It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." *Τιλωσαι*, i. e. as critics in the Greek language expound it, to consecrate, sanctify, or finish this Captain of salvation for this service, by an atoning sacrifice.

God was pleased to make his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, his first elect; Is. xlii. 1. and he chose all the rest in him; Eph. i. 4. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." He was resolved to set him up at the head of all the saved number, who was his own Son, that he should

be the forerunner into heaven, and have the honour of redeeming all the sons of God, and bringing them back unto the Father, and he decreed him to be the great sacrifice, for the expiation of the sins of all his chosen and favourite sons : He has redeemed them all with his blood.

2. It was in the view of Jesus Christ, as the great Mediator and sacrifice, that God appointed any further communion any favourable communications, between himself and his creature man. It was in this view that he appointed that there should be any approach of fallen man towards himself : It was in this view he gave him the first promise, and the first hope of mercy, even that "the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent;" Gen. ii. 15. by whom mankind was deceived to their ruin and destruction ; and by appointing Jesus Christ to be a sacrifice for sin : It was prophesied that his heel, or the least part of his nature, *i. e.* his body, should be bruised in order to break the head of the serpent ; as it is explained ; 1 John ii. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil;" *i. e.* his tyranny and dominion over man. This seed of the woman was the appointed sacrifice for this purpose ; Gen. iii. 15. It was with this view that God enquired after lost man in the garden of paradise, in order to recover and save him by his Son Jesus ; Gen. ii. "Adam, where art thou ?" And he gave him the promise of recovery by this means. And as God afterwards appointed that "no man should come to the Father but by the Son ;" John xiv. 6. so he revealed himself as making his way towards fallen Adam, by this man Jesus ; and it is by him that all that have been brought back again to God have been appointed to draw near to him ever since ; for he is the only appointed way.

It is also very probable that God might make clearer discoveries to our first parents, in the midst of their ruined and wretched state, in and with the first promise, than Moses, the divine legislator, has given us an account of, because this was to be the beginning and first pledge of their hope of any acceptance by God, and their expectation of life and salvation. Let me but speak one awakening word to fallen sinners : Did you never consider yourselves leave to think how great your guilt and destruction, and how terrible your misery and danger : and do you never consider that it was in and by Jesus Christ, as the appointed sacrifice for our sins, that God made his first steps toward you in a way of restoration and recovery ? This should not be utterly neglected and forgotten by sinners. See how early was the love of God to fallen man.

3. It was in this view of Jesus Christ, as a propitiatory sacrifice, that God instituted sacrifices to be offered up by Adam immediately after his fall, as it is recorded by Moses. God

bid that ever we should imagine, that the great God left this important affair of offering sacrifices to reconcile and appease an angry God, to the mere invention of vain and foolish man : And how can we suppose that it should enter into the heart of man, that God should be pleased with such sacrifices as the cutting and burning of his living creatures in the fire, in order to please him after their first sin ? It is very evident that God appointed the skins of beasts to be their first covering, but these very beasts were not then appointed by God the Creator to be slain for the food of man, till the days of Noah : and therefore, it must be out of the beasts slain for sacrifice, that the Lord God made coats of skins, and clothed Adam, and his wife Eve. And it is highly probable that their clothing was made out of the skins of the beasts that were sacrificed, to guard them from the cold winds, and storm, and from any of the inconveniences of the air and sky that might befall them, for want of such covering ; Gen. iii. 21. *And unto Adam and his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.*

It is further evident, that these sacrifices were not merely sacrifices of thanksgiving and acknowledgment to God for his mercies, as men are too often ready to suppose. When *Cain brought to God the first fruits of the ground* ; Gen. iv. 3. if it was done merely as an offering of thankfulness, it is manifest that Abel also, Gen. v. 4. *brought the firstlings of his flock, and the fat thereof* ; and it is very plain that Abel found acceptance with God, but Cain did not ; ver. 5. And as it is repeated ; Heb. xi. 4. *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.* And probably this was the difference, because, by the sacrifice and death of the living creatures, there was an acknowledgment made of sin, and of sinful man's desert of death, by some intimation from heaven : and this was accepted of God as an atonement or substitute, in the room of the sinner, or a typical propitiation for sin. This seems to be implied in that question of Balak to Balaam ; Micah vi. 6, 7. *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God ? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old ? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, &c. Or shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul ?* It is very natural for man, under a sense of the guilt of sin, to enquire, how he shall appear before a holy God with acceptance ? And God, as it were in answer to such a supposed enquiry, directs Adam to the sacrifice of beasts, as an atonement for sin ; i. e. as a sort of ransom for the forfeited life of man. And this is the most natural and most easy sense of things, and the best account of the original of sacrifices, and of the prevalence and continuance of that custom almost all over the world : *And this is the fairest account of the original tradition*

of Adam's first sacrifice after his fall from God, and the sense his anger*.

4. It was in the view of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, the Lamb of God, that all the schemes of the Jewish sacrifices, the slaughter and burnt-offerings of the animals, and the pourings-out and sprinklings of blood, and the washings with water in the Jewish sacrifices, were first appointed as figurative methods to cleanse them from sinful defilements: And the Lord Jesus Christ at last appeared, or was set forth hereby, as the great deliverer from the wrath of God, and as typified under all the figures and shadows. Heb. x. 1—12. "The law having a shadow of good things to come, but not the very image of things," those sacrifices were all imperfect as to the grand design for they could not cleanse the consciences of men from guilt before God; Heb. x. 1, 2. In this respect Christ alone was the true sacrifice; Heb. ix. 11, 12.

And this was the reason of shedding of the blood of beasts according to the law: Heb. ix. 14, 15, 22. For there was remission without blood. The blood of Christ, by virtue of union with the true God, had infinite and immortal value in "Christ, the Lamb of God, offered himself without spot unto God, to purge our consciences from dead works, (or from works that deserve death) that we might serve the living and true God with acceptance." Thus Israel, considered as a national church derived this advantage from our Lord Jesus Christ. And it is with this view that the national atonement, or the bull that was offered every year for the sins of the whole nation Lev. xvi. and xvii. chapters, attained its proper effect, and delivered the whole nation from national guilt, and that destruction which the justice of God might have brought upon for sin.

5. It was in the view of this great sacrifice, slain from the foundation of the world, that God pardoned the personal guilt of men, and forgave thousands of sins under the Old Testament and spared the guilty, each of them in their day and season, :

* As it is generally supposed by our divines, that it was Jesus the Son of God, who, in the name of his Father, appeared to Adam in the garden after sin, and had this conversation with him; so it is not unlikely that God, in person of his Son Jesus, taught Adam how to manage those sacrifices, by tearing off the skins, and cutting the beast into proper parts, and burning them which there is a hint given in the Greek translation of the septuagint; Gen. i which is not found in the Hebrew original at present, where God says to (*if thou hast rightly offered, but hast not rightly divided the sacrifice, thou hast sinned*, if this is supposed to be a true account of the matter, then Jesus Christ himself in a prelude to his incarnation, was the first high-priest, and he that to Adam first to offer a sacrifice, and so, in the sight of God, it was accepted the hands of him, whom God had constituted an everlasting high priest; therefore at the same time, the sacrifice of Christ, the Lamb of God, might be typified the slaughter and sacrifice of the beast itself.

away the guilt of their iniquities. So David was forgiven adultery and his murder, crimes of the deepest dye, for which David knew of no sacrifice; Ps. li. 16. and for which no man could be pardoned or justified by any ceremonies in the law of Moses. And therefore the apostle says; Acts xiii. 38, 39. *By this man, even Jesus Christ, there was forgiveness appointed for these sins for which no sacrifices were ordered by the law of Moses, nor any sacrifices were offered, or accepted, according to the levitical law. Rom. iii. 24, 25. God has set him forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood; to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God*:* But even at that time there was forgiveness by God in the view of Christ; for even David speaks with such freedom in the xxxii. Psalm, and elsewhere, of the pardon of sin.

It was also through this blood of the Lamb slain, that Solomon was pardoned his many heinous and grievous sins; *i. e. the Lamb of God, slain in the view of the Father, as an atoning sacrifice, from the foundation of the world;* And through the same blood God forgave the repeated crimes of Manasseh the king, who had filled Jerusalem with slaughter; and all the saints, and all the kings, who had ever been sinners, and were saved, was in this view of *the blood of the Lamb*; always supposing rest in the mercy of God, together with sincere repentance, and turn to God, was found at the same time. Blessed Jesus, how richly and how extensive was this salvation through thy blood, when before it was actually offered!

6. The gospel of the salvation of sinful man was contrived and appointed by the great God, in this view of Jesus, *the Lamb of God, the great expiatory sacrifice, slain from the foundation of the world;* And it is for this reason that the doctrine of this covenant for sin by sacrifice, runs through all the parts and forms of religions which God early appointed in the world, and several religions which man, under the divine appointment of God, ever practised. Heb. x. 12—18. Where there is a particular account given of the covenant of grace, from the language of the prophets. "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down on the right-hand of God;—for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified; whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us; for after he had said before, this is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws in their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins

* We translate this word forgiveness, as though it were *ἀποσις*, remission, but the word is *κατάσις*, which properly signifies the passing by of sin; that is, but God did not actually punish them; Though the Cocceian writers do not make a just inference from this, that therefore no sins were pardoned under the Old Testament, but merely the punishment of them delayed or neglected.

and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." These are blessings of the gospel of Christ; here is the sanctifying Spirit included, as well as the blood of atonement; here is a purification of our natures, as well as a justification of our persons, introduced in the view of this *Lamb that was slain*: And therefore John the baptist might say, in more senses than one; John i. *Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world*. He takes away the guilt of sin in the soul, by the sanctification of his Spirit. All the blessed promises of the gospel, in the Old Testament and in the New, are but the language of this new covenant, which arose from the view and foresight of the blood of this dying Lamb: which was therefore called *the blood of everlasting covenant*; Heb. xiii. 20.

Let me ask ye now, O sinners, whose consciences are exposed to agonies through the guilt of sin, and whose souls are in danger of being captivated into new offence, by the power of Satan within you: Do you not see how necessary these blessings are to your salvation? How can you have your sins pardoned, or your souls accepted with God unto eternal life, or renewed unto holiness, if you have not an interest in the salvation wrought by the blood of the Lamb?

7. It was with this design, and in the view of this blood of Jesus, the great sacrifice, that all the ordinances of the New Testament itself were instituted: Baptism itself had something of this signification; for so said Ananias the christian to Paul when he was first struck down to the ground by the vision from heaven, *Why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord Jesus*; Acts x. 4, 5, 6. The water of baptism came to have a cleansing and sanctifying virtue from the foresight and eternal mercy of God, who appointed Jesus Christ to be slain for a sacrifice; which is intimated Heb. x. 22. *Let us draw near with a true heart, in assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed, i. e. in baptism, with pure water*. There is no need of the particular description of the institution of the Lord's-supper; Mat. xxvi. 28. Rev. i. 5. where *in the blood of Jesus Christ* is said to wash us from our sins. *The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all unrighteousness*; 1 John i. 7.

8. It was in the view of this *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, that there was a way made, provided, and prepared, for our Lord Jesus Christ to arise from the dead. The apostle to the Hebrews, in chap. xiii. ver. 20. is expressing this sentiment. "The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant;" i. e. the co

ant of grace and pardon, which began as soon as man had sinned, and remains to this day, even to all everlasting, to speak peace and pardon to sinners. Every circumstance in this part of the history of our Saviour was appointed in this view. He died, and lay in the grave for a short season, to prove the truth and reality of his death; and he arose again, to confirm the predictions of the ancient prophets; for all the works of God, concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, and his transactions in life and death, were known to him from the beginning of the world; and every step of his sufferings, and his rising from the grave, was all ordained with a view to this covenant, by which *he was raised from the dead*; Act. xi. 18. All the decrees of God, and all the predictions of the prophets, all the types of the old Jewish law, and all the promises of God with regard to his Son Jesus, were doubtless appointed, accomplished, and fulfilled, with regard to his great sacrifice.

The holy angels, who were to be employed in the resurrection and ascension of Christ, were doubtless acquainted with this glorious event beforehand; every one of those holy ones had their orders to be ready at the proper post for these transactions; for his rising from the dead, and his glorious entrance, as the Son of God, into his heavenly kingdom; thousands of angels were present there; Ps. lxxviii. 17, 18. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels. The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, &c."

9. Therefore was our Lord Jesus Christ represented to the apostle John as *a Lamb slain in the midst of the throne*, after his resurrection, and his entrance into glory in heaven; Rev. v. 6. that there might be an everlasting emblem, and monument, or memorial of the Lamb slain before the face of God, for all the blessed designs which God had in his view for the salvation of his people, through all the ages of mankind, ever since sin entered into the world, even to the end of time, and the consummation of all things: That by this vision there might be before the eyes of God a perpetual appearance of this foundation of our pardon of sin, the justification of our persons through the blood of Christ, and our acceptance with God in the heavenly world. And who can tell, or who can conceive, how many and how various were the blessed and glorious ends that God designed, and actually attained, by this representation?

DISCOURSE VI.

The early Appointment of the Atonement of Christ manifested

Rev. xiii. 8. and v. 6.—Of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world
In the midst of the throne—stood a Lamb as it had been slain.

THE SECOND PART.

THUS far have we considered what are the transactions of God in which he might have a regard to the sacrifice of Christ, represented so early as before the foundation of the world. In the next place, I proceed to consider what divine lessons of instruction, or consolation, may be derived from the vision of the *Lamb, as it had been slain, appearing in the midst of the throne*; Rev. xiii. 6. And among these we may number such as follow:

1. There is hereby an information given to the inhabitants of the heavenly world, that Jesus, the Son of God, who was made man, has redeemed many from among the children of men to be a praise unto him, and his glory, in all ages to come. There is an enquiry; Rev. vii. 13. "What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" To this we answer, as in that text, verse 14. "These are they which came out of great tribulation." Or we may give the same answer. Zeba and Zalmunna answered to Gideon, when they were asked Judges viii. 18, 19. "What manner of men were they whom thou slew at Tabor?" And they answered, "As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the children of a king. And he said they were my brethren, even the sons of my mother." Each of them are the brethren of our Lord Jesus Christ, born of women and exposed to "great tribulations;" but "they have washed their robes, and made them white, in the blood of the Lamb: And therefore they are like the angels of heaven, who stand round the throne," in the glorious services for which they were prepared, in the court of our blessed Redeemer, each of them the image of the first-born Son of God, and reconciled to God the Father by his blood, and shall dwell there for ever with him. A glorious Reconciler, and a divine atonement, and happy souls who are partakers of it!

2. The Lamb, as it had been slain, appears there as a divine Mediator, and is a memorial of the everlasting virtue

constant efficacy, of the atoning sacrifice of Christ; which typified of old by the constant sacrifices morning and evening. The priests on earth stood daily ministering, and offering times the same sacrifices; which could never effectually take sin; "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for ever sat down on the right-hand of God——For by offering he has for ever perfected them that are sanctified;" x. 12, 14. These repeated sacrifices were designed as a way to remove the continual guilt of returning sins amongst the people; morning-sins, and evening-sins, sins in the beginning of life, and sins in the middle state of life, and sins of old age; sins of public life, and private sins, known and unknown, secret and open. The priests were daily employed in continuing these several sacrifices, through all the levitical dispensation. And let us observe; Acts iii. 1. this was called the hour of prayer: that the people were appointed to offer up their prayers and addresses unto God at these times of the morning and evening sacrifices as the everlasting means of the acceptance of our morning and evening worship before God, making all our services acceptable to the great and blessed God in heaven hereby. Therefore when we come to lift up our morning worship, or our evening addresses to the throne, let us remember that Jesus, the Son who was slain, is there for ever, making this new and living way to the throne plain, and keeping it always open by the virtue of his sacrifice. Let not a morning or evening pass, without an address to heaven in this blood.

8. This gives sufficient and perpetual notice of the everlasting intercession which Christ makes for the saints; Heb. vii. 25. therefore he is represented, as *able to save to the uttermost those that come unto God by him*. There is no need of other priests to offer up daily sacrifices, since the one sacrifice of Christ, the great High-priest, in the constant emblem of it, abides before the face of God for ever; John i. 29. 1 John i. 7. *And the Lamb of God, who, by his blood, cleanseth us from all unrighteousness*. Is. i. 18. *Though our sins may be as scarlet, they shall all be washed away; and our garments be as white as snow, or as white as wool, and fit to appear before God continually, without blemishes and defilement, through this abounding fountain, which may be said to flow for ever from the wounds of Jesus Christ, as a sacrifice; since it is in and by this blood, our High-priest may be supposed for ever to plead with the Father for our pardon and acceptance: For the intercession of Christ is scarcely equalled unto us, as carried on by the actual voice or language of the Son of God in heaven; but perhaps it rather means the everlasting virtue and efficacy of his sacrifice, as his blood, which has a voice in it, even as a fountain, always open and flowing in the sight of God, for the forgiveness of sins; Zech. i. 1. for all the true Israel of God: And in this sense,*

the blood of Jesus, as is elsewhere said concerning *the blood of Abel*, has a voice in it, and pleads for ever for *better things than the blood of Abel did*; Heb. xii. 24. Glory be to God for providing this everlasting sacrifice, and for revealing such a vision in the midst of the throne, for our constant contemplation.

4. This vision appears on the throne as an everlasting encouragement for the vilest and most guilty sinners of all ages to trust in the sacrifice of the Lamb that was slain. When we remember the *scarlet* and *crimson* sins of David, Solomon, and Manasseh, and of the Corinthjans, which are reckoned up 1 Cor. vi. 10, 11. the saints on earth may say, and such were we drenched all over and defiled with iniquities, whose evil thought, evil works, and evil actions, are without bounds and without number, but they are all washed away in this divine laver, with all the infinite evil and guilt of them, against the Majesty and the grace of God; for the virtue and the dignity of the unit godhead, which dwells in the man Christ Jesus, runs through the whole of his sacrifice, and makes it of infinite and everlasting value; whereby sins of all manner of aggravations are removed from those that believe in Jesus; 1 John i. 7. Mat. xii. 31. manner of crimes are sufficient to create despair, where an atonement is provided.

5. It may also be designed as an encouraging memorial to relieve old sinners under the guilt of sins, of long continuance and laden with many aggravations; for as the yearly sacrifice of atonement, whose blood the high-priest carried into the holy place, and appeared there before God, cancelled the guilt of the nation for all the days of that year: so Christ, being entered into *the holy place made without hands*, and dwelling there forever, with his own blood answers for the sins of those that believe in him, which they have been all their lives committing against God, if they are but deeply convinced of their long and repeated iniquities, and with humble faith fly to Jesus, the hope that is set before them.

Look up, therefore, look up, ye humble penitents, that have been guilty of many and repeated crimes, and are almost drowned in tears of repentance, and are ready to die under despair, be cause of your aggravated iniquities, look unto this blessed emblem on high, the Lamb, as it had been slain: This sacrifice give foundation for hope, not only that we shall be cleansed from all our secret faults, which are more than we can think, or reckon up but even from presumptuous sins, which are of the deepest dye Mark iii. 28. *All manner of sins and blasphemies*, says our Saviour, *shall be forgiven unto men*. Look up to this blessed emblem, and you shall find this salvation complete and perfect, and your consciences pacified, under the agonies of your own guilty reflections, through the blood of Jesus, who died

6. This emblem of a dying sacrifice is also a refuge, a support, and a hope for saints, under the continual workings of original sin, under their daily infirmities, under every new temptation, and the buffetings and charges of Satan, who is *the accuser of the brethren*; Rev. xii. 11. The armies of the saints have continually experienced the virtue of this sacrifice; for in all ages they cast down this accuser by the blood of the Lamb; and here is their great refuge, under all the violent and repeated suggestions and accusations of the great enemy of God and souls: Here is indeed a sweet pillow for the souls of those who have been guilty of long iniquities, to rest their penitent and pained consciences, by faith upon, in a dying hour; *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever*: And the virtue of his atonement always fresh in the eye of God.

Is there any poor soul here, whose conscience is buffeted and sorely tormented with hurrying temptations, and doubts whether their repeated sins shall be pardoned or no? Go into the secret chambers of retirement and repentance, whither the saints before you have gone, and sighed, and wept bitterly before God, and mourned over their sins before the throne. Ask christians of long experience, whence came all their peace, and their hopes of freedom from the guilt of sin? And they will answer with one voice, it is from the blood of the Lamb. It would overwhelm the conscience to have a full sight of these transgressions let in upon it, in all their terror and dreadful condemnation, they had not such a refuge as this to fly to. O blessed forever be the name of Jesus, who has given us, in his word, such a sight, such a gracious vision of hope and comfort! And a blessed vision it is, for the poor humble sinner to look at daily, with an eye of faith.

7. This vision is appointed as an evidence and monument of the church's safety and security, hope and confidence, even to the end of the world; though their circumstances be never so low, though they are never so much sinking under their fears, this is good security of that promise; Mat. xvi. 28. *The gates of hell will not prevail against the church's interest, to bring it down to the ground*; for the sacrifice of Christ is of everlasting value, and he purchased the security of the church to the end of the world. Jesus is represented as standing in the midst of the throne, and for the eyes of God the Father; so that the church shall never be condemned, nor given up to destruction. All the living ones that God has designed to be brought into the building of the church, shall be brought into it in their several seasons: All the dead sinners that are made alive by the blood of Christ, and by the work of his Holy Spirit, shall be raised together in a glorious building, which God shall dwell in for ever: And when the *corner-stone* is laid in heaven, the redeemed nations shall shout unto *grace, grace*, Zech. iv. 7.

8. This vision may be esteemed also as a monumental emblem, that the followers of Christ, who shall fill heaven with inhabitants, are sinners redeemed from the earth : They are brought into heaven as ransomed by the blood of the Lamb, and are cleansed in this laver ; they are not originally pure and holy in themselves, as the angels were, but they are guilty creatures once shamefully defiled and corrupted, but rescued from hell and sin, and recovered from all their defilements and dangers by the Blessed Redeemer. Such were some of you, all ye pardoned and sanctified souls ; such were all of you, as related to the first Adam, sinful and miserable ; but ye are redeemed and saved by the second. This thought should ever keep us humble and self-abased, that such worthless creatures as we are are not banished for ever from the presence of God. This should ever put us in mind of our low estate, that we were once fallen creatures, and are raised by the sovereign and condescending grace of God in Christ Jesus ; and it is in Christ alone that we stand. This should be a perpetual warning to each of us, not to indulge or endure the least defilement of sin ; for sin is of so malignant a nature, that it will soon spread all over the soul, and taint it with guilt and shame, when once indulged. This is a lesson for redeemed creatures ever to remember, especially while we are within the reach of temptation, and should keep us ever watchful.

9. This vision may give the believers in Christ an everlasting assurance that they shall never be separated from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord : For he stands in the midst of the throne, and will keep his place there for ever and ever ; Rom. viii. 34, 35. He stands there, if I may so speak, in his priestly garments, with the remembrance of his bloody sacrifice, before the throne of God, and is never out of his sight. Faith may triumph with holy confidence in this view. Who shall condemn us now, since Christ has died, and lives for ever, to maintain and testify this atonement, which he has made for our sins by his death, and his rising again ? *He that was dead is alive and lives for evermore.* Amen ; Rev. i. 18. Who shall pretend therefore to separate us from the love of God, that is so secured to us in and by Jesus Christ ? You see plainly, in the last verse of this chapter, faith defies all creatures whatsoever to make any division between God and the justified and holy soul, while Jesus appears there in the eternal remembrance of his atoning sacrifice. The poor creature here on earth may sometimes be overtaken with sin, through the power of corruption, and blush, and fear to think of appearing before a God of perfect holiness ; but this vision of our Redeemer encourages his faith, restores his spirit, and supports his hope. And we observe it is placed in the last of the prophetic visions, even in the Revelations of St. John, that it may abide upon the soul and live in the memory of saints in this frail and imperfect state, where they are so often in danger of sinning against God.

Inferences or remarks drawn from these discourses.—I. How large, how excellent, and how glorious is this salvation of Jesus Christ, *the Lamb of God*, slain to take away the sins of the world? And this may be made to appear in many particulars :

1. It is a salvation that reaches through all ages, from the beginning to the end of time, from the first sin of man, even to the end of all things : Those glories of the salvation of Jesus Christ are beyond the reach of our present conception, and beyond the powers of number to reckon up, and the force of eloquence to display.

2. It reaches through all the tribes of mankind, through all countries and nations, through all families and persons, both Jew and Gentile, to the ends of the earth. Our Saviour prophesies, *as if he be lifted up from the earth*, that is, crucified, and die as a *ransoming sacrifice, he shall draw all men unto him* ; John xii. 32. So in Rev. v. 10. and vii. 9. men of all nations, and of all languages, of all countries, and all ages, shall be found in this blessed number, who are redeemed by the blood of Christ, and are in the everlasting song of praise *to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever.*

3. This doctrine of the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world, reaches through all the transactions of God with the children of men. It begins as high as creation itself ; thousands of mankind were at first created for this reason, that they might in time be joined to this blessed army, and rejoice and triumph in *the Lamb that was slain* : It reaches through all the redemption of Christ, for sinful men were redeemed by the blood of Christ for this very purpose : For this purpose they were called and converted from the wicked of the earth ; and turned from sin to God, that they might for ever be made glorious in holiness. It is through this death of Christ, the Son of God, that they are all justified and brought into the divine favour : They are all sanctified by his Holy Spirit, under this influence, and adopted into the family of God, to become the younger brethren of Jesus, the first-begotten of the Father. And when God fulfils this salvation in heaven, it will appear what multitudes of fallen and ruined creatures are recovered and saved, by this atonement of the Lamb.

4. I may add further, all the mercies and blessings that are bestowed upon men through time and eternity : I might add, whether these blessings are national or personal, yet our Lord Jesus Christ, in our nature, dying on the cross, has some hand, by the exuberant merit of his sacrifice, in procuring and accomplishing all these purposes : The grace of Christ, while we keep our eye on the united godhead, has some hand in all the temporal favours, and even the national mercies, even of those who refuse

to receive the special and everlasting blessings of his grace besides all the consolations and the joys which the saints as partakers of here on earth, from their first calling to their glorification, must have some regard to this great sacrifice, ever free in the eye of God.

5. This salvation spreads through and beyond all the sin that ever we committed, from the beginning of life to this day and beyond even all the miseries that mankind ever sustained by their original fall, and apostacy from God; had they all receive this grace it is enough to balance them all. In the dignity of the divine nature, united to the man Jesus, there is provision enough to answer for all this abounding iniquity, and price sufficient to buy all the blessings that God ever bestowed upon his fallen creature man, and sufficient pardon and happiness for all the sinners that are willing to submit to the grace of God, and receive the blessings in his own appointed way. It is only impenitence, or rejection of the gospel, hinders the universal effect of it. The amazing and blessed extent of this salvation!

6. I add, in the last place, the doctrine of the salvation of the Lamb of God, slain from the beginning of the world, carries a glory through all the perfections and attributes of God himself which might be discovered at large in a survey of the several glories of his nature, his justice, and wisdom, his power and truth, his grace and goodness, in the salvation of fallen men: there is never a perfection of God that is honoured, but it is in and through this blessed medium, the death and mediation of Jesus Christ the Lamb of God.

II. Rem. How necessary, how solid, and important, is the doctrine of the salvation of Christ, by the atonement of the Lamb! It is not a mere matter of speculation, amusement, or discourse; but it is of infinite concernment to men to be acquainted with it; John xii. 27. For the purposes and designs of that hour, even of the atonement and death of Christ, the Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God, came into this world: This might be illustrated also in many particulars; as

1. God would not deal thus with his beloved Son Jesus Christ, to make him a bloody sacrifice, for mean and ignoble purposes: This work of his death and atonement is by no means to be esteemed as a cypher among the works of divine grace, or a mere object of speculation and amusement. The blessed God has too much love for his Son Jesus, his only begotten, and his first beloved, to make him merely the talk of his church, or a matter of entertainment for their meditation, or their discourse: there must be something substantial, holy, divine and honourable designed in and by the death of this Lamb of God; whose sacrifice, in the view of it, is represented as beginning before the foundation of the world.

2. God would not deal thus with the fallen and miserable race of mankind, to appoint such a sacrifice, which had little or no efficacy in it. Our Saviour himself tells us, John vi. 33, 35. That "he is the bread of life; and except we eat his flesh, and drink his blood, except the fallen and perishing race of mankind apply themselves to this way of salvation by Jesus Christ, "they have no life in them;" that is, "there is no salvation appointed any other way;" Acts v. 12.

3. The blessed God would not deal thus with his chief favourites among mankind, even the wisest, the best, and the holiest of his creatures, to be a sacrifice merely to entertain their reasonings and their meditations; but it is designed as the food of their souls, as the life of their spirits, and their hope for eternity; John vi. 21.

4. Again, God would never have dealt thus with his chosen and favourite people the Jews, through all their generations, to have fed them and pleased them only with types and figures, shadows and emblems, if they had no substantial blessings contained in them. There were indeed some happy uses appointed concerning these types and shadows, in the national church of the Jews, but this was not the chief design of their institution, but it was to figure out and represent the solid blessings of the gospel, the spiritual and everlasting privileges which God designed for all his chosen and saved ones.

5. I might add in the last place, God would not deal thus with his holy prophets of the Old Testament, and his apostles in the New, whether Jews or christians, to make them the ministers of a shewy and shadowy dispensation, which had no substantial and everlasting blessings belonging to it.

III. Rem. What a divine and distinguishing blessing is it to us, in this age and this nation, that the doctrine of the pardon of sin, by the atoning blood of the Lamb, has been preached to us from our infancy, and yet continues to be preached to us by the ministers of the gospel! O blessed be God, that we are not found in those popish nations, where the priests would teach us to trust in masses and penances, in long and idle repetitions of formal prayers in Latin, and merits of the saints, and useless addresses to them, represented in figures of silver, or gold, wood or stone, or brass, in order to reconcile us to God; in sprinklings with holy water, and other fooleries, instead of the only appointed sacrifice of the Son of God; whereby they make void the blessed gospel of Christ, and overwhelm it with their superstitious inventions! How sad a thing would it be for us, if we were left upon a dying pillow, and had no other hopes but these to rest our souls upon!

Here it may not be improper to give an answer to this objection: If this doctrine of the atoning blood of the Lamb that was

plain be so glorious in itself, and so needful to our salvation, how comes it to pass that our Saviour speaks so little of it in the whole of his ministry, while he was three years preaching among the towns of the Jews.

Answer. See a large and full answer to this objection in my sermon on the *Atonement of Christ*; (Vol. I.) and further answers are repeated in my treatise of *Orthodoxy and Charity united*, in the three last pages of the *First Essay of the Substance and Matter of the Gospel*.

Another objection may be raised here: If this doctrine be so glorious, and so very needful, How comes it to pass, that it is so much neglected among men that profess christianity; and that men who believe it are no more affected with it?

Answer. 1. Though a thing be never so useful and necessary, yet the mere commonness of these things sometimes is an unhappy occasion of rendering them less regarded, and less attended to. These glories and wonders of the gospel of Christ have run over our thoughts and over our tongues so many thousand times, without that due solemnity which becomes them, and without those awful ideas which those things require, that our natures are not much moved by the importance of them. Though these truths are in themselves so divine, so awful and solemn, yet, alas! they are lost upon our passions, and they make no powerful impression there; they awaken no serious meditations, neither at the time present nor afterwards.

2. Mankind do not keep upon their minds a deep sense of sin; the impressions that the convincing spirit sometimes makes, vanish away from their consciences, and the necessity and the glory of this way of salvation too soon vanishes off from our thoughts, because we are not rightly and steadily apprehensive what an infinite evil is contained in the nature of sin; and therefore the methods of pardoning mercy and forgiving grace lie with so little weight upon our spirits: The sacrifice of Christ, how exceeding precious soever it is to an awakened and convinced sinner, yet it little affects the meditations of those who have not a lively sense of sin maintained upon their spirits: When sin lies with a weight upon the soul, it awakens many a bitter sigh and groan; and a review of the method of atonement appointed by the great God, in the blood of Christ, renders the remembrance of it very pleasant and affecting. Let us therefore endeavour with all diligence to preserve a deep sense of the evil of sin, as committed against the infinite Majesty of heaven, always upon our consciences, that the blood of Jesus may be ever precious unto us: We soon forget the vile aggravations with which our sins are attended; and therefore the way of forgiveness makes so little impression upon our souls.

3. There are few christians who keep the love of Christ so true and warm enough in their hearts, to give them any deep

pressions of the invaluable price of his blood. It is true, there are many thousands in our land and nation, who love the Lord Jesus Christ sincerely, though they have not seen him; but still they are but few, in comparison of the unknown multitudes who have heard of his name, and yet know him not, and love him not: O blessed Jesus, awaken these thousands of stupid sinners to see the wonders of thy love, the amazing ascension of thy death and the glory of this thy salvation! This reconciliation to God by the blood of Christ is one of the chief glories, for which the saints in heaven ever praise thee, and ever love thee: This is the matter of their divine songs, worthy is the Lamb to receive glory and honour! because we were enslaved and captivated to sin and Satan, and we were redeemed by his blood; Rev. v. 6.

4. Another unhappy cause why these things make so slight an impression upon our spirits, is because the most of us are busily and deeply engaged in the things of this present life; though all these things, which affect our present passions, are but shadows and trifles, in comparison with this glorious and divine doctrine: A glorious subject indeed, which should at all times awaken our warmest joy, and our loudest praises.

IV. Rem. How divinely full of glory and pleasure shall that happy hour be, when all the millions of mankind, that have been redeemed by the blood of this Lamb of God, shall be set together and stand around him, with every tongue and every heart full of joy and praise! How astonishing will be the glory and the joy of that day, when all the saints shall be together in one common song of gratitude, and love, and everlasting thankfulness, to this Redeemer? With what unexpressed delight, and inexpressible satisfaction, shall all that have been saved from the ruins of sin and hell, address the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world, and rejoice in his presence?

Nor shall the angels be silent in this general and universal song of blessing and praise; for though they are not redeemed from sin and hell by the blood of the Lamb, yet they are represented in Rev. v. 11, 12, 13. as assisting the saints, the redeemed of the Lord, in their triumphs of universal joy: And when they shall all at once, who in the several ages of the world, have been taught to receive the grace and salvation of this Redeemer, stand together, and praise the Father of all things, who has given their souls into the hands of his Son Jesus Christ, to redeem, sanctify, and save them: then God shall have fulfilled this blessed prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ; John xvii. 24. *Father I will, that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.*

DISCOURSE VII.

*God in Christ is the Saviour of the Ends of the Earth
Faith represented in its lowest Degrees.*

Is. xlv. 22.—Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth;
I am God and there is none else.

THE FIRST PART.

IF these words were not written in the bible, (and by that made grown old and familiar to us) but if they had come immediately into the midst of any assembly in Great-Britain, by a voice from heaven, how would they awaken our ears, and impress our souls? Surely every one amongst us, that sees himself in danger of perishing, would listen with eager attention to the word that calls and invites him to be saved. The British islands have been reckoned by the ancients to be the ends of the earth; and we, the inhabitants thereof, should be strangely surprized and pleased with such language from the upper world.

Our thoughts would be crowded with hasty enquiries: “whence is this blessed voice? Is it from heaven indeed? Is it that which invites perishing wretches to salvation? Am not I within the reach and compass of this call? Is it not I that am invited? And is not the blessing suited to my case and my danger? What must I do to partake of it? And what assurance can I have that it shall be conferred upon me.

Such enquiries as these should be raised in us at this time, if we do but pay as just a deference to the voice of God which he spoke of old by a prophet, as we would if he spake now by a new miracle: And though all these queries would be very hard to answer, if we had nothing else but this miraculous sound, yet the words lie in the Old Testament, since we enjoy the New, it is much easier to obtain a satisfying answer to them. Let us try to find out,

I. Who is the person that speaks.—II. Who are the persons spoken to.—III. What this salvation is.—IV. How we may come by it.—V. What assurance we can have, that we may possess it in the way proposed.

To answer these questions shall be the business of these discourses.

First, Let us find out who is the person that speaks.

He asserts his own divinity in the words of my text. *I am God and there is none else.* Whether the Divine Being speaks his in the person of the Father, or in the person of Jesus Christ the Son, is not of absolute necessity to be determined in this place. Perhaps it could not be expounded under the Old Testament any otherwise than concerning the great God, considered as the Father of all, the only true God, whose name is Jehovah, and who was then chiefly known to the Jews as the God of Israel. (It is the God of the Jews calling the Gentiles to partake of his salvation. He is their strength and their Saviour, and their righteousness is derived from him, as in the foregoing and following verses.

But when under the New Testament we explain these words, we must rather consider God in Christ reconciling the world of Jews and Gentiles to himself: It is the same one godhead which dwells bodily in the man Christ Jesus; for the Father and the Son are not two Gods. It is God, the only true God, manifested in the flesh: It is Immanuel, or *God with us*, who speaks these words: It is Christ Jesus the Lord, who is one with the Father, and in whom *the fulness of the godhead dwells*, who call the ends of the earth to look unto him and be saved. And there are some special reasons that incline me to suppose these words of the prophet should chiefly be applied in the New Testament to our Lord Jesus Christ, who makes this blessed offer of grace.

(1.) It is the same person to whom the salvation of Israel is ascribed, and who is called a *Saviour* so often in the context, *ver. 5, 17, 21.* which is the very meaning of the name Jesus, and the frequent appellation of Christ in the New Testament, and his particular office is to be a Saviour, and to bring salvation.

(2.) It is he who is appointed to be the *righteousness and the strength* of his people. *Ver. 24, 25. Surely shall one say, the Lord have I righteousness and strength.—In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified.* Now this is the very name of the Messiah; *Jer. xxiii. 6. The Lord our righteousness:* And it is Christ who is made righteousness unto us: *1 Cor. i. 23.* And you and in whom all the saints are to be justified in the language of the gospel. It is from him also that his people derive strength. It Paul bids *Timothy be strong in the grace which is in Christ*; *2 Tim. ii. 1.* The Ephesian converts must *be strong in the Lord*; *1 Ph. vi. 10.* And the apostle himself *could do all things through Christ, who strengthened him*; *Phil. iv. 13.* Now the New Testament (to which times the words of my text chiefly refer) does not usually represent God, under the idea of the Father, as the strength of believers, nor is he ever described there as their righteousness.

Again, (3.) This is the person that brings salvation to the

ends of the earth, which is the very character of the Messiah in the writings of the same prophet. Is. xlix. 6. I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, (says God the Father) that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

(4.) I add further, that part of this context, even the very next words, are applied to our Lord Jesus Christ by St. Paul. The prophet saith, *I am the Lord, and there is none else*; ver. 18. *Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear*; ver. 22. The apostle, citing the words of the prophet, speaks thus; Rom. xiv. 9, 10, 11. *Christ died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living: All must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ: For it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.* Where the words Christ, Lord, and God, seem to be used promiscuously for the same person. Nor would the apostle's argument seem strong and cogent in that place, if the word God were applied only to the Father; for it is his design there to shew that the advancement and glory of Christ was the aim and the effect of our Saviour's death and resurrection, that he might be Lord and Judge of all, and that every knee and tongue might own his lordship and sovereignty. The application of these words to Christ, is again evident in Phil. ii. 10, 11. *At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.* Though there the glory of the Father is expressed also.

(5.) The last reason why this text may be properly applied to Christ, is because many other expressions of the prophets, that plainly belong to the great God, the God of Israel, as coming to bring salvation to the Gentiles, are plainly applied to Christ in the New Testament; Ps. cii. 22, 25. *When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord, &c. Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth.* This is applied to Christ Heb. i. 10. So Ps. xcvi. 1. 7. *The Lord reigneth, let the multitude of isles be glad thereof: Worship him all ye Gods.* Which is applied to Christ; Heb. i. 6. So Is. xxxv. 4, 5, 6. compare with Mark ix. 27. So Is. xl. 5. compared with Mat. iii. 3. So Joel v. 32. compared with Rom. x. 13. which would be too large now to rehearse.

It will be objected indeed, how can it be said, that Christ is God, and there is none else? Is not the Father God also? answer, this does no more exclude the godhead of the Father than our Saviour's own words; John xvii. 3. exclude his own divinity, where he calls the Father *the only true God.* I think is sufficiently evident from many places of scripture, that the Father and the Son have an inconceivable communion, and that of and the same divine nature which is in the Father, dwells in the Son: For since divine names and attributes, works and worship

are ascribed to both, therefore they must both be in some sense true God; and since there is but one true God, they must both have fellowship in the same godhead; or else the Son would be another God different from the Father, which the bible neither knows nor allows.

These words therefore, I am God, and there is none else, if applied to Christ mean no more than this: There is no other godhead but that which dwells in me; but that godhead in which I partake, by intimate communion or one-ness with the Father. *I am in the Father, and the Father is in me*; John xiv. 10, 11. *In Christ dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily*; Col. ii. 9. After all, if we should ascribe this speech entirely to God the Father, yet it must be confessed, as I hinted before, it is *God in Christ, God as reconciling the world to himself* in and by Jesus Christ, and saving the Gentiles as his people, with an everlasting salvation; so that Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of men, cannot be left out of my text.

The second enquiry is this, who are the persons to whom this gracious invitation is made? The text tells us, that the call reaches to all the ends of the earth, which we are to understand in a literal or in a figurative sense.

I. In a literal sense, and thus it signifies the Gentile nations, who dwell afar off from Judea, those that inhabit the distant corners of the world, and *the islands that are afar off*, that have not heard of the name of the grace or glory of God: As Is. lxvi. 19. For the Jews fancied themselves to be placed in the middle of the earth, by the peculiar favour of God; and indeed they were so in one respect, for the land of Canaan is near the borders of Asia, where it joins to Africa, and not very far off from the limits of Europe; which three were the only known parts of the world in that day.

The British islands may, in a special manner, be included in this expression, for they were the very farthest parts of the earth, that could be known in the age of Isaiah. This voice of compassion is therefore eminently sent to us in England; the Lord says to every one of us, *behold me, behold me, ye that were not called by my name*; Is. xlv. 1. *Look unto me from these isles afar off, ye Britons, look unto me from the ends of the earth, and be saved.* O Sirs, if you and I could but imagine that Jesus Christ calls us, as it were by name, surely it would allure us to hearken to the voice of such divine compassion.

II. The words may be understood in a figurative sense, and so they may signify all those persons who are under the same sort of character and circumstance as the Gentiles were in that age.

I. Ye that are in the ends of the earth, that are afar off from the church of God, his knowledge and his worship. Ye that are at the greatest distance from the true Jerusalem. Ye

who are the vilest of sinners, utterly unholy, and without God in the world. Ye that have nothing of grace or religion in you, look unto Christ and be saved, for he came to save the sinners of the Gentiles, and the vilest of mankind.

2. Ye that have not known the blessing of holy parents, but were bred like heathens, who know not God, and born in families that call not on his name : Ye that never were trained up in religious education, that were never brought near to God by a father that was in his covenant, or a mother that believed in his gospel : Ye that were never solemnly devoted to God, nor acknowledge any relation to him, he calls you this day to accept his salvation. Or,

3. Ye that have broke the bonds of a pious education, and ran away from God and his house, and his worship, as the Gentiles had done from the religion and instructions of Noah their ancestor. Ye that have wandered afar off from your Father's house, even to *the ends of the earth*, and are perishing with the prodigal son, at a dreadful distance from God and heaven : Come, look unto Christ and be saved.

4. Ye that are mourning in darkness, as it were at *the ends of the earth*, and on the very borders of hell, *without hope*, as the Gentiles were ; Eph. ii. 12. almost giving up all for lost, yielding to final despair, look to Jesus the Saviour, lay hold on the hope that is set before you, and live.

And while I am preaching in this place*, I may add also,

5. You that dwell in dark corners of this our land, far from any place of religious worship : Ye who live by the sides of the forest, or on bare and solitary commons, in a poor ignorant village, or in lonesome cottages, where letters and reading are not known, and a bible is a strange thing, where books are seldom seen, and the word of God never sounds : Ye that have lived hitherto like wild heathens in the ends of the earth, if any such are present in this assembly, remember you are this day called as it were by the prophet from heaven, and by the word of the living God, from the lips of his ministers on earth, to look to God in Christ, as reconciling the world to himself ; to look to Jesus the Saviour, *in whom all the fulness of the godhead dwells*.

The *third* enquiry proceeds thus : What is this salvation to which we are invited ? It is the same salvation that Israel shall enjoy, the Israel of God, the people of his love : They shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation ; ver. 17. In general, it is a salvation from sin, and all the dismal consequences of it. This is the reason of the name Jesus, or the

* This was delivered in a village in the country.

Saviour; Mat. i. 21. *He shall save his people from their sins.* And it is the same Jesus, *who delivers us from the wrath to come*; 1 Thess. i. 10.

Particularly, (1.) It is a salvation from the guilt of past sins, which exposes us to divine vengeance, and a restoration of the person to the present love and favour of God, to peace of conscience, and to the hope of eternal life. (2.) It is a salvation and a recovery from the power of sin to the power of holiness. It is a deliverance from vile affections and sinful practices to the practice and the love of all piety and goodness: It is a recovery of our nature from the lusts of the flesh, and the life of a brute, to the reasonable and becoming life of a man or an angel. It is a rescue of the soul from the tyranny of its own lusts, and the foul image of Satan, to a sweet and sacred liberty, to a religious self-government, and to the image of God. (3.) It is a deliverance from all the future punishments due to sin, from the everlasting misery of hell, together with the conveyance of a right and title to the everlasting happiness of heaven. It is a blessing that runs through this world and the world to come. It is a total and complete deliverance from all that you feel, and all that you fear. It is all-sufficient and eternal salvation.

Whatsoever your ruin, your distress, or your danger be, there is something in this salvation that is suited to relieve them all; there is relief and hope in Christ. Let us then awaken all the powers within us to attend to the invitations of divine mercy. Are we blind and ignorant of God, and heaven, and divine things? *Christ is the light of this lower world*; John i. 9. *He has compassion on them that are ignorant and out of the way*; Heb. v. 2. Are we foolish? *He is made of God wisdom to us*; 1 Cor. i. 30. Are we unclean and defiled with many iniquities? *The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin*; 1 John i. 7. Are we guilty before God? *He is our propitiation and atonement*; Rom. iii. 25. and *the Lord our righteousness*; Jer. xxiii. 6. Have we lost the divine favour? *He is the only Mediator betwixt God and man*; 1 Tim. ii. 5. And *the great Reconciler to make our peace*; Eph. ii. 15. Are we unholy? *He can change our natures, and sanctify our souls*; Heb. ii. 11. Are we hard-hearted and impenitent, so that we cannot mourn for our sins as we would do? *He is exalted to bestow repentance, as well as forgiveness*; Acts v. 31. Are we weak, and unable to resist temptation, or to perform our duty? *He is our strength*; Isa. xlvi. 24. Are we sick and dying? *He is our physician*; Mat. ix. 12. Are we dead in trespasses and sins? He can quicken us to a divine life, and make us live to God; for the living Spirit is with him. *Christ himself is our life*; and though the body of the saint must die; yet he shall raise it again to life everlasting; John v. 21, 26, 29.

Surely if we are awake, and in our right senses, there not a soul of us in this assembly, but must feel itself under so of these unhappy circumstances. Come then, ye sinful and distressed souls, ye helpless creatures, ye perishing dying wretches of every kind : Come let me lead you to this heavenly Saviour and may my own soul join with yours to partake of this all-sufficient salvation. Blessed Redeemer, make us willing to be saved, and let us seek our help from thy hand.

I go on now to the *fourth* enquiry : And that is, what we do in order to be partakers of this blessing ? The words of the invitation are, look unto me. Now when persons in distress are called to look to any one for help, it implies to trust in him, to depend upon him, to seek help from his power and goodness. See the history of the *cripple who seeing Peter and John going to the temple asked an alms : and they said, Look on us : Upon whom he gave heed to them, expecting to receive something of them ;* Luke iii. 4, 5. So looking unto God signifies dependance on him, expectation of mercy from him. *We know not what to do,* 1 Chron. xv. 2. *Jehoshaphat ;* 2 Chron. xx. 12. *but our eyes are upon the Lord.* So Ps. xxiv. 5. *They looked unto him and were light.* When there was universal distress round about, saith the prophet ; Micah vii. 7. *I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation.*

It is evident from the sacred, as well as the common use of this word, that it signifies the same as believing or trusting in Christ in the New Testament, which is the appointed means of obtaining a share in his salvation. Acts xvi. 31. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Since the Gentiles are required in my text to look to him. It is also told by the same prophet, that *to him shall the Gentiles seek* Jer. x. 1. Which is cited and interpreted by St. Paul ; Rom. x. 12. "In him shall the Gentiles trust."

The soul then, that is so far sensible of its past iniquity, guilt and danger of hell, and that feels so much of its inward sinful nature, appetites, and passions, as to know its own iniquity, and to procure pardon of God for sins past, or to make itself holy in the time to come, and sees also in Christ such a glorious all-sufficiency of help and relief, and upon this account commits its prayer and humble trust, or dependance, into the hands of Christ, as an all-sufficient Saviour, sincerely and earnestly desirous of his complete salvation in all the parts of it, the hope of heaven and the happiness ; this soul is a believer in Christ ; this soul looked to Christ, in the sense of my text, and shall certainly be saved. Because the duty of faith, trusting, or believing, is necessary to salvation, therefore it has pleased God in his

to render the notion of it plain and easy, by many metaphors and figures of speech, to accommodate the capacities and understandings of men.

ings of the meanest. And these are borrowed also from the most useful and active powers of nature, and the most common actions of life.

When the metaphor is taken from the feet, believing is called *coming to Christ*; Mat. xi. 28. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" John vi. 7. "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." In another place it is described by *fleeing for refuge*; Heb. vi. 18. which is a figure borrowed from the feet also; but including hunger, fear, and speed. When it is borrowed from the hands, it is called *receiving of Christ*; John i. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* And Heb. vi. 18. It is a laying hold on the hope set before us. Sometimes the metaphor is taken from the tongue, and then faith is described by *calling on Christ*; Rom. x. 11, 12, 13. *Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. He that believeth on him shall not be ashamed;—for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him.*

In my text the figure of speech is taken from the eyes; and the direction is, look unto me and be saved. There is something in this way of speaking, that more exactly suits the words faith and believing; for as they imply both a belief of the all-sufficiency of Christ to save, and a trusting him for this salvation, so looking implies that the poor dying creature has seen the all-sufficiency that is in Christ, and thence is encouraged to hope and expect help from him. It is such a look of hope and dependance as a helpless creature, just dying of the pestilence, or a mortal stab, would express toward some angel-physician that was coming to him with a vital and all-healing balm: Such a look as a condemned criminal, at the place of execution, would cast toward some swift messenger afar off, who has a pardon in his hand: Or such a look as a child, just ready to be slaughtered by a spiteful enemy, would express towards his father, well-armed, and hasting to his deliverance. We may suppose the saving act of faith in this place to be described by the word looking for these reasons.

I. Because the persons who are called, are in the ends of the earth: And thus the propriety of expression is preserved, and the metaphor appears more beautiful. Those who are so far off from Christ might complain, "We are feeble dying creatures, we cannot come to him, as with our feet, nor lay hold of him as with our hands; but we can look toward him, though we are in the ends of the earth." As Jonah did when in the depths of the sea; Jonah ii. 4. *I am cast out of thy sight, yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.* Now the temple was a type of the human nature of Christ, in which God was pleased to dwell:

and the Jews in their prayers, even from the ends of the earth and in heathen lands, turned their eyes towards this temple in humble hope of acceptance; 1 Kings viii. 29, 35, &c. So may the poor perishing sinner say, "Though I am far from God and holiness, and all hope in myself, or in any creature that are near me, yet I am within reach of the call of Christ; I hear the voice of his inviting grace; I will look towards him as my only hope; I will keep my eyes upon him and trust in him; I will by him draw near to God; and my soul shall live."

II. Believing in Christ may be described in this place by looking to him to express the lowest and the weakest degree of faith, for the encouragement of poor convinced trembling sinners. When persons are awakened to a lively apprehension of their guilt, and a quick sense of their danger, and see themselves every moment liable to perish under the wrath of an offended God, and at the same time feel their own utter inability to save themselves, it is proper that the act of faith whereby we are saved should be expressed in the easiest manner, that may allure them toward Christ, the only Saviour, and may encourage them to hope. When they are, as it were, at the ends of the earth, at a wide distance from God and Christ, they may look towards him, and send a wish of desire and dependance that way; like dying drowning sailors in a storm that look towards the shore, to see if there be any hope: And such a look as this, is ordained of God to derive all salvation from so almighty and complete a Saviour as Jesus Christ is: For it contains in it the whole nature of saving faith, as the flower and the fruit are contained in a little green bud, though the several parts and the leaves of them are not yet unfolded, nor appear to sight.

Such a look of a convinced sinner to Christ implies in it a distressing sense of his sin and present danger, a belief that there is help for him in Christ, and an aversion of the eye from every thing else; a renouncing all other dependancies, an earnest desire to partake of this salvation, such as Christ offers it that is, to make him holy as well as happy: And it includes also thus much of trust or confidence, that if the soul has any hope at all of its own salvation, Christ is the only ground of this hope. There is and will be some sort of expectation of relief from the hand to which we look, when we see ourselves perishing.

III. Looking to Christ for salvation is a word that sheweth how little hand we have in our own deliverance from sin and death. *Israel has destroyed himself, but in God alone is his help* Hos. xiii. 9. It is not possible that our looking should affect our salvation of itself, or do any thing toward it any other way, than as it is, dependance on another to save us.

Faith itself is that grace that has the least shew of self-activity, self-sufficiency, or self-honour in it. Rom. iv. 16. There

fore our salvation is ordained to be of faith, *that it might be of grace*. It is the law or constitution of faith, as the means of our salvation, that it must *exclude all boasting*; Rom. iii. 27; *That all that are saved might glory only in the Lord*; 1 Cor. i. 31. Now when faith itself is expressed in so low and feeble exercise of it as looking unto Christ, it does in a most emphatical manner exclude every thing of self; it utterly forbids all boasting, and readers all the honour to Christ alone. How can a dying wretch pretend to any glory or merit in his own salvation, who only looked and was saved?

IV. There is in this way of expression a natural and easy reference to the command of looking to the brazen serpent, which was a type of Christ, and which was to confer health and life on the wounded and dying Israelites, by their looking up to it in the wilderness. See John iii. 14, 15. *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have eternal life*. Compared with Numb. xxi. 8. *The Lord said unto Moses make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live*. Happy people, for whom so divine a remedy was provided against a national mischief! So sovereign an antidote against spreading and mortal poison! Those that were stung and perishing, though they were at the utmost limits of the camp, might, as it were from the borders of the wilderness, look up to the brazen remedy, and find health and life: From the ends of the land they looked and were saved.

Physicians were useless in that day, and all medicines insignificant. The swift and fiery poison wrought powerfully in them that were bitten, and they were quickly brought to the borders of the grave. But before their eyes were closed in death, if they could but cast a look towards the appointed signal, the divine medium of salvation, behold they are miraculously healed, and live! And which of all the sons or daughters of Israel could boast of any thing of his own in this wondrous deliverance, when on the very confines of life and the brink of the grave, they were healed by a look to the brazen image of a serpent? *Such is the perishing sinner casting an eye toward Christ for salvation!*

But some poor trembling sinner will be ready to say, "Surely this is so little and so low an act of faith, that I am ready to question whether this can save me or no: How shall I know whether my looking to Christ is of that kind as shall be effectual to my salvation?"

Now in answer to such an enquiry, let the fearful soul remember what I have said before under the second particular, concerning the several acts of the soul that are secretly includ-

ed in this looking to Jesus; and ask itself whether it has put forth these acts or no? Besides this, I would mention also these two properties of saving faith, as it is described by looking.

1. It must be such a look as immediately affects the heart with love and sorrow; sorrow for our own sins, and love to Christ our Saviour. If we have ever seen him with sincere delight as a Saviour from sin, we shall mourn heartily that ever we were sinners. We cannot but repent for sin, while we believe or hope for the forgiveness of it through such condescending grace. And we cannot but love so compassionate and almighty a Friend, that has delivered us from eternal destruction. Having seen Christ we are weaned from sin, and we love the Lord. Mary Magdalene, that remarkable sinner, lying at the foot of Christ, wept much and *loved much*; Luke vii. 38, 47. You have never seen Christ, as your Saviour, if your sins are not the objects of your shame and sorrow; or if Jesus be not the object of your desire and love.

2. It must be such a look as changes the soul and temper into another image, even the image of Christ. 2 Cor. iii. 18. *We, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.* In the glass of the gospel beholding the glorious holiness of our Lord Jesus Christ, our very tempers are changed into his holy likeness, from one degree of grace to another, till it advance to complete glory; and then we shall be made more perfectly like him by seeing him as he is, or face to face; 1 John iii. 2. There will be a shine of holiness on our conversation in this world, as reflected from the glory and holiness of Christ, whom we have seen, even as the face of Moses shone when he had *seen God*; Ex. xxxiv. 29, 30. That is, when he had seen the Son of God conversing with him in a visible glory.

A saving look of faith to our Lord Jesus Christ, will happily influence all the powers of nature, and all the actions of life.— This is seldom done indeed at once, but by slow degrees. The longer we behold him, and the oftener we look to him, the more we shall grow like him. We must look to Jesus as our example, as well as *the author and finisher of our faith*; that we may lay aside the sin that so easily besets us, and run with patience the race of holiness that is set before us; Heb. xii. 1, 2. In vain do we pretend to have seen Christ, if we do not find ourselves at all beginning to become new creatures.

Thus I have finished my answer to the fourth enquiry; viz. How we are to come by this salvation; and why the act of faith is expressed by looking to Christ.

DISCOURSE VIII.

God in Christ is the Saviour of the Ends of the Earth; or, Faith represented in its lowest Degrees.

Is. xiv. 22.—Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God; and there is none else.

THE SECOND PART.

THIS is an invitation of surprising and sovereign mercy to creatures in the utmost distress and misery. It is the great and blessed God himself, in the person of Jesus Christ, calling the Gentile world to salvation. It is God in Christ inviting sinners from the ends of the earth, and the borders of hell, to partake of heaven and happiness. It is Immanuel, God with us, who calls us to look unto him and be saved. If we are sensible of our own misery; if we are weary of sin, and would be secured from the wrath to come, let us look to him as a Saviour, with an eye of faith and holy dependance. This was the subject of the former discourse.

Let us now go on to the last question, and learn, what assurance we can have from the text, that we shall possess this salvation in the way proposed; or that faith in God our Saviour shall be attended with such success.

The reason is given by the prophet in almighty and convincing language; *For I am God and there is none else.* This sentence has two distinct parts in it, and each of them carries strong reasons for the support of our faith, and the encouragement of our hope. The first part is the assertion of his own godhead. *I am God*; which carries in it these two supports or assurances:

1. *I am God*; therefore, I am all-sufficient to save; and therefore, ye dying sinners, look unto me, and be saved. What is there that the most wretched of creatures can stand in need of, but there is a supply to be found among the treasures of a God? When a God undertakes to be a Saviour, the creature cannot perish. There is light and wisdom enough in him to make the fool wise for ever; and to scatter all our darkness: There is power enough in God, to make the weakest soul strong in grace, and active in every duty: There is love enough in him to melt the most stubborn heart, and change an old enemy into an humble and willing subject. Ye may be assured of this salvation if

ye look to Jesus, who is God, and therefore *mighty to save*; Is. lxiii. 1. There is an all-sufficiency in his blood and righteousness to atone for infinite transgressions, and to procure the everlasting favour of God: For this High-priest or Mediator himself is one with God, he is God, and his sacrifice on earth, and his intercession in heaven, are all ever dignified with godhead, and thereby become almighty for salvation.

2. *I am God*; and therefore have a right to prescribe the means of obtaining my salvation. Look therefore unto me, ye sinners, and be saved. I will give it to every one that looks; *he that believes on me shall be saved* from sin and death; Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 15, 16. God is rich in grace; and if he will manifest the glory and freedom of it in the grant of his new covenant, and will promise salvation to faith, and not insist upon that personal perfect obedience which once was required, let the thankful sinner rejoice, and submit, and give God the honour of his abounding mercy. Let him pursue the highest measures of holiness, under the melting influences of gratitude, and the constraining power of divine love. This is naturally implied in the first part of the words, *I am God*. But when he adds this glorious clause, *and there is none else*, he seems, in the second part of this sentence, to intimate these three things further to us:

1. There is none that can save besides me. The salvation of a sinner from the ends of the earth, from the borders of hell, is too great a work for any being that is less than God. What mere creature has worth enough to make compensation to the great God for the sins of men: Or what created power has influence enough to persuade God to be reconciled? Is there knowledge enough in a mere fellow-creature, intimately to acquaint himself with all the thoughts and wants of a perishing sinner? Is there power enough to new-mould his nature? To strike divine light into his conscience? To bend his stubborn will and subdue all his powers to the obedience of the gospel? Has any mere creature power sufficient to change a dead sinner into a living saint? To secure him through every temptation? To fit him for the society of God and angels? And to bring him through death to eternal glory? All this must be done if a sinner be saved.

2. These words also imply, there is none but God who has a right to prescribe the means of our salvation. If he says to sinners, *look and be saved*; who shall dare forbid the blessing, or appoint a different way to obtain it? If the Lord of heaven has said to poor perishing creatures on earth, ye shall be saved if ye believe. Shall the Jew dare to impose circumcision as necessary to salvation? Or the papists command penances or pilgrimages? Or shall the conceited Pharisee require a perfection of holiness, and a righteousness made up of the works of the law, in order to

obtain eternal life? "The righteousness of the law saith, do this and live:" But the "righteousness of faith says, Believe and be saved;" Rom. x. 5, 6, 9. It is granted that this saving faith must be a vital principle in the soul, that manifests itself in repentance, and endeavours after universal holiness; for a dead faith cannot save: But it is not our holiness that can provide acceptance with an offended God, it is faith in the sacrifice and righteousness of the Redeemer, that is the means appointed for this end. The great God has appointed it, and who shall dare to forbid; his authority is sovereign, and his appointment a sufficient warrant for our hope.

3. *I am God, and there is none else*, includes thus much also for the comfort and assurance of the believing sinner; that there is none can prevent your salvation, if you comply with the gracious proposals. Who shall condemn if God will justify? Rom. viii. 33, 34. Who can pluck us out of the hand of Christ, or separate us from his love? John x. 28. Who shall destroy, if God will save? It is his property, and his divine prerogative, to kill and to make alive, to save and to destroy; Deut. xxxii. 39, 43. "See now, that I, even I am he; and there is no God with me; I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. Rejoice therefore, O ye nations, ye Gentiles, together with his people Israel; for he will render vengeance to his adversaries, and be merciful to his land; Is. xliii. 11, 13. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Saviour. I will work; and who shall let it?"

Thus it appears, that there is abundant ground from the words of my text, for a poor perishing sinner to raise his hope to assurance that he shall be saved, if he does but sincerely answer this gracious invitation from heaven, and trust in God, as he is revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ, for salvation, according to that description of true faith which is given us in the word of God. All the improvements I shall make of this discourse at present, shall be contained in these four reflections.

I. We may learn from this scripture, how extensive and glorious is the salvation of Christ! How answerable it is in every respect to the weaknesses and the wants, to the miseries, dangers, and fears, of a convinced, and awakened sinner! It reaches to those who are perishing in the ends of the earth. Let us survey them a little more particularly.

1. Is our guilt and distress exceeding great and dreadful? Behold here a salvation of rich fulness and divine all-sufficiency: for it is a God that provides it. The riches of grace, the depths of wisdom, and the efforts of almighty power are employed in this blessed work; and the mercy is expressed in the manner of a speaking God: He who said, *Let there be light, and there was*

light, says also, look and be saved: And the sinner looks and receives salvation. It is a God who commands deliverances for Jacob, and salvation for his people; Ps. xlv. 4.

2. Are our enemies great and mighty? Are the flesh, and the world, and the powers of hell engaged against the safety of our souls? yet our salvation is perfectly and eternally secure; for he that saves us is God: No creature can divest us of it, and there is no other God besides him. Neither height, nor depth, nor principalities, nor powers—nor life, nor death, nor any creature, shall separate us from the love of God, in Christ Jesus, our Lord; Rom. viii. 38, 39.

3. Are we at such a dreadful distance from God, that we seem to be on the utmost verge of all hope, at the ends of life and this world, at the borders of hell and despair? Yet we are within the reach of the call of mercy, within the sound of the voice of Christ, and his extensive grace: *Look from the ends of the earth, and be saved.*

4. Are we poor impotent creatures, that can do nothing to make satisfaction to God for our sins, and little or nothing towards the restoring our souls to the likeness of God, and the recovery of holiness? Do we stand in need of such a Saviour, that must work all our works for us, and in us? Behold such a one in my text: He requires of you but to look to him, and trust in him, in the manner I have described, and the salvation is free and sure. Christ himself will bestow it on us. There are some poor, melancholy, desponding creatures, who are even almost overwhelmed with a sense of their guilt, and of the power of sin in them, and are just giving up all hope, who have need to have the richest and amazing condescensions of grace to be set before them, in such a manner as this. And blessed be God, that his gospel contains in it such abounding mercy to creatures so miserable.— We may therefore cry out with joy and thankfulness, and holy wonder: O the fulness and sufficiency of this salvation! It is God who provides it, who knows and can supply all the variety of our wants! O the wide extent of it! It reaches to all nations, to all characters of persons, even to the ends of the earth. O the rich freedom of this grace, that requires us to look, and be saved! O what free and full, what large and extensive, what rich and sovereign salvation!

II. What a blessed security of this salvation is given to all those who comply with the invitation of this grace! It is as safe as it is extensive. No creature can take away what a God resolves to bestow. No finite being can prevent what an infinite being resolves to do. If he that is God will save, none else can destroy, or frustrate the designed salvation? Who shall forbid the blessing that the Almighty Saviour will confer on those who look to him from the ends of the earth? The enemy, even the

most malicious and powerful enemy, whose name is Abaddon, or the destroyer, is but a creature; but the friend, the mighty and merciful friend, whose name is Jesus, or the Saviour, is God, even Immanuel, God with us. When he stands upon the throne of his mercy, and cries out to perishing sinners, *Look to me from the ends of the earth, and be saved*; not all the powers of hell shall be able to destroy the sinners that look to him, and accept of his salvation. What a glorious relief is found in my text against all temptations to despondency? Your Saviour is God, and there is none besides him.

III. How much do those sinners deserve to perish for ever, who will not be saved upon such gracious terms? In vain do you turn your eyes around you, and look to one creature, and seek another for help; your ruin is too great, and your misery too deep and dismal, for any power but that of God, to raise and cover you. If they who refused to hear the voice of Moses, who spake from earth, died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment shall ye be thought worthy, *who refuse to hearken to the voice of God speaking from heaven?* Heb. x. 28, 29. Can you ever imagine it possible that you should *escape* the divine vengeance, *who neglect so great, so divine a salvation.*

Consider, ye sinners, that are this day under the call of grace, though now you seem to be as it were at the ends of the earth, afar off from God and Christ; from all that is holy, and all that is happy, yet you are not utterly abandoned to destruction, while the voice of mercy sounds in your ears. But take heed that ye hearken while ye are called to-day, lest ye perish before the morrow come. Remember this, that the silver trumpet of mercy will not always sound: Christ Jesus will not always cry, look unto me, and be saved. Ye are now upon the confines of hell; if once death open its dark gates, and hell has put her mouth upon you, you will then be far out of the sight of Jesus the Saviour, and beyond the call of his mercy for ever.

Let me turn my voice now for a few minutes to the gospel Israel, to the children of the kingdom. While I have been inviting the ends of the earth to be saved, and have been calling sinners afar off from God and his church to receive Jesus Christ and his salvation, is there any dispensation for you to neglect it, who dwell in the midst of the visible church? You who were born of holy parents, who have lived in religious families and are by this means brought near to the kingdom of heaven? Are you ready to flatter yourselves that you are out of danger of perishing? Have a care of vain presumption, and foolish feeble hopes. The wounded Israelites, who lay just under the brazen serpent of old, might die and perish there in their own folly, if they refused to look up to the appointed remedy; while some from the

distant borders of the camp looked and were saved: But our obstinate wretches must be unpitied in death.

Attend then, ye sinners in Zion, and hearken to the voice of God the Saviour. Christ has been brought near to you in his gospel, his promises, and his holy ordinances; you have read him in his word, you have heard him speak by his ministers, as you have learned much of him from the instructions of your pious parents: Ye have begun to see something of him in his glory and grace; and will you now turn your eyes away from him? Will you look upon the vanities of the present evil world, and the eye of your souls, your desires, hopes, and wishes, upon trifles and impertinence, and neglect the offer of heavenly treasures? Have you seen and heard so much of Christ already, that you have grown weary of him? Are the Lord and his salvation grown cheap and common things to you, of little value, not worth a look? Will you who are near to the kingdom of heaven refuse to enter in, and let those that come from the ends of the earth obtain the inheritance, and seize the happiness before you? O how aggravated will your condemnation be? How dreadful the agonies of your torment, to see perishing sinners come from distant regions, from the east and the west, from poor-wicked families, and houses of iniquity, and receive the salvation of Christ? while you are *cast into outer darkness? There shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth?* Mat. viii. 11, 12

IV. The last use I shall make of this discourse, is to take a short survey of that salvation, of the happiness and the holiness thereof, that is derived to a soul by a sincere look of faith to Jesus the Saviour. O what a blessed change is made by our looking to Christ! A change, I say, in the very eye-sight of our souls, and in our view and survey of all things round about us, so far as we have any concern in them! What a blessed change in our judgment and esteem of them! We look upon things with another eye than before, and things put on a new face. Faith looking to Christ for salvation, sets all things in different light before the eyes of the soul, and gives quite another view of them. It is like some heavenly glass applied to the organs of sense, that not only assists and improves our sight, but represents every thing to us in a divine light, even such as they appear to the blessed spirits above.

1. It alters the view and appearance of all the great and gay things of this life. All the treasures, and pomp, and entertainments of this world, were once the most tempting objects we could look upon; but now we look on the world, with all the gayest and richest scenes of it, as a little mean and despicable thing; for we have seen Christ and heaven; and when the world begins to flatter us again, and to look great and tempting in our eyes, let us look again to Jesus, and his salvation; that the world may lose its splendour and allurements.

Once a poor christian in a cottage, or in vile raiment, contemptible in our sight, now we look on the saints, even in the meanest circumstances, as the excellent of the earth; for heirs of heaven, they are like to Christ, and formed the blessed image of him, whom we have seen with an eye and love. Holy Saviour, and holy saints! They, *the of the earth*, and he the ornament of heaven.

The bible heretofore we looked on but little better than a book; or perhaps it was our aversion. The New Testament we no pleasure. The true glories of it were hidden.

The gospel was a *hidden* gospel; but now we look on it as our most valuable treasure and portion; and we often read it; for we find Jesus Christ there, with all his salvific part of the bible carries quite another aspect than of old. We look upon the promises as an inventory of our inheritance; and we read those words, *All things are yours*, with a peculiar delight; because of our own interest in them, and as they are repeated twice, to confirm our faith, so we read them often, and dwell upon them with pleasure.—*ours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's*; 1 Cor. 3. Then by virtue of this promise we can look to the sun and the earth; to the sun, moon, and stars; to Paul, and Cephas; to ministers and to angels; to this world and to the other; to *life and death, to things present and to things to come* with a humble and pleasurable belief of our interest in them, so far as we have need of them to make us holy or

as we look on the promises of the bible with another eye, so we behold the precepts of it in a sweeter light: we now see them as the rules of our happiness, as the model of our nature, as the holy transcript of the perfections of God, as the blessed advices of our dear Redeemer. We look on the commandments, and behold *they are no more grievous to us than the law is our delight*; 1 John v. 3. Ps. cxix. 77. As for the threatenings of the book of God, we once beheld them, perhaps with a regardless eye, and a stupid heart; or if we were to read them with utmost terror, as the messengers of damnation: We beheld them as so many angels with flaming swords, to forbid our entrance into paradise. But since we have seen Jesus with an eye of saving faith, the threatenings are no more such a dreadful aspect. Since the Spirit of God has awoken against the man that was God's fellow, and all his wrath and vengeance was executed on Christ, our surety, we are no longer terrified by the threatenings as disarmed of their terror and no longer in danger to our salvation.

The face of God, shining in his terrible attributes of holiness and justice, was dreadful to our souls, so that we could no

look upon him, and we turned our eyes away from God : As his attributes of love and mercy, we had no relish of them ; we had no solid hope in them. We saw nothing in God desirable and delightful to us : We stood afar off ; we neglected ; forgot him ; or else we hid ourselves from him, as Adam did because we were afraid. But now, since we have beheld God Christ, as reconciling sinners to himself, now we can look upon him in all his awful and his peaceful attributes without dismay : we can survey and dwell upon all his glories with a sacred pleasure : and lift up our eyes towards him with humble confidence in prayer or in praise ; for we behold him as God reconciler and a Father, since we have seen Jesus the Mediator and trusted in his name.

With what surprize and overwhelming fear did we once behold approaching afflictions, when we were without God, without Christ, and without hope ? But now we can look upon sufferings and sorrows without being overwhelmed by them ; we look upon the huge swelling waves without painful apprehension and see the floods rise high without fear of being drowned ; we have seen Jesus as it were walking on the water ; and have heard him saying, It is I, be not afraid. We can look upon him when we are afar off from our friends, even in the end of the earth, and find light in darkness, and relief in the midst of our distresses.

6. How formidable once was the face of death. No painter can describe the monster so hideous to the sense, as he appeared constantly to our awakened souls, before we had seen Christ. What horror did our spirits feel, and our flesh shudder at the thought of his approach ! How frightfully and yet how justly did our guilty fancy paint him, and all his attendants, in their terrible array ! But the saint looks on death now as a harmless thing, for he has seen Jesus disarm him ; Christ has abolished it, and taken away *the sting from death*. The lively christian looks on it as a friend, or rather as a slave subdued to the service of his Lord, sent on a glorious message, to fetch him to dwell where his blessed Lord is. They shall be *where I am, to behold my glory* ; John xvii. 24.

7. The man who has seen Jesus with an eye of faith, can stand to the last great tribunal without terror ; for he knows and is acquainted with Christ the judge : He has seen him and trusted the important concerns of that day into his hands. *I know, says the christian, whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that I am able to keep all that I have committed to him unto that day ; 2 Tim. i. 12.* Therefore he can see the judgment-seat, and the book opened, without dismay or fearful expectation ; for he has seen Jesus cross out all his sins with the blood of his sacrifice : Christ has cancelled them for ever from the great register of heaven.

the *book of divine remembrance*; and has shewn him his own name written in the Lamb's book of life, from the foundation of the world.

8. Then he may turn his eyes to all that glorious assembly so high; he may look on the saints in their robes of light, as companions of his blessedness, and the troops of angels as ministers of fire, to execute vengeance on all his enemies; and heralds to prepare his way to the upper heavens. He may fix his eyes with most intense and transporting delight on Christ his sovereign Lord, and behold him hereafter with eyes of sense amidst the honours of heaven, whom he had beheld here with an eye of faith, amidst the sufferings of the cross, and the agonies of the garden. "This is he, says the saint, whose voice of mercy I heard in yonder perishing world, and to whom I looked from the ends of the earth, that I might be saved. I believed him then to have *all the fulness of the godhead dwelling in him bodily*; and as *God manifest in the flesh*, I worshipped him, and trusted in him. I behold him now as *the brightness of his Father's glory*, and his divinest image: I find him to be a complete and all-sufficient Saviour; for I stand possessed of his divine salvation, *My knee bows, and my tongue confesses that Jesus is Lord*. He is one with the Father. *To him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing, and honour, and power, and glory, for ever and ever*. Amen. Rev. v. 13.

DISCOURSE IX.

Faith built on Knowledge.

2 Tim. i. 12.—I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that I am able to keep that which I have committed to him, against that day.

THE FIRST PART.

WHEN this epistle was written to Timothy, St. Paul, the writer of it, was a prisoner at Rome; there he lay under a heavy chain, and was exposed to public shame for the sake of the Gospel. He had death in a near view, and was preparing for a bloody stroke. For in the sixth verse of the last chapter he says, *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand: I have fought the good fight, and my course is finished.* But he seems to assure himself upon the words of my text, and grows bold upon this foundation of solid comfort: As though he should say, “None of these things move me, nor am I afraid to die, for I shall not be lost: I suffer; but I am not ashamed: I know whom I have trusted to take care of me to death, and all beyond it; even to the great day of retribution.”

It is pleasing and glorious to see this apostle, this little figure of a man, whose *presence and whose speech were both to be trembled at*; 2 Cor. x. 10. to see how he builds upon this text, and assumes divine courage in the midst of pain and shame, the very face of scandal and martyrdom. “Let me die out of this world, though with infamy, violence, and blood; but I have been told of life, and joys, and honours, in the world to come, and that with such evidence, as to constrain my belief; And I know whom I have believed. Let my barbarous executioners with the sword rob me of the short remains of this present life; but they have committed my soul, and all my infinite concerns, for a long time hereafter, into the hands of an almighty and a sure Friend, and I am persuaded he is able to keep what I have committed to him against that day.”

This is the language of a lively hope, and these are the words that have administered constant support to many dying christians. Now that such a hope may appear to be rationally built upon this text, and that our present meditations and our course may proceed with more regularity and profit; I may briefly explain the words. The chief things that want any application are these four:

I. Who is this great Friend of St. Paul's whom he has own and believed.—II. What he means by believing.—III. What it is he has committed into the hands of this friend.—IV. What is that day, or period of time, when he expected to find all these which he had thus intrusted him with.

I. Who is this great friend of St. Paul's whom he had believed, and of whose ability he was so well persuaded? These words can be properly applied to none so well as to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the mediator: and that for these reasons. It is that is spoken of in the context; ver. 10. "Who has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: And it is this gospel of Christ for which Paul is not ashamed to suffer, in the words just before the text.

It is Christ who is recommended as the proper object of belief or trust in the New Testament, as God the Father was under the Old: So our Lord himself declares; John xiv. 1. "Ye believe in God: believe also in me. This was the great duty of all the first preachers of the gospel pressed upon their hearers, even a belief on Jesus Christ. This was the perpetual subject of St. Paul's exhortations, the matter of his practice, and the ground of his hope, the instances are so numerous, that it is needless and endless to collect them. It is Jesus Christ into whose hands the Father has put all his saints and children, and committed them to his care, that he may keep them. John xvii. 9, 12. "Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me—out to the world; and I have kept them through thy name." And therefore into the same hands a child of God most naturally comes himself.

II. What does the word believe signify here?

By believing we are here to understand an assent to the revelation that Jesus Christ had made of himself, as sent from the Father to save sinners, and a trust in him for this salvation: For the word *πιστευω*, in the Greek, naturally includes both, and the following part of the verse confirms this sense: which will be made more completely evident in the improvement of this discourse. We let it be remarked, from the bold and pathetic manner of speaking, that the apostle appears as a strong believer, as one that had much acquaintance with Christ, and long trusted in him, and every day gained further confirmation of his faith. Observe the expression, *I know whom I have believed*, and am come to a confident persuasion in myself, *that he is able*, &c. It is a faithful and joyful; for he mentions it as his support against pain and suffering.

III. When we enquire, what it is that the apostle committed to Christ? I think there is no need to limit or confine the trust; all that belongs to poor sinful man, which God the Father has appointed Christ to take care of, may be included in this

depositum, this important trust. I have committed my whole person, soul and body, with all my spiritual concerns in this world, and all my everlasting interest in the world to come, into the hands of Christ; my soul, and the affairs of my eternity. And this the apostle seems to have chiefly in his eye, because he was now ready to leave the body, and all things of this present life. So Christ on the cross commits his soul into the hands of his Father; Luke xxiii. 46. *Father into thy hands I commend my spirit.* So Stephen, the first martyr, addressed himself to Christ; Acts vii. 59. *Lord Jesus receive my spirit.* So David, by a spirit of prophecy, in evangelic expressions, betrusts his soul with God his Redeemer; Ps. xxxi. 6. *Into thy hands I commit my spirit, thou hast redeemed it, O Lord God of truth.*

IV. What is that day, that great day, which the apostle means in the text? Without doubt, he refers to the last judgment, which is that day, by way of eminence, that day when the works of all other days shall be reviewed, when all mankind shall appear together upon the earth, that have lived in several successive days, and years, and ages, and a decisive sentence shall be passed upon all, without a possibility of reverse: The day on which the fate of their eternity shall depend, and be determined. It is the custom of the apostle to speak of this day in such a way of absolute eminence, without particular descriptions: So he does twice in this same epistle; chap. i. 18. and iv. 8. And it is expressly evident in 2 Thess. i. 10. he means this last great day, when Christ "shall appear in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that obey him not:—and shall come to be glorified in all them that believe.

Though believers in Christ, who have committed themselves to his charge, find their souls safe in the moment after death, and the beginning of their intellectual heaven, yet this is more insensible to other men, and unseen to the world: The day of judgment is a more remarkable and conspicuous day in the eyes of all the creation, angels, and men; in this day shall Christ openly deliver up his great trust to the Father, who committed all elect sinners into his hands: In this day shall he make it appear, that he has been "able and faithful to keep whatsoever God and the saints have committed to him." Besides, till this day come, Christ has not fulfilled his commission, nor answered his trust for which he is engaged to his Father, and to believers; for this is one part of it, that he would take care of their dying bodies, *and raise them up at the last day*; John vi. 39. The apostle, though he well knew the happiness of separate souls, that were *absent from the body*, and immediately *present with the Lord*, yet he more frequently points to this bright and distant day of the resurrection, when he invites our hope abroad beyond the limits of life and time, to give it the fairest and the longest prospect.

Thus having sufficiently unfolded whatsoever might seem doubtful in the text, let us proceed to a more particular improvement of it: And to this end we may comprise the sense in this one proposition or doctrine:—

A christian lays a solid foundation for his faith and joyful hope in the knowledge of the person whom he trusts. He has some good acquaintance with that great Friend of his, to whom he commits all his concerns from time to eternity; and upon this he builds his confidence and comfort; and from this he rises to joy and triumph. The words of my text are the language of an advanced and well-grown faith; and both my doctrine and discourse keep this in view; yet the nature and practice of a sinner's first addresses to Christ by faith, may be easily learnt hereby; as I shall shew hereafter. To confirm and improve this doctrine, let us consider,

I. What it is that a christian knows of Christ, that engages his trust and confidence?—II. What sort of knowledge it is? And how he comes by it? And III. What useful remarks may be drawn from this subject?

First, What is it that a christian knows of Christ, that engages his trust in him? The answer may be comprised under these two general heads; viz. The personal qualifications of Christ, and his special character, or commission, as one appointed to take care of souls.

I. A believer knows the particular and personal qualifications of Christ, which render him able to take care of what is committed to him. Now these qualifications depend not only upon the constitution of his person, as one in whom God and man are united, but also upon the labours of his life, and the virtue of his sufferings, his death, his resurrection, and his exalted state. Let us descend a little into particulars upon this subject, and take a short and pleasurable survey how well our Lord is qualified to take the charge of souls, and of their eternal welfare.

1. He has almighty power, and can secure whatsoever is committed to him, against all oppositions and dangers; for it is by him that God the Father created all things, and he hath sufficient influence over all the works of his hands; a divine ability to save his favourites, and destroy all that oppose; to ensafe them from every peril that arises from their own weakness, and defend them against every adversary that designs mischief. It was by him that our souls were formed at first in his own and his Father's image; and he can new-mould them into the same form, though it be quite defaced. What iniquity is there in nature, which such almighty grace cannot subdue? What wild imagination, or rebellious thought in man, which a God cannot reduce to obedience? Should all the wicked of the earth conspire to ruin a

christian, what could the impotent malice of creatures avail, if the Creator forbid their violence; or if he who made them encompass the saint round as with a wall of brass, and cover him as with a shield? And what can Satan, the tempter or the destroyer do, if Jesus hold him in his chain, and forbid him to come nigh the believer? The lion of the great deep cannot so much as roar, to affright the meanest lamb of the flock, without the permission of *Christ their Shepherd*. He can neither tempt us from our duties, nor rife us of our comforts, if the Son of God command him to silence. And what are all the angels in heaven but the servants of Christ, "all ministring spirits, sent forth to secure them that are heirs of salvation?" Heb. i. 14. What is there within us, or without us, in heaven, earth, or hell, that can endanger our happiness, if he that is one with God, and almighty, undertake to save us? To him therefore we commit this great undertaking.

2. He has inconceivable treasures of knowledge, and wisdom unsearchable. He takes notice of the most secret and distant dangers to which his favourites can be exposed: *Hell is naked before him*, and the dark counsels of destruction have no covering: He confounds all the policies of darkness, and knows how to infatuate Satan, the most subtle spirit, when he contrives mischief against the saints. And when our own hearts, for want of foresight, run giddily, and wander into snares, he can surround us with divine light for the recovery of our wanderings, and guide us in a safe path homewards. "The hidden workings of sin in the inmost chambers of the soul are open to his eyes; Heb. iv. 12, 13. And he knows how to prevent it from bringing forth fruit unto death; but on the other hand, his own counsels are laid unsearchably deep; nor can all hell fathom or undermine them. He is supposed to be represented under the character of *wisdom*, shewing her power; Prov. viii. 14. "Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding, I have strength. He knows how to deliver the godly out of every temptation, and to preserve them to his own kingdom. This glorious person is fit to be trusted with the infinite concerns of weak and ignorant creatures.

3. His love, and compassion, and willingness to take the charge of souls, is equal to his wisdom and power. Though this be not expressed in the text, yet it is necessarily included, for how could the apostle say with joy, *I know whom I have trusted*, if he knew only that he was *able to save*, without believing him willing? Or why should St. Paul trust him with so valuable a thing as his eternal welfare, if he did not know him compassionate as well as mighty? But his willingness is abundantly evident by all that he did, and all that he suffered, to procure salvation for us, for he tell us it was the very design of his

coming, to seek and save that which was lost ; Luke xix. 10. And he must be willing to keep that which he undertakes to seek and to save.

It was his love and willingness to take care of sinners, that brought him down from heaven to an incarnation, and veiled the dignity of his divine glory in the lowly and debased figure of a man, in the likeness of sinful flesh. A believer reads his willingness in the very features of his manhood; and every poor painful circumstance of his life writes his love still in fairer characters. What mean all his labours, and wearisome travels? His preachings and pleadings with obstinate men all the day, in towns and villages? And his midnight wrestling with God upon the cold mountains? What mean his kind invitations, and his melting language, *Oh, every one that thirsteth, let him come unto me, and drink? Come unto me all ye that—ure weary, and I will give you rest*; Mat. xi. 28. *Come to the physician, ye that are sick and I will heal you. Come ye that are heavy laden, and I will release you. He that cometh unto me shall in no wise be cast out*; John vi. 37.

What can be the design of all these tender expressions, but to acquaint us with his willingness to take care of those sinners that commit their souls to him? What means his submission to cruel sufferings, and bitter reproaches? his agonies in the garden? The convulsions of his nature, and the tortures of his soul? Tortures that drew cries and tears from the Son of God? And *his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even to astonishment and death*. What do all those speak, if not love and willingness to save? What is the language of his arms, when spread naked on the cross, but *come unto me, sinners, and I will embrace you*? This is the voice of every wound of his body, while his breath expired amidst blood and groans. Nor can we understand any thing by all these scenes of woe, if we cannot read love in them, and a hearty willingness to secure believing sinners from the wrath to come.

4. He hath perfect righteousness, and atoning blood. So that the most guilty soul may trust him safely; for he has obeyed, and he has suffered: He has procured pardon for sin, and justification unto eternal life: He has made satisfaction for the vilest of crimes, and for the chief of sinners. He had a human nature that could die, and the in-dwelling divinity, that could put infinite dignity into his death, and render it a full atonement for the heaviest guilt: He has paid our immense debts, and justice acknowledges the receipt in full: He has fulfilled the commands of God's perfect law, which we could never fulfil: and he has borne the curse which would have made us for ever miserable: And all this not for himself, but in our stead; and that with this design, that he might redeem us from the curse of the law, and present

us before God in his own righteousness, *that we might receive the adoption of sons, and be for ever accepted in the beloved*; Gal. iii. 13. and iv. 5. Eph. i. 6.

Here is an all-sufficient righteousness, in which the severe eye of the holiness of God can find no flaw or defect, which is the foundation of our hope; whereas our righteousnesses are mingled with many defilements. Here is a righteousness that shall not be abolished, though the heavens wear away, and the earth wax old. Therefore *the isles* where sinners dwell *shall wait upon him, and on his arm shall they trust*; Is. li. 5, 9. It was the great business of the Messiah to finish transgression, to make an end of sin, to make reconciliation for iniquity and *bring in everlasting righteousness*; Dan. ix. 24. And this is of such necessity to our salvation, because of the perpetual frailties of our nature, that a poor trembling believer could not venture his soul safely into any hands but where such a glorious righteousness was found; and from this character our Saviour is pleased to take one of his honourable titles: Jer. xxii. 6. *The Lord our righteousness.* Surely therefore, saith a humble, convinced, and guilty wretch, in such a one will I trust, for I have no merit in me to obtain pardon, I have no righteousness of my own to render me accepted with God, and I must for ever perish without it. "Surely in the Lord I shall find righteousness as well as wisdom and strength;" Is. xlv. 24. And to him I commit my soul.

5. He has great interest with God the Father, and always prevails when he pleads. "Father, I know that thou hearest me always;" John xi. 42. He never prays in vain, for he is ever worthy of the Father's ear. He appears in all the virtue of his original sonship, even when he appears in the name of sinful worms: and when he pleads their cause before the throne, he does it in all the power of his meritorious righteousness, and with the cries of his dying blood. We might doubt of audience when we address ourselves to the great and dreadful God; for we are but his creatures, who have sinned against him, but he is the only begotten Son. We may well stand at a distance, and tremble, for we are rebels; but he is perfect in his loyalty and obedience. We are defiled, but he is pure and unspotted; we might expect thunder and destruction from the Almighty, for the Lord abhors all sin. For such guilty wretches to come before the face of God, though with groans and tears, would but set our rebellion and guilt before his eyes, awaken his wrath, and put him in mind of deserved vengeance; but when Christ appears as a petitioner, he is approved and heard; for he is the Son of his love, he is all holiness: No man can come to the Father but by him; John xiv. 6.

Therefore we dare not trust ourselves in meaner hands. "He

is able to keep what is committed to him unto the *great day*, and to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him; seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them; and is such an high-priest as the Son of God, holy, harmless, and undefiled;" Heb. vii. 25, 26. He pleads for aliens and strangers, in the virtue of his sonship; for criminals in the efficacy of his obedience; and we joyfully commit ourselves, poor sinful and perishing strangers and criminals, to him, to be introduced into the Father's presence, because he has the most powerful influence, and the strongest interest in heaven.

6. He lives for ever; Rev. i. 18. "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I live for evermore." Amen. He therefore that hath known death by experience, and now stands firmly possessed of eternal life, is the most proper person that I can trust with all my concerns, my flesh and spirit, for life and death, for time and eternity. Should I presume to make myself my own keeper, yet my utmost care could pretend to reach no further than the term of this life; for whither I go in death is all darkness to me, if I had not known Christ and his gospel, who has *brought life and immortality to light*; 2 Tim. i. 10.

And notwithstanding all those discoveries of the future state, I am still incapable of providing for myself in the invisible world. My soul and body are then separated, and I cannot keep them together, nor take care of them apart. Where this world of souls is I know not, nor can I tell how to secure my best interest there, or direct myself in the right way to the region of sanctified spirits in that world, where I am so much a stranger; all the land of death is in a great measure the region of darkness still; it is a vast unknown country, and far the biggest part of it is a burning climate, a land of torment, sorrow, and despair; and there are a thousand roads that lead down into this gulph of wretchedness; and how shall my poor wandering soul, when dismissed from this flesh, find the way to the land of light, since I know not the paths, nor the dangers of the way, and there is no companion in death to guide me through the dark valley? How shall I dare to plunge into eternity, except some mighty friend be there to take care of me, and conduct me to the seat of the blessed?

But my Lord Jesus lives in that unseen world; he has passed through the region of death, and knows it well: he has the keys of death and the separate state, and is acquainted with all the avenues of it; he is governor of the land of blessedness, and the fittest guardian to whom I can commit my departing spirit. I leave also my poor remains of flesh to his care: These limbs I leave to moulder into dust, under the wakeful eye of his providence; for he is Lord of this lower world too, and he

will raise my flesh to immortality, and rejoin it to my soul at the great day.

7. In the last place, I might add, the faithfulness of Christ to fulfil all that he undertakes, is another qualification that encourages our trust. His name is the *Amen*, *the faithful and the true*; Rev. iii. 14. The Lord is faithful who shall establish you and keep you from evil; therefore saith the apostle to the saint at Thessalonica, *We have confidence in the Lord touching you*: 2 Thess. iii. 3, 4. His sincerity is above all possibility of being corrupted, and what he once designs he will accomplish: *Whom he loves, he loves to the end*; John xiii. 1. He is unchangeable in his compassion from the very truth of his nature; his zeal and watchfulness can never admit him to be forgetful one moment of all the infinite concerns that a believer has intrusted with him. His faithfulness adds force and strength to all the encouragements that our faith receives from all the other qualifications of Christ; and, if I know all these excellencies are found in him, I am persuaded *he is able and willing to save to the uttermost*; and I leave my all with him till the last day. Thus we have briefly run through the personal qualifications of Christ. But,

II. Besides these his personal qualifications, which are the objects of a believer's knowledge, and the motives of his faith there is another thing that engages his confidence in him; and that is, his special character and commission as a Mediator, which he has received from the Father, and which he has voluntarily undertaken to fulfil. Hereby he stands obliged to use all his personal abilities to take care of sinners that are committed to his charge. He often speaks of his being *sent from the Father to do his will*. See John vi. 39. *And this is the Father's will that hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day*.

By this commission Christ has a right and authority to exercise all his natural powers and capacities to secure the souls of believers. The justice, and wisdom, and holiness, as well as the grace and mercy of God the Father, joined to commit this authority into his hands. And it is in this sense that *all power in heaven and earth is given him*; Mat. xxviii. 18. *And he is head over all things for the church*; Eph. i. 22, 23. When we say, that all gifts and all graces are treasured up in the hands of Christ, to be communicated to his people, we mean, that as a commissioned Mediator, he has a rightful authority to exert all his natural and divine powers in the communication of gifts and graces, and holy influences of the Spirit; which power neither he nor his Father did think proper to be exerted without satisfaction made for sin as Mediator.

Behold then our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary, and

the Son of God; behold him in all the sufficiency of the united Godhead, and in all the glory and authority of his mediatorial commission, fully capacitated to keep whatsoever is committed to him! The believer sees this and rejoices; he beholds all the souls of sinners designed for salvation *given into the hands of Christ, by the Father, to keep*; which Christ himself often speaks of in the xvth and xviith chapters of the gospel of St. John. And he reads those words of his Lord with abundant joy, *and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all: and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one; John 10. 28, 29, 30.*

“Now, says the believer; shall I not venture my eternal state in those hands where God himself has laid it? Shall I not use him to be my guardian in this my weak and helpless state, whom the Father has appointed for this very purpose, and trusted with the care of all his children? Who is so fit to be my shepherd as that glorious person to whom the Father has committed the charge of all his sheep? God the Father knows him well, at he is equal to the great undertaking, or else he would never have intrusted him with the souls of his chosen ones; and I through his grace have beheld such abilities, such love, and such faithfulness in him, that he is sufficient to answer the weighty charge; therefore I have intrusted him with my all, and *I know whom I have trusted.*”

Besides, says the christian, this is the person whom God has ordained to take care of his own infinite honours, as well as the immortal concerns of men; and where can I trust my soul better than where the all-wise God has trusted all his own glory; his government of heaven and earth, of angels and men, is laid *on his shoulders*, and of his dominion there is no bound, there no end; Is. ix. 6. The biggest affairs of kingdoms and nations, all the revolutions and concerns of the worlds of nature, grace, and glory, are committed to Christ the Mediator; *all things are delivered into his hands by the Father*; John iii. 35. And surely, with the christian, there is none like him to take care of my soul; sees God himself, upon a survey of all the creation, found none like him; none so fit to be intrusted with all his own infinite concerns, in all the worlds which he hath made. *I know therefore whom I have believed*, when I believed in Jesus, and *I am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.*

Secondly, After having discovered what it is that a christian knows of Christ that engages his belief, and firm confidence, we proceed to enquire, What sort of knowledge this is, and how he comes to know him so as to trust in him, and rejoice in his faith? The answer may be reduced to these two heads: A

believer that is arrived at such a knowledge of Christ, has obtained it partly by the testimony of others, and partly by his own experience.

1. It is a knowledge that arises from the testimony of others. And this sort of knowledge is generally called faith ; that is, the believing of any proposition upon the authority of those that relate it ; and according as the witnesses that make the report are more credible, and more numerous, so we give the firmer assent to their testimony ; our faith grows so much the stronger, and our knowledge is the more certain. Now the witnesses that give evidence to the power and faithfulness of Christ our Saviour, are so gloriously credible in themselves, and so many in number, that a believer has the most rational and solid ground for his faith. Let us take a short survey of these witnesses, and humbly examine their testimony.

God himself, the all-wise, the true, and the eternal God, in the person of the Father, has borne witness from heaven to his Son Christ Jesus in all ages. This he did in old time by visions and voices, by prophecies and holy institutions. It is of him that *God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began* ; Acts iii. 21. What is *the seed of the woman, that should break the serpent's head* ; Gen. iii. 15. but a promise of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour, given to Adam, to prevent his despair : and a testimony of his power to *destroy the works of the devil*, and to save fallen man ? What is the seed of Abraham in whom all nations should be blessed ; Gen. xxii. 18. but a prophecy of the blessings of life and salvation to the nations of the earth, by Jesus the son of Abraham ? Who was Shiloh, of whom Jacob prophesied, to him shall be the gathering of the people, but Christ, who was sent of God, that the Gentiles might commit their souls into his hands, and join themselves to him as their head and governor ? Gen. xlix. 10.

It would be endless to run through all the messages from God, which the inspired prophets of old delivered to men, and which gave divine testimony to the Saviour that should be born. Who was the angel of the covenant, that was sent to conduct the Jews through the wilderness, and to keep that nation, and to bring them safe to Canaan ? Who was the captain of the Lord's host, that was sent and appeared to Joshua, engaging for the protection of him and his army ? What was the vision that appeared to Isaiah, *the Lord sitting upon a throne in much glory and power*, but so many prefigurations of the Son of God, that was to take our nature upon him, and become a Saviour ? What were all these appearances of God in the form of man, but signs and pledges, and, as it were, essays towards his incarnation ? What were the types of the Old Testament, but emblems of deliverance, atonement and salvation, that were to be conferred by

Christ, upon those sinners that would trust him with their souls? What was the ark wherein Noah was saved, when he committed his life to the keeping of God, in that floating house, amidst the flood of waters, but an assurance of safety to those sinners who make Christ their refuge, when the floods of divine wrath rise high? What was the design of the bloody sacrifices, the sacrifices of expiation, but to hold forth the method whereby Christ should secure guilty souls from death.

Time would fail me to speak of the brazen and the golden altar; of burning the flesh of beasts, and the smoking incense; of the ark of the covenant where the law was kept, and the cover of it, which was called the mercy-seat, where the God of glory dwelt under the form of a bright cloud: Time would fail me to speak of the tabernacle of Moses, and the temple of Solomon; of the cities of refuge, appointed for the safety of casual murderers; of the high-priest, of his garments, and of his offices, who was to keep the names of the tribes of Israel upon his breast and upon his shoulder. These were all the institutions and appointments of God himself, to assure us by various carnal emblems of the fulness of that salvation by Jesus Christ; for which no single emblem was sufficient.

Let us descend to later times, and behold God the Father giving testimony to his Son, by kindling a new star in the heavens at his birth and sending it as a guide to lead the wise men from the east and from the rising sun, to a greater and sweeter light, *the Morning Star, and the Sun of Righteousness*. He sent a voice from heaven at his baptism and pronounced in distinct language, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*; Mat. iii. 17. Twice more did he speak from heaven, and with an audible voice, in the time of the life of Christ, attest this mission: A believer knows many of these things, and receives the testimony of God. And *this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son, that eternal life is in him*; 1 John v. 9, 11.

Christ himself is another witness that testifies his own ability to save sinners, and keep what is committed to him; John viii. 18. *I am one that bear witness of myself; and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me*. And though he bear record of himself, yet his record is true and credible; for he came from heaven, and was made man in an extraordinary way; and he rose again after death, and ascended to heaven; which seems to be the meaning of those words, *For I know whence I came, and whither I go*; which are brought as a reason of the truth of his testimony; John viii. 14. He appeared amongst men with all the undisputed signs of the Messiah upon him; and the doctrines that he preached, and the miracles that he wrought, and the convulsions of nature at his death, and the wonders of his resurrection, all agree to confirm the mission of Christ, and his ability

to save. A christian beholds the Son of God coming from the dead, with this message to him : " I am able to deliver from death those that believe in me ; to keep their souls safe in my hand, and to raise their bodies up to life everlasting : For, behold, *I was dead, and am alive ; and live for evermore.* Amen. Rev. i. 18.

Or shall I rather say, that the miracles of Christ were the testimonies which the Holy Spirit gave to the mission of Christ, the Son of God ? For they are sometimes in scripture ascribed to the Spirit ; Mat. xii. 28. *I cast out devils by the Spirit of God.* And one of the three witnesses in heaven to the gospel of Christ, is the Spirit of God ; 1 John v. 6, 7. *It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.* That Spirit and power by which *he opened the eyes of the blind, made the lame to walk, and the dead to rise,* does effectually attest his power to take care of those that are intrusted with him : For these wonders were wrought with a design to confirm this doctrine ; and upon this account Christ is said to be *justified* in, or *by the Spirit* ; 1 Tim. iii. 16. His commission was sealed, and his authority attested by these mighty works of the blessed Spirit. Thus the believer has a threefold witness from heaven, to give him the knowledge of Christ, and to confirm his faith ; and this is abundantly sufficient to justify his trust in Christ Jesus.

But he has many other witnesses also to the same truth : He can call all the holy prophets and saints since the world began, to bring in their witness, who told of the power of Christ to save, in dark speeches, when they lived in this world, and now find themselves safe in his hands in the world of light. A believer can call the noble company of apostles, the holy army of martyrs and confessors, to attest the same doctrine ; who, through terrible temptations of Satan, and the wrath of man ; who, through fires and waters, and many deaths, have committed their souls to his divine keeping, and found them in safety beyond the grave.

The believer can add the testimony of all his fellow-saint now living, who, by venturing their eternal concerns into the hands of Christ, have found safety and rest, strength against sin and peace of conscience ; divine joy, courage against suffering and triumphs in the midst of dangers. They all with one voice cry out, *Not unto ourselves, but to thy name be all the glory, for thy grace has kept us since we committed ourselves unto thee and not one of us is lost ; and we continue to trust our all with thee till the great day ; and we are assured of safety, though our dangers are infinite.*"

You see here what a rational and solid foundation a christian has for his knowledge of Christ, and his faith in him. It is built upon testimonies so numerous, so credible, and so divine ; and

apostle say, I know whom I have trusted : And he be-
 witness to us even to the end of the world, to direct
 the same refuge. When a sinner is awakened to see his
 guilt, and danger for eternity, and is making earnest
 what shall I do for my soul? Where shall I trust it,
 or be kept safe for ever? Let his eye be directed to this
 all-sufficient Saviour, by so long a train of witnesses,
 Holy Spirit with them, and he can no longer doubt whip-
 ply himself, or to whose hands he should betrust his
 concerns.

He knowledge that a believer has of Christ's ability
 comes not only from the witness of others, but from his
 own and sensible experience. The apostle speaks here
 of a long believer, but as one that had known Christ long,
 trusted him, and gained daily confirmations of his faith,
 as he had before. Though a sinner at first is drawn to Christ
 by that is made of him by others, either by his educa-
 tion or hearing the word, or by holy conference; yet
 he grows up to an establishment and assurance of faith
 by that experience he has had of what Christ has done for
 him, he saith to the minister, and to his fellow christian,
 I have trusted him, and the prophets, as all the neighbours said
 of the man of Samaria; John iv. 42. *Now we believe,
 because of thy saying; for we have heard him our-
 selves know indeed that this is the Christ, the Saviour of the*

world well satisfied that it is from this sort of knowledge, as
 before, it is from experience as well as faith, that so
 many have been able to assume the words of my text, and
 stand in the approaches of death. For though they may
 have had the knowledge of Christ, and his ability to save, and
 from their earliest youth, by the pious instructions of their
 parents, the ministry of their teachers, and much converse
 with the Holy scriptures, yet they have a more large and
 full knowledge of Christ, from the many sensible effects
 and power upon their souls, and from their constant
 communion with him by meditation and prayer, both in their secret
 and in their daily walk with God. They can say
 of their rich experience, perhaps from their youngest
 days downwards, to maturer age, I know whom I have

known my conscience was burdened with guilt, and I
 found no relief till I saw the cross of Christ, and carried my
 burden thither; the man that hung upon the tree took
 me off, sprinkled me with his own blood, and undertook
 to free me from the wrath of God for ever. I know who it
 is that has relieved me from these terrors, and I rejoice in his

atonement. I had no righteousness to appear in before a pure and a holy God; and I had just reason to dread his presence as a *consuming fire*; but the same glorious person put a complete righteousness upon me, through faith, whereby I can stand before a just God with humble confidence; and I know and adore the *Lord my righteousness*.

“My nature was all corrupted, my sins were strong; I had no power to think or to do that which was good; and I know whose grace it was that renewed all my nature, that formed my soul to religious thoughts, that set me upon the work of mortification, and assisted me in those divine labours. I remember what powerful seeds of vanity were found in my heart; and if I had not given up the garden to Christ’s keeping, it had been all over-run with weeds, and neither fruit nor flower had ever appeared there. When I met with temptations I found myself a very unequal match for them; for I was by nature all weakness, but by the knowledge of Christ I have obtained strength: I have often found his grace sufficient for me, and his strength more than sufficient in my infirmity: I know by whose power it is that I stand, and I am persuaded that he that has kept me hitherto, is still able to save me from falling: I have tried his grace so often, and so often found it sufficient hitherto, that I will trust him for what remains. I have committed my soul therefore to his keeping till the day of my death, till the great day of my resurrection. And we who are alive believe concerning those that are gone, that our blessed Lord has fulfilled a great part of his trust; has introduced the spirits into the presence of the Father, with exceeding joy; and will fulfil the design of his love, when the dead shall arise to complete glory.”

Thus I have endeavoured to make it appear, that a believer knows so much of the person of Christ, of his qualifications for Saviour, and his divine commission for this purpose, as to engage his trust and confidence in him: And he obtains this knowledge by testimonies of sufficient evidence; and by his own experience he confirms his faith. The reflections that attend the subject will compose the next discourse.

DISCOURSE X.

Faith built on Knowledge.

i. 12.—I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him, against that day.

THE SECOND PART.

ALTHOUGH the Redeemer was gone to the invisible world, and Paul never knew him while he was on earth, yet he was no stranger to him when he wrote this epistle. Christ is unseen of men, but not unknown to the believer. The apostle was so acquainted with the person and the commission of Christ, he could venture all into his hands to the day of judgment: he could look forward to that day with divine pleasure, and remain in the midst of present sufferings, upon the assurance of his safety. From the example of this great and holy man in the next text, I have drawn this observation.

Doct. A christian lays a solid foundation for his faith and joyful hope in the knowledge of Christ Jesus, in whom he trusts.

Here I have shewn at large what it is of Christ that a christian is acquainted with, in order to trust him. Besides the wonderful constitution of this person, as a man, *in whom dwells the essence of the godhead bodily*, many glorious and all-sufficient qualifications of a Mediator are found in him. Ye have heard how great and how good, how wise and how faithful, he is; how well fitted to undertake the salvation of the guilty, because he has provided an atonement and complete righteousness; how well furnished to take the charge of bringing sinners to a state of grace and holiness, because he hath the fulness of the Spirit in order to communicate to men, in order to renew their natures, and fit them for heaven. I have shewn what a commission he has received from the Father, to undertake the great work of the redemption of men; and thereby as he hath a natural power, so he has a legal authority to take the charge of souls that are committed to him. O the glorious furniture of the great Mediator! O the divine commission that gives security to faith! How happy are they joined in Jesus the Lord! and how much doth the knowledge of this conduce to a believer's comfort.

I have also shewn at large, in the second place, how

a christian comes by this knowledge : He has abundant testimony to the truth of all these things from heaven and from earth : God himself hath given witness from heaven, by miracles, visions, and voices : The apostles, prophets, and martyrs, have filled the earth with their witness ; and, by most convincing arguments, have proved the all-sufficiency of Christ to save. The believer hath a witness in his own soul, to the power and grace of Christ when he feels holiness wrought in his heart by the gospel, and divine peace in his conscience, with the fore-tastes of heaven. Now from such a knowledge, derived from scripture and inward experience, he grows up to a holy courage in believing ; he can venture his immortal concerns with assurance into the hands of Christ ; he is bold, and triumphs in his faith, and can suffer for it without being ashamed. Thus having briefly recalled the doctrinal part, I proceed now to the last thing I proposed ; and that was, to attempt some useful remarks on this subject or discourse.

I. Here we may learn the true nature of saving faith in Christ. It is a committing of the soul into the hands of Christ, from a due knowledge of his person, and his power to save. It is true, that my text is not the mere language of a young and feeble faith, but the divine oratory of holy confidence, joy, and triumph ; yet the nature of saving faith is so fully comprised, and so plainly expressed in it, that I have often thought I know not any one single verse in the whole bible, that gives us so clear and distinct an account of this grace. By the words of my text it is rendered as intelligible as love, or hope, or fear, or almost any of the common actions of life or religion. It is a committing or entrusting of the soul to Christ for complete salvation, flowing from a sense of our sin and misery ; a knowledge of his personal qualifications, and his divine commission ; or a persuasion of his ability and willingness to keep what is thus committed to him to the day of final judgment.

Saving faith is not a feeble belief of the words, or works, or power of Christ, upon a short hearsay and slight notice, but it is built upon knowledge and just evidence. It is not a mere doctrinal and historical assent to the truths which our Saviour spoke ; nor is it a mere rational conviction by the best arguments, that Christ is furnished with such abilities to save : It is not a sudden fit of desire, or hope, or well-wishing to our souls to be saved by Christ ; nor is it a rash and bold presumption that Christ will save me, and make me happy : But it is a solemn entrusting of my soul into his hands for salvation, built upon a deep sense of my own sin and danger : a solid knowledge of his sufficient furniture for such an undertaking ; and an earnest desire to be made partaker of this salvation, in the full nature of it, both the holiness and the joy.

Saving faith therefore supposes and implies in it a lively sense of the guilt of our sins, and the eternal misery that is like to befall us; a sight of the just vengeance of God to which we are exposed; and how incapable we are to make atonement for ourselves; or procure pardon; a sense of our want of a perfect righteousness to justify us before God, and how impossible it is to make one out of our own works and duties: for why should we trust another to do that which we can do for ourselves.

It supposes also a sight of the corruption of our natures, our natural tendency to fresh iniquity, and our weakness to perform duties of life or religion; our natural delight in sin and the pleasure, and our natural aversion to God, and all that his holy pleasure; together with our utter incapacity, of enjoying heaven whilst we are in this temper, and our impotence to change our own natures, to turn our souls from earth to heaven.

It supposes and implies a painful sense of our having offended God, and weariness of this state of sin, and a hearty willingness to be delivered from it: For why should we seek after knowledge of such an almighty Friend and Saviour, if we are not fearful of eternal misery without one? Or why should we concern ourselves about a person that can subdue sin in us, if we are not so far made willing to part with it, as to have our nature reformed into holiness? And let it be observed, that this inward sense, this inward weariness of the power and reign of sin in us, and this desire of deliverance from it, is the most essential part of true repentance, or the conversion of the soul to God.

It includes, in the next place, a sight and belief of the sufficiency of Christ to supply our wants; that there is mercy in him for our sins, and pardon procured by him; that there is righteousness with him for our justification and entrance unto eternal life; and all this by the means of his strict obedience and death; That there is power and grace in him to conquer all our sins, to suppress temptations, to mortify our vicious appetites, to incline our wills to God, to strengthen our endeavours for the practice of all holiness; to keep us in the favour and in the image of God, and to secure us safe to heaven; and that he is appointed by the Father to do all this for sinners.

It consists formally in a committing of the guilty and polluted soul to the care of Christ, according to his Father's commission to take care of lost souls, and to keep that which is committed to him. It is a secret address of the heart unto Christ, whereby we resign our guilty persons to him, to be redeemed for the sake of his sufferings; our unrighteous souls to be accepted through his righteousness; our sinful and polluted souls to be sanctified by the power of his grace, and to be preserved safe to death and glory.

After all this, there follows an acquiescence, or rest of the soul in Christ, which he promised, when he called *the weary and the heavy laden sinners to come to him*; Mat. xi. 28. And this is accompanied with a good hope and expectation of all this salvation from Christ, for which the sinner trusts in him. And this excites his love and thankfulness to Christ, and awakens all his endeavours to a warm pursuit of heaven, in the path of holiness, in which God hath appointed us to walk to the kingdom. Thus every divine promise, every threatening, and every command, obtains a due authority over the heart, under the vital influence of such a faith. This is not a lazy and a slothful confidence, that casts away all care by throwing it on Christ, and walks in a secure and bold neglect of duty: For a believer well knows that he is bound to take the utmost care of his own soul, to work out his salvation, with holy fear, to watch against temptation, to resist every rising sin, and persevere to the death; though from a sense of his own insufficiency, he builds his safety and hope on the all-sufficiency of Christ.

Let it be observed here, that it is not necessary that all these several workings of the heart should be plain, and distinct, and sensible, in every act of faith, nor in every true believer: For the actions of the soul, and especially the springs, and the motives, and designs of those actions, are so hidden, and so mingled with each other, that they are not all distinctly perceived even in the soul, where they are transacted. When the jailor cried out, *What shall I do to be saved?* Acts xvi. 30. or when the poor man in the gospel, Mark ix. 24. said, *Lord, I believe; help my unbelief*; there were a multitude of crowding thoughts and passions that produced and mingled with those ideas and expressions of fear and faith, which could never be distinctly apprehended and recounted by the persons that felt them. But this I say, that most, or all the particulars I have mentioned, seem to be necessary in the very nature of a true and saving faith in Christ, where the gospel is known and preached so clearly as it is in our times, and must be pre-supposed or involved, and secretly included, in the very act of believing unto eternal life. It is a committing the soul to the care of Christ, from such motives, and with such designs, as I have described.

This account of saving faith guards it against all the mistakes of the age, and secures it against all the inroads of error on either side. A christian that takes in all these views, will not easily be led away by the popish, or any other doctrine, where faith is supposed to be a mere assent to the revelations of the gospel, nor will he be ensnared by the unwary expressions of some great writers, that faith is a full persuasion of our own salvation, which has given too much countenance to Antinomian notions. He that has this knowledge and this belief which I have

described, and does thus heartily commit his soul to Christ, *shall in no wise be cast out*, and can never miscarry; but by repeated exercises of this faith, and humble watchfulness in walking with God, he shall grow rich in experience, and shall learn to say with triumph, *I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able, &c.*

II. We may infer from this discourse, the value of a solid and regular knowledge of the person of Christ, and his gospel: It lays a good foundation for our first faith, and afterwards for its growth to a steady assurance. When we well know whom we have believed, we believe with a firmer confidence, and with boldness we commit our infinite concerns into the hands of a person of whose ability and faithfulness we are well persuaded; at first, by a distinct knowledge of his gospel, and afterwards by an experimental acquaintance with his power and grace. Our hope in his salvation is hereby better established, and our hearts grow fearless. Such a hope is an anchor that loses not its hold in the wildest storms, and makes the vessel ride in safety.

What is the reason of the perpetual doubts and despondencies of some christians, that have made a long profession of the gospel? Whence is it that they are alarmed at every turn, and tremble, as though all were lost? How comes it to pass, that these hurries of mind should return so often, and almost overwhelm some pious souls, that walk watchfully and humbly with God? Is it not because their faith has been too much built upon sudden and warm affections, without so solid a ground of regular knowledge? When persons of a weaker mind have felt a strong and divine impression from some particular scripture, or from some bright sentence in a sermon, which hath displayed the grace and salvation of Christ, they have made this inward sensation the ground of their hope; they have fed still upon this cordial, and lived upon this support. And whensoever these warm impressions return, they trust in Christ afresh, and rejoice sensibly in his salvation: But they can hardly give a rational account what their faith is, or why they believe; and when these extraordinary supplies fail them, they sink, and tremble, and die.

I confess, if this faith change their natures, purify their hearts from the love of sin, and make them walk in holiness, far be it from me to suspect the truth of it. But this I must say, that such souls are in danger of perpetual disquietudes, ready to be *shaken by every wind*, and exposed to every gloomy temptation: When the flashes of light are gone, they are all darkness and terror, because they cannot render a reason of the hope that was in them, from a distinct acquaintance with the person in whom they had fixed their hope, or from his rich ability to save.

It is not a piece of wisdom in natural things, to trust a man with affairs of importance before we know him; or if we do,

every little dark circumstance, every flying report, will be ready to shake our hearts, and fill us with fear; though perhaps our concerns may be safe in his hands. And it is not a piece of holy wisdom to trust Christ himself infinitely, and yet be contented to know him but a very little. Such souls may be safe at last, because the Lord, whom they trust, is honest and faithful; but they expose themselves to many fears, and frequent torments of mind, all the time of their absence from him. Let Athenians build their altars to the unknown God, but a christian should not trust in an unknown Saviour.

Let us all be persuaded then to learn much of Christ, that with honour and wisdom we may trust him much; that we may venture our all for eternity into his hands, and rest securely upon well-known power and faithfulness. *They that know thy name, O God our Saviour, will put their trust in thee; Ps. ix. 10.* There is a noble instance of holy prudence in a well-built and well-settled faith. Let us not fancy that we know Christ enough, when we have attained merely such a degree of knowledge as is absolutely necessary for conversion, or so much as is sufficient to make a profession of his name, and thereby obtain a right to the fellowship of the saints. Let us not be content to be always babes, feeble and fearful because unknowing: We should think no pains too much to acquire divine knowledge, and to improve it: And to this end, let the holy scriptures be our daily study, for these are the writings that testify of Christ. Let us not censure the preachers that feed us with a word of knowledge, nor complain of dry discourses, when in any particular sermon, the doctrines of religion are chiefly insisted on; for these are the foundation of our wisest faith, and the pillars of solid and exalted joy. It was knowledge that carried the great apostle into that extacy of pleasure, and divine mortification to every thing besides Christ; *Phil. iii. 8, 9. Yea, doubtless, 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 count them but dung—that I might be found in him, &c.*

Seek after experimental acquaintance with Christ. Follow the advice of St. Peter, 2 Epistle iii. 18. *Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus.* This is attained by much converse with him, in meditation and prayer; by secret and hourly addresses to him; by frequent breathings of soul towards our heavenly Friend, in whose hands lie all our immortal concerns. Make daily observations of the work and power of his grace upon your hearts, in your performance of duties, and success against temptations: and have a care that you lose not the things which ye had wrought: Take heed lest you decline in your acquaintance with Christ; that your faith and hope being built upon a regular knowledge, you may have a blessed treasure of christian experiences to establish and exalt it.

III. How unkind and unnatural is it for parents to let the souls of their children perish for want of knowledge! How necessary to acquaint them betimes with the gospel of Christ that they may trust in him betimes, and that their souls may be safe in the great day! If I should ask every mother in the assembly this question, do you not desire all your children should be young believers? But how can they believe in him whom they have not known? How can you expect they should trust in any person, if you have never brought them into his acquaintance? Or will you content yourselves that you give them the name of christians in baptism, and let them know nothing of Christ.

Think it not enough therefore to make them repeat the words of a catechism, but enquire what they mean by such and such words and sentences, which they pronounce; and thus you will discover where their ignorance lies: Then inform them, and assist their young understandings. Acquaint them with the sin of their natures, with the sins of their life, with the anger of God, and danger of hell; till they are afraid of it in earnest, and ask, *what they shall do to be saved*. Then teach them the knowledge of Christ, in his glorious person; in his excellent qualifications of love, power, and faithfulness; teach them the doctrine of his death as a satisfaction for sin, and of that all-sufficient righteousness, upon which only they can find acceptance with a just and a holy God: Acquaint them with his pleading a heaven as a *priest*, for sinners here on earth, and his reigning there as *King*, to give grace and holiness, pardon and repentance, and salvation, to all that are willing to accept it in his own way. And let this practice be continually repeated, till, by frequent enquiries, you find they understand what you teach them.

Shew them how to commit their souls into the hands of Christ by prayer and faith, and how to walk watchfully in obedience to all the commands of Christ, to practise the duties of religion toward God, and the duties of morality toward men; in order to evidence their faith, and to bring them onward to complete salvation. Tell them of the last great judgment-day, when all their secret actions shall be brought to light before God, angels and men; and when they must give an account to Jesus the Judge, of all their behaviour here. Make it evident, that there is no way to appear with safety before him as a judge, but by committing their souls to him, as their kind and all-sufficient friend: And then holy parents may hope to meet their sons and their daughters with comfort, at the right-hand of the Lord in that day.

It is an acquaintance with such a Saviour, and such a trust in him, that will prepare them not only for the last judgment,

but for every circumstance of life and the various changes they may pass through in the day of their pilgrimage ; and it will fit them for an early or an aged death. If they should be exalted to riches or honour in the world, such a faith will be of abundant use and safety to them, that the keeping of their souls was committed in their younger days to the care of Christ ; and they will carry their profession and their conversation unspotted with the world, through ten thousand snares attending such circumstances, by the influence of such a faith.

If they fall under various and heavy afflictions in the several stages of their life, it will be their perpetual relief, that all their concerns are in the hands of a merciful and a *faithful high-priest*, who himself has suffered in the flesh, and knows how to pity them that suffer. When the tumults of sorrow gather together, and the waves rise high, to distract and overwhelm their spirits, they will find many an hour of sweet serenity and calmness, by having committed themselves to that Jesus, who can say to the waves, *Peace, be still*. But this leads me to the next inference.

IV. We may infer from this discourse, how well God has provided for the safety and comfort of believers. For their safety, because he has set up and appointed a person so able to take care of their souls ; and for their comfort, because he gives them such a knowledge of him in his own word, and by their own spiritual observation. It is this knowledge, this faith, and holy confidence, in the power and faithfulness of Christ, that prepares the soul for all accidents in the natural and spiritual life ; it is this gives the christian his support and comfort under every change of circumstances ; and makes him valiant, and ready to meet them all. Shall we run through a few of these seasons briefly ?

In times of abounding error, when the gospel of Christ is corrupted, the believer gives diligence to reading, that he may hold fast the form of sound words ; he prays for the enlightening Spirit to confirm him in the truth ; but he rejoices in this, that his soul is in the hands of Christ, who will not suffer him to be seduced into damnable heresies, but will secure him from every fatal mistake.

Under the violent temptations of Satan, it is a support to the saint, that the powers of hell are led captive, and trodden under foot by him who is the guardian of his eternal welfare : He knows that his Lord will save him from the mouth of the lion, *will deliver him from every evil work ; and will preserve him to his heavenly kingdom ; 2 Tim. iv. 17*. Under a sense of fresh guilt, and sins of daily infirmity, the christian mourns bitterly, because of his failings and follies, but hopes for security from ruining transgressions, and the unpardonable sin ; because the virtue of the atonement in which he trusts is eternal :

Christ has undertaken to preserve him from final apostacy though the best of saints are not secured here from the workings of sin.

And under these discomposures of mind, and the frequent vexations and uneasinesses in the things of this life, that may ruffle their tempers, had it not been for their acquaintance with Christ, they had been sometimes utterly overcome; but how often have they retired into their closets, and left the tumult of their thoughts behind them in the world, while they went to converse with him by prayer, who had the care of their spiritual concerns? Or, at least, they have cried unto the Lord because of those uneasy companions; have shook them off in his presence with holy anger, and returned into the world again with serenity in his countenance, and victory and peace in their souls. The strength they derive from their blessed Lord, whom they have chosen for their divine guardian.

Under the weakness of our graces, and the inconstancy of our tempers, it is a matter of relief to an humble saint, that the keeper of his soul is compassionate, and pities his frailties; is almighty, and will strengthen him under his weaknesses; is unchangeable, *the same yesterday, to-day, and for-ever*. The lambs of his flock are weak, and cannot follow him in some rugged and difficult paths; then *he gathers the lambs with his arms, and carries them in his bosom*; Is. xl. 11. And there are some of the sheep of his fold that are ready to straggle into forbidden ways, to wander abroad, and lose themselves in the wilderness: But *the Lord is their Shepherd, he restoreth their souls, and leads them again into the way of righteousness, for his name's sake*: Ps. xxiii. 3.

In an hour of desertion, when God has withdrawn his joys, when the light of his countenance is concealed, and darkness lies upon the spirit, the believer holds fast his hope, though his rejoicings are interrupted; for he has committed his soul to the care of Christ, who has full interest with the Father, and can prevail for the recovery of his joys again. While *he walks in darkness, and has no light of comfort, still he can trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God*; Is. l. 10.

Under sickness, and pains of nature, that threaten a dissolution of the body, the pillow of a believer lies easy under his head; for his soul, his dearest part, is in safe keeping and cannot perish. Amidst all the languishings of nature, we have often heard the triumphs of grace from the mouth of a lively christian. *If I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for my Almighty Friend is with me*; Ps. xxiii. 4. *I know that if the tabernacle of this earthly house be dissolved, I have a building of God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens*. There is a mansion above prepared for me by him

who has the care of my eternity. He went up on high on purpose to *prepare a place, and he will come again, and take me to himself; that where he is, there I may be also; if it were not so, he would have told me; for I know whom I have trusted; and whither he is gone I know, and the way I know; 2 Cor. v. 1. John xiv. 2, 3, 4.*

Upon this view and assurance, the dying saint attempts the praises of his Lord, and practises something like the worship of heaven before-hand: *To him that is able to keep me from falling, and will present me faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,—be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. Jude 24, 25.*

V. See whence ariseth the divine and amazing courage ~~that~~ some christians have expressed under the foulest reproaches and sharpest sufferings for the sake of the gospel. This holy fortitude springs from a good acquaintance with the person of Christ, and a full persuasion of his ability to save. When we are ignorant and in the dark, we are afraid of every thing; but courage is the effect of light and knowledge. A faith that is well founded on a due knowledge of Christ, can raise the suffering christian above the power of shame and fear. And I chuse to make this remark a distinct head of discourse, because it is the very occasion on which the apostle introduces the words of my text. *Christ has abolished death, ver. 10. He has brought life and immortality to light by the gospel: This I am well acquainted with, saith the apostle; for this very person, even Christ, my Lord, has appointed me a preacher of this doctrine: For which cause I also suffer.—Nevertheless I am not ashamed: For I know whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*

It is a point of folly for a man to expose himself to reproach, and pain, and death, without any solid reason, or just hope of recompence. But St. Paul was no fool when he *was ready to be bound and die for the name of Christ; for he looked forward to the last great day, he saw his immortal interest safe under the care of Christ, whom he had well known and trusted; and therefore he had good reason to venture all on earth for the sake of such a friend in heaven. He saw the recompence secure in the hands of Christ; and therefore, says he,*

“ I am not ashamed of my sufferings, nor of my faith. Let my persecutors destroy this flesh, but they cannot touch my soul; for it is in safe hands: I know where I have trusted it. Let the Jews or the Romans kill this body, but it shall be raised up again at the great day, by his power, to whom I have committed my all for here and for hereafter; for he is able to expel death from his possessions, and make the grave restore all its prisouers. I know his power to *subdue all things to himself.* Let them load

ae with shame and reproaches now, but I shall look them in the face in that day with courage; and they shall tremble and be confounded with everlasting shame. They may deprive me of a mortal life, and all that belongs to it; but they cannot rob me of a blessed immortality; for the Lord of life hath taken charge of that important concern; and I am assured he is able to keep it. *None can pluck me out of his hand:* He will present me safe before his Father in that day, and make it appear with divine evidence, that *the light afflictions which I suffer now, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is then to be revealed.* He puts me into the same promise with himself; *if I suffer with him, I shall also reign with him:* And his promises are an eternal security. *I know whom I have believed."* Thus you see what a glorious encouragement may be assumed from such an acquaintance with Christ, to endure the cross, and despise the shame for the sake of Christ and his gospel.

I grant there have been weak christians of lower degrees of knowledge, that have borne sufferings and martyrdom with a courage beyond all expectation. There have been some babes in Christ, that could not dispute for the truth, yet they could die for it. But let it be noted, that such persons have had generally but small advantage for improvement in knowledge; either they were young converts, or had but mean natural parts, or a poor education; yet a sincere zeal for their Lord: And perhaps also they had a bright and strong experimental knowledge of the gospel, by its sweet and sanctifying influences. Now when such as these have been called out by providence to bear a testimony to the truth, they have had a mouth and wisdom given them immediately from heaven, which all their adversaries have not been able to gainsay, nor resist: And this, according to the promise made to the apostles, in their infancy of understanding; Luke xxi. 15. They have been upheld under their torments by the arms of Christ, and by his sensible presence: Their divine fortitude hath been all inspiration. But you that have fair and daily opportunities for a large acquaintance with the gospel, have no reason to expect such miracles for your assistance in our day, if ye refuse the appointed means of hearing, reading and meditation.

Take this further advice also along with you: While you are treasuring up truth, seek after holiness, and every grace. See to it, that all the knowledge you gain by these methods be wrought into your very souls, and that you experience the sanctifying and comforting power of these truths on your consciences, your passions, and your lives. Divine truth, thus turned into spiritual nourishment, gives a vital strength for service and offering. When you have *the word of God* in your mouths, as *the sword of the Spirit*; Eph. vi. 14, &c. the breast-plate of

fit us." But the voice of Christ, to whom they had committed their souls, may say, "Now let them die, and quit the world with the fairest honour, that they may leave behind, amongst their friends and the churches, the sweetest savour of all their conversation, and the most precious memory of their names."

Are they taken away by sudden death? They know him who has the keys of death, and they have committed the care of it to him, to determine the time and the manner, when and how they should be released from this prison of flesh, and be taken up to his own bosom. Though they may be conveyed with a sort of surprise into the unseen world, yet it is but a seizure into the arms of their best beloved, who is ready to receive and conduct them to the Father in perfect righteousness, with abounding joy.

VII. This doctrine leads us on to a joyful and entertaining prospect of the great and last day; the day when Christ shall make his faithfulness appear in all the trusts that he ever undertook; for then he shall have fulfilled them all, and shall deliver his account to the Father. Then millions of souls, that were committed to his care in successive ages, and human bodies, an equal number, that had long lain sleeping in the grave under his eye, shall be re-united, to make complete and glorious persons; then shall all his saints at once appear, and give honour and everlasting thanks to their faithful and almighty Guardian.

"Behold he comes with clouds, and every eye shall see him! He comes in his own glory, in the glory of his Father, and with all his holy angels! Behold, he comes exalted upon a throne of judgment which the Father hath placed him to finish his great commission, and to pass a decisive sentence upon all mankind. My faith descries him afar off; I see his day, and I rejoice to see it. He shall summon all the nations before him; and I shall appear there, I trust, at his right hand, among the blessed. Then shall he remember, and fulfil all the kind words that he hath spoken to me on earth, by his holy writings: For in the days of my infirmity and warfare on earth, I have not been ashamed of him before men," nor will he be *ashamed of me before his Father, and his holy angels*; Mat. x. 33.

"See, O Father, will the Lord Jesus say, *see, here am I, and the children that thou hast given me*; Heb. ii. 13. *While they were in the world I kept them, through thy name: Behold, there is not one of them lost*; John xvii. 12."

"Come," will the Lord say to every humble believer, "come to my right-hand, and stand there among the saints: Behold, all is safe, that thou didst once intrust to my keeping; I know thy faith, I acknowledge thy love; I will now reward all thy humble obedience with everlasting honours; and thou shalt confess I have been a kind and a faithful friend."

God the Father shall say to our Lord Jesus, "Well done, my best of servants, my Son, my first-beloved; thou hast kept all those whom I gave thee to keep, and brought them safe into my presence; they shall be thy glory and thy eternal crown." And every saint shall as it were, echo to the voice of the Father, and say, "my first-beloved, my Lord, and my best of friends, thou hast kept me through all the days of my infirmity and flesh, ever since I gave myself up to thy keeping; and thou hast brought me safe to thy Father's house; the glory and the crown be thine forever! O the unknown transports of this hour! The unspeakable joy and glory of this day! Faith is even astonished at this delightful distant prospect, and longs till the Lord appear.

DISCOURSE XI.

The ordinary Witness of the Spirit.

Rom. viii. 16.—The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

THE FIRST PART.

HERE is a sacred honour and dignity conferred upon men as a patent from heaven : The patent is the scripture, or word of God, and the dignity is, that we are made his children.] There are also two distinct witnesses to this title of honour ; viz. our spirits, and the blessed Spirit of God : The Spirit itself witnesseth with our spirits, that we are the children of the Most High. Every one that reads the text may plainly discern, that, by *the Spirit itself* we must understand the Holy Ghost, or third person in the ever blessed Trinity, who is sent to dwell and operate in the hearts of christians ; as it is expressed in several of the foregoing verses. And it is as manifest, that our own spirit here signifies that principle within us, distinct from our flesh, whereby we are enabled to think, reason, compare things together, and to judge concerning them. This is sometimes called the mind, the conscience, the soul ; and it is termed our spirit here in the words before us.

The Spirit of God may sometimes operate by himself in a very extraordinary manner, upon the souls of men, and give them immediate and divine assurances of their adoption and interest in the love of God, as his children ; And this favour was sometimes bestowed in the primitive days of christianity, when the saints were called in an uncommon manner, to undertake the duties of uncommon difficulty. But the words of my text rather chiefly to refer to that more ordinary and usual testimony which the Spirit of God gives to our sonship, by assisting our spirits to attain the knowledge of this privilege. In order to improve these words, I shall endeavour,

I. To lead your thoughts on in a few propositions, to give you a plain and easy notion of this ordinary or assisting witness of the Spirit of God.—II. Shew what methods the Holy Spirit usually takes in this work.—III. Propose some advices concerning it. And then—IV. I shall give my thoughts also concerning the extraordinary witness of the Spirit.

First, I would open the way towards a plain and easy notion of this ordinary or assisting witness of the Spirit of God with our own spirits, in a few propositions :

I. God, in his word, has given us the description and the characters of his children. This is evident, and beyond dispute. Many scriptures there are that evince it. He has told us that we are by nature; viz. children of wrath; and laid down the character of sinful men in an unregenerate state, who are called the children of the devil. He has acquainted us with what we are by grace; viz. his own children, *born again*, or *born of God*; and has laid down various marks of that privilege also, that so we might distinguish between good and evil, between saints and sinners.

The marks of the children of God in scripture, are chiefly such as these :

1. They believe in Christ Jesus; John i. 12. *To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God; even to as many as believed in his name*; 1 John v. 1. You have the same thing expressed in other words: *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God: Whosoever believeth him to be the Messiah, as to receive him for a Saviour from sin and hell, according to his commission to save.*

2. They are such as do not willingly indulge sin, that do not make sin their practice. See 1 John iii. 9. *He that is born of God sinneth not*: He doth not drink in iniquity with greediness, as others do; he has still a settled rooted aversion in his mind, to those sinful practices into which sometimes he is drawn by the power or surprize of temptation; for he has the seed of God abiding in him, and the divine likeness and temper communicated to him by regeneration, so that he sins not with a full bent of soul, nor with his whole heart, as he loves God, and seeks him, nor with constancy and perseverance; Ps. cxix. 2, 10, 38, 44.

3. Such as love God, and keep his commandments, they are the children of God: And this you have frequently repeated in the 1st Epistle of John. When a principle of divine love reigns in the heart, we keep the commands of our heavenly Father with delight and they are not an heavy task or burden to us: *His commandments are not grievous*; 1 John v. 3.

4. Justice and charity toward men, and special affection toward our fellow-christians, are further evidences of our adoption; 1 John iii. 10. *In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: Whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.* When our righteous and friendly conduct toward our fellow-creatures proceeds from a sense of the authority of God, and his divine commission; when our *meekness, gentleness, goodness to all men,*

and our peculiar love to the saints of God, spring from a right principle; when we love the brethren because they carry the image of God in them; these are such characters as distinguish the sons of God from the children of wrath, and the seed of the wicked one.

5. Peace-makers are entitled to this dignity; Mat. v. 9. *Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God:* But he that sows discord among brethren is of the seed of the serpent.

6. Sanctified afflictions, and patience under them, is another mark of adoption; Heb. xii. 7. *If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons;* and he does this for our profit; ver. x. *that we might be partakers of his holiness.* If the sorrows, the burdens, the reproaches, the pains, the sicknesses, and the sufferings that we sustain, either from the hands of God or men, do not draw out our angry disquieting passions, but are borne with a holy composure of spirit, looking to the hand of God as our Father; and if we find our hearts weaned from this life as from a state of sin and sorrow, and drawn nearer to heaven, it is a conformable sign that we belong to the family of God.

7. They that gain a victory over the world, and live above the reach of the frowns and the smiles of it, they are the children of God too: The apostle John assures us of this; 1 John v. 4. *He that is born of God overcometh the world.*

8. They are the children of God that walk as Christ walked, and live as Christ lived: They that follow the glorious example of the original and *first-begotten Son*, have the mark of true children; Rom. viii. 29. *God has predestinated all his children to be conformed to the image of his Son Christ Jesus.*

I might sum up all the foregoing evidences of sonship in this general character of likeness and conformity to our Redeemer: For if we consult that text; 1 John v. 6. we shall find that *the water and blood* are the two great testimonies that are given to the sonship of our Lord Jesus. *This is he that came by water and by blood.* And as he was manifested to be the Son of God by the purity of his life, and the blood of martyrdom, which also was a blood of atonement, so are we manifested to be the children of God. The blood is our witness, when we by faith lay hold of the atoning blood of Jesus, and commit our guilty souls to pardoning mercy, to be accepted through that blood of his sacrifice. And when we are *sprinkled with the clean water of sanctification*, or baptized with the Holy Spirit and made holy, as Jesus is holy, then we have the witness of the water too. Thus, by the witness of the water and the blood, Jesus the first Son is evidenced, and we also appear to be children.

II. As the word of God discovers to us, and describes the

characters of his children, so the Spirit of God works these heavenly dispositions in us, these happy characters of our sonship. *By nature we are the children of wrath*, the mere seed of the first Adam, and the offspring of Satan, rather than of God, in our corrupt natural state, we are led by *the prince of the power of the air; we are children of disobedience, and of death*: Eph. ii. 2. There are none of these divine marks upon us. It is the blessed Spirit that forms these filial graces in our souls, lays the foundation of these evidences in the heart with power, and makes them appear in the life with beauty and praise. Therefore the children of God are said to be *born of the Spirit*; John iii. 5, 6.

It is he that takes us out of the Kingdom of Satan, the family of death and hell, and brings us into the family of God, and the kingdom of his grace. It is he that, by his divine influences, *translates us from darkness into the kingdom of Christ*. It is he that takes away all the wild and savage marks of an unclean beast from the soul, and gives it the disposition and the character of the sheep of Jesus. It is the blessed Spirit who, by his sanctifying and renewing work, stamps the image of God on the soul, forms the features and resemblance of the divine nature, and imprints on the heart such gracious habits and dispositions as render it like to God. Thus the child of God bears the Father's likeness, as the figures engraved on the seal are copied out on the wax. And this some have called the *seal of the Holy Spirit*; Eph. i. 13. and iv. 30. And as the Spirit of God works these divine principles of holiness in the heart, so he is said to be given to us, to dwell in us; i. e. to preserve those holy principles which belong to the children and heirs of God: And in this sense he may be called an *earnest of their future inheritance*; Eph. i. 14.

Blessed are your souls, who have the fore-mentioned characters impressed upon you. Rejoice in your own happy state, and bless the eternal Spirit, who has stamped the likeness of God upon you; who has begotten you again to a new life, by the power of the word working effectually upon your hearts; who has translated you from the household of sin and Satan, and made you the children of the most high God.

Here also we may remark, that in this we bear a resemblance to Christ Jesus, *the only begotten Son*. It was by the descent of this Spirit on the blessed virgin, and by the overshadowing power of the Most High, that the child Jesus was formed; and therefore, that holy thing which was born of the virgin, was called *the Son of God*; Luke i. 35.

The resemblance holds yet farther: For *the Spirit was given to dwell in Christ without measure*, to sanctify his human nature, and to work miracles; John iii. 34. By this Spirit of holiness

he was also raised from the dead ; and thus *he was declared to be the Son of God, with power*, as some interpret that text ; Rom. i. 4. He was God's *first born*, before all worlds ; and it is the same Spirit that dwells in him, the original Son, without measure, that is sent, according to our measure, to dwell in us also : It is the same Spirit that raises us from a death in trespasses and sins to a new life : It is the same Spirit that is given to sanctify us, and to make us children.

Go on yet and compare Rom. viii. 9, 11, 14. with Heb. ii. 14. and you will find, as he was pleased in a way of condescension to take *flesh and blood upon him, because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, that he might be like them* ; Heb. ii. So he is pleased to give his own spirit to men, that they might be like him also ; for *he that has not the Spirit of Christ is none of his* ; Rom. viii. 9. For this reason he is not ashamed to call them brethren, children of one Father ; for he partook of their flesh, and they partake of his Spirit.

III. God has given to each of our spirits a power of reflecting upon our own hearts and lives, whereby we become witnesses and judges for or against ourselves : And by this power we pass a judgment both concerning our particular actions, concerning the temper of our spirits, and concerning our state toward God. This power is sometimes called conscience. It is a faculty whereby we compare our words, our thoughts, and actions, with some rule ; and that rule is the law of God : And thereby we judge concerning these particular thoughts, words, and actions, whether they are good or bad. But when we compare the habitual frame and temper of our spirits, as well as the transactions and conduct of our lives, with the plain description and characters of the children of God, that are given us in his word ; hereby we judge of our own state, whether it be a state of sin, or a state of grace.

This is that light that God has set up in men, by which they should pass sentence in their own case, with regard to their own present conduct, and their future hopes. And Solomon, for this reason, calls *the spirit of man the candle of the Lord* ; Prov. xx-27. The heathens had this conscience in them, and those broken pieces of the law that were written in their hearts, was the rule by which their consciences did either excuse, or else accuse ; Rom. ii. 15. But we have a more certain rule to judge ourselves by, even the word of God, the revelation of his mind and will, that he has made in the bible. Our consciences must judge according to this rule. We are bid therefore to try, to judge, to *examine ourselves* ; 2 Cor. xiii. 5. *Examine and prove yourselves*. And 1 Cor. xi. 28. *Let a man examine himself*. This self-examination is required as a necessary duty, in order to come at the know-

age of our sonship, that our spirits may be able to bear a witness, that we are the children of God.

Blessed are they who, upon such an inward search and examination of themselves, can find such marks of his children. Blessed are we, if our own hearts condemn us not: Then *we may assure our hearts before Jesus our Judge, and have confidence at his coming*; 1 John iii. 19—21. Happy is our state, if our spirits bear witness that we are the children of God, by this inward and impartial reflection upon ourselves, and the comparison of our hearts with this rule of judgment.

IV. Though God has given us this power of reflecting and comparing ourselves with characters laid down in his word, yet there is need of the assisting light of his Spirit to search with our spirits, and to witness to his own work in our hearts.

We are too often ready to deceive ourselves in this matter in two ways:—1. In some persons, pride and self-flattery are so prevalent, that they always think better of themselves than they deserve, and are ready to pronounce themselves the children of God, without just evidence and sufficient ground.—2. Others, who are humble and sincere christians, have their spirits so depressed, either by a melancholy constitution, by a natural self-diffidence, by weakness of body, or by heavy afflictions, that they can see nothing good in themselves; they cannot read any characters of divine grace in their hearts, though grace shines visibly in their whole conversation, to the view of their fellow-christians.

On these accounts, and some others also, we stand in need of divine assistance in this work of self-examination. And therefore it is, that though we are commanded to search ourselves, yet we have the examples of saints in the scripture, that desire the spirit of God to search them too. With what zeal and fervency hath holy David intreat *that God would search him*. See Ps. lxxix. 23, 24. when he had been examining his own heart in the 10 former verses, he concludes, *Search me, O Lord, and try me*. As we cannot work grace in our own hearts, so, in an hour of weakness, we cannot clearly discover that grace that is there, the full satisfaction of our consciences, unless the same spirit that wrought it, is pleased to reveal it to us by assisting influences.

It is by observations and assistances borrowed from the sun, that hour-lines are drawn on a sun-dial, and they abide there in the dark; but we cannot find what hour of the day it is, unless the sun shines upon those hour-lines: So grace in the heart is wrought by the Holy Spirit, and it abides still even in the darkest night of temptation, when once the Spirit of God has wrought it there, it shall never be quite lost; for the seed of God remains: it the soul cannot discern it clearly, so as to take comfort from

it, in an hour of darkness ; unless the spirit, like the sun, do his beams of light into the soul, and discover his own work. Therefore, a great writer of practical divinity, Mr. R. Allein expresses it, " As the Spirit seals us, by being the mark of the Lord upon us, so he witnesses, by being the light of the Lord within us whereby we come to discern the mark of the Lord upon us." A Hagar in the wilderness did not see the fountain of water, though it was near her, till *God opened her eyes* ; Gen. xxi. 19. so the springs of divine life and holiness, which the Spirit of God has raised within our souls, are sometimes, as it were, hidden from the soul itself, till the Spirit shew it to the believer, by assisting his enquiring faculties, and shedding down a divine light. This leads me to

The *second* thing proposed : And that is, to shew the method by which the Spirit generally works in this assisting testimony.

1. He doth it by stirring up the soul to a most diligent search, and making it unwearied in this toil and labour of self examination. I call it labour and toil, for by nature we are very unwilling to be accurate, and strict, and just in the search of ourselves. The Spirit of God will hold us to it, when we find great aversions and disinclination in our own hearts to such a work. We who have so much sin, are sometimes much afraid to look into the bottom of our souls, lest we should find no sincerity there : It is the Spirit of truth therefore, that excites us to diligence in these holy enquiries.

2. He gives us sometimes a fair opportunity and occasion for the exercise of some grace in a clear and distinct manner ; and hereby assists the witness of our spirits. Perhaps by the discovery of the grace and glory of Christ, in a sermon, he invites our faith, our love, our holy joy to appear : By a kind providence, and some new signal mercy, he puts us in mind of thankfulness : Or if our souls have lain long in a secure careless frame, he leaves us, it may be, under some spiritual affliction, some terrible temptation, and awakens us to thoughtfulness, repentance, holy mournings, and longing desires after God. Thus the characters of adoption appear in our hearts, that before were covered over with the dust of this world, and buried under the cares or vanities of life.

3. It is the Spirit of God that inwardly assists these holy principles, and strengthens them in their exercise, when he hath given an outward and providential occasion to awaken them : For as he is the first spring of all the powers of the new creature, so he is a constant assisting principle to promote their holy exercise. He dwells in the saints for ever, and is an everlasting spring of their holiness. It is he that excites and manages the vital motions of our souls, and makes it appear by holy exercises that we have

ritual life in us; otherwise the providential occasion and opportunity for the exercise of such a grace might be given, and pass away, and be lost, while the soul itself lies sluggish, negligent, and inactive, if the Holy Spirit did not set it on work: *For we are not of ourselves sufficient even to think or do any thing truly and*; 2 Cor. iii. 5.

4. The Spirit of God sometimes assists this witnessing work, bringing some word of scripture into the mind, wherein the character of a child of God is described, agreeable to some holy disposition which we find working in our own hearts: And this makes the matter clear, plain, and evident to the conscience. Though this be not a constant method with God, yet surely the experience of many christians can subscribe to the truth of it, when they have been searching their own hearts, to find what grace is there, some proper sentence of scripture has been brought into their minds, wherein they have, as in a glass, beheld their own souls, beheld the likeness of the children of God in their own souls; and then they have been constrained to pronounce with holy joy concerning themselves, "Surely I am a child of God." It is not at all hard to suppose, that God's Holy Spirit should put a happy sentence of his own word into our minds, or bring it into our remembrance, in order to evidence our adoption, when it is generally granted the evil spirit may have such access to our minds by the organs of the brain, or the fancy, as to suggest to us thoughts profane, impure, malicious or blasphemous speeches, and to tempt us to presumption or despair.

5. It might be added, in the last place, that the discerning faculty of the soul is enabled to act aright by the Spirit of God, and kept from all dangerous mistakes and self-deceivings in this work of examination. Hereby he makes it appear, that such a principle of faith, of love, or repentance, which we find working within us, is true evangelical repentance, is sincere love, and *faith unfeigned*; and that it is indeed God's own work in the heart: And thus he puts an end to our doubtful fears about the truth of grace. These things seem to me so plain and intelligible in themselves, and so correspondent with those divine aids of the Holy Spirit which are promised to the children of God in all their serious and religious exercises, and without which we can do nothing that is truly good, that I trust it will be easily understood, and readily received, by those who are much conversant in transacting their most important affairs with God, according to the light of scripture.

The substance of this testimony of the Spirit to our adoption may be represented in short after this manner: The Spirit of God in his word has described the marks and characters of his children; and, by his gracious influence, he works these holy dispositions, these characters in our hearts: God has given us a

conscience which is a faculty of comparing ourselves with the rule of his word and judging accordingly : The spirit of God by his power, and by his providence, awakens these holy dispositions into lively exercise : He assists our enquiring and our judging faculties, helps us to compare our own souls with his word, and thus confirms our own spirits in the belief of this proposition, that we are the children of God. This is the more common and ordinary way and method, whereby God is pleased to give the comforts of adoption to his people.

It is the remark of a judicious writer on this subject, " That as on the one hand wicked men are sometimes convinced in their own consciences that they are children of wrath, and further confirmed in this persuasion by that evil spirit who labours from hence to drive and hurry them on to despair ; so, on the other hand, when the hearts of believers speak peace to them, telling them that God is their Father, reconciled to them in Christ, and the Holy Spirit saith the same also, then they have *perfect peace*. That the Spirit of God may thus concur with the inward consciousness and testimony of our own spirits in so important a matter as our love to God, and his love to us, is very easy to be supposed, when the apostle speaks of this concurring witness of the Spirit of God to his own consciousness, and his sincere love of his countrymen, when he says ; Rom. ix. 1. *My conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost*. There is nothing in all this account of things but what is perfectly agreeable to the word of God, and to the rational actings of created minds, under the happy influences of the uncreated Spirit.

The *third* thing proposed was, to give a few advices relating to this ordinary witness of the Spirit of God concurring with our spirits.

1. Satisfy not yourselves with one slight examination, but renew the work frequently, and search whether you find the same marks and evidences of adoption remaining in you or no. Do not content yourselves to run the whole course of life with one or two solemn examinations of your own hearts, when God first began to work religion in you, but enquire and see whether your principles of grace abide in the same brightness, evidence, and activity as in time past. Perhaps by this means you may discern a sensible growth in grace, and you may find abundant advantage worth all the care and labour of self-examination ; or if you find decays and backslidings, it will awaken repentance and zeal toward a recovery.

2. In this searching work keep aloof from carnal self-love. When you call yourselves to an account, set yourselves before the bar of your own consciences, as before the bar of God ; for conscience is a judge for God within us. Pass an impartial sentence concerning yourselves, even such as you suppose God him

self would pass, if you were now summoned before his tribunal. Suffer not yourselves now to be biassed by the esteem or the fondness that we all have naturally for ourselves. The matter is too important, the enquiry too solemn and awful, for you to indulge self-flattery. It will be no profit to deceive your souls in this work, for you cannot deceive God. Come therefore and apply yourselves to this holy exercise, with an unbiassed design to pronounce concerning yourselves whatever you find the word of God pronounces concerning you.

3. Trust not merely to your own spirits, without earnest prayer for the assistance of the Spirit of God; Jer. xvii. 9. *The heart is deceitful above all things:—Who can know it?* Therefore David prays importunately, as we have before observed, that God would *search him and try him*; Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24. Beg of the Lord that he would not suffer you to be deceived, when you set about this searching work; for it is a matter of most high concern. A mistake here is dangerous and it may be for ever fatal.

4. When you find any character of adoption made to appear with strong evidence against your souls, be not utterly discouraged though you do not find all the characters of grace there. It is true indeed, where there is a new nature and divine principle wrought in the heart, there are the seeds of every holy disposition; but they do not all arise to an equal strength, nor stand forth and shine with equal evidence. The Spirit of God may sometimes witness with your spirits, though but one mark of adoption appear plainly, while others are not so easily discovered. A single bough of the tree of life has upheld souls from drowning in despair, when they could but lay hold of that one bough. Many a christian, under great difficulties, inward tumults, doubts, and darknesses of spirit, have been enabled to hold on their way by living upon some one plain scripture, and finding the sense of it transcribed into their own hearts. Some one evidence of true faith, or holy love, of repentance, or heavenly-mindedness, has been set in such a divine light before them, that they could not well mistake; and this has borne up their hope in an hour of temptation. But I must add,

5. Though you ought to bless God for any mark of his children in your hearts, yet you ought not to content yourself with one mark, since the scripture has given us many. The faculties of our natures are various, and they have their various operations: The passions or affections of our souls are many, and some of them are frequently in exercise: Now all the passions and faculties of nature, with all their operations, should be conformable to the rule of the word of God; and when it is so, there appears a variety of marks of the children of God upon us, even as many as there are powers or passions belonging to our souls. Whe-

ther it be love, it is love to God, and the children of God, and are born of the same Father : Whether it be hatred, it is to sin, and to all that displeases God : If it be delight, it is light in heavenly things, and in holy ordinances : If it be it is a desire after God, after a sense of his love, a great acquaintance with him, a more exact conformity to him breathing after the heavenly state, where we shall not be against him. Thus since the several powers and principles of our nature being sanctified, yield us several distinct evidences of adoption, let us not be contented with one of them, but press forward toward a stronger hope of our sonship : let us labour and pray that all the springs of action within us being sanctified by the Holy Spirit, may yield the fruits of holiness, may shine bright in a way of evidence, and may give us hope to full assurance.

6. When you have found any comfortable and solid testimony of your adoption, by *the Holy Spirit witnessing in this manner with your spirits, that you are the children of God*, walk with a cheerful sense of it continually ; go on in the way of holiness, rejoicing in the Lord. This was one end why Christ has given us the characters of his disciples in scripture, that when we see them in our own hearts we might rejoice. This was part of the design of his farewell-sermon to his apostles, wherein some of these characters are described. See John xv. 11. *These things I have spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.* The blessed Spirit, in the same discourse promised as a *Comforter*, and we ought to walk in the light of his consolations. It is the most evangelical and the most convincing method of his grace, when he carries on his sanctifying work by the influence of peace and joy ; and it is one of the great duties of a christian, that *the joy of the Lord is his strength, to fulfil the duties of righteousness.*

DISCOURSE XII.

The extraordinary Witness of the Spirit.

Rom. viii. 16.—The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

THE SECOND PART.

IT is great and divine condescension, that the blessed God should ever take any of the children of wrath, and make them the children of his love: But he condescends yet farther, when he sends down his own Spirit to give us notice of our adoption, and to acquaint us with our high and holy privilege. The common and ordinary method whereby the Spirit of God bears witness that we are his children, is by drawing out our own spirits to search and enquire into the filial and holy disposition which he himself has wrought in our hearts, and by assisting our consciences in this enquiry. Thus by his gentle, easy, and insensible influences upon our souls, he leads us on in a rational manner to infer and conclude, that we are born of God, because we find the image of God impressed on us, and those divine qualities wrought in us, which belong only to his children. This has been the subject of the foregoing discourse. I proceed now to consider the extraordinary witness of the Holy Spirit, when in a more immediate * and more sensible manner he raises in the hearts of some of his favourites a powerful and a pleasant sense of their interest in the love of God.

This extraordinary witness may be distinguished into two kinds,

1. It may imply some very uncommon and powerful confirmation of the ordinary and rational witness, by the most sensible impressions of divine love on the heart, by which it is raised to holy raptures, to heavenly joy and assurance. Perhaps the apostle Peter may have some respect to this; 1 *Peter* i. 8. where speaking of Christ, he adds, *whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now, ye seen him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.* Here it is supposed in the text, that the persons to whom he writes were conscious of their own faith in an unseen Saviour, and their love to him: and thence they could infer that they were accepted of God: But

* By the word immediate here I do not mean without ordinances, such as prayer, meditation, &c. but rather sudden and speedy.

without some peculiar and more uncommon influences of the Holy Spirit, they could hardly be said to arise to such joy as was *unspeakable and full of glory, or glorified joy*, as the greek text expresses it, *χαρὰ δειδοζαυμένη*, a-kin to that which the saints possess in the glorified state.

2. There is yet another sort of extraordinary witness of the spirit; and that is, when in an immediate and powerful manner, the Holy Spirit impresses the soul with an assurance of divine love, and gives the heart of a saint such a full discovery of his adoption or interest in the favour of God, without the more slow and argumentative method of comparing the dispositions of their souls with some special characters of the children of God in scripture. The Spirit of God may witness in an extraordinary manner to our adoption, by an inward experimental sense of *the love of God shed abroad in the heart*, assuring some of his favourites that they are the sons or daughters of God, without any particular examination of the heart at that time, or any present reflections on the characters of adoption described in the bible.

I confess the several acts of the mind of man, even the reasoning and argumentative acts of the soul, are so quick and sudden, and the sensible joy that may arise from them, follows in so swift and close a succession, that it is sometimes very hard to distinguish and define the bounds and limits of the several actions, perceptions, and impressions on the mind. On this account I shall not be solicitous to keep up the distinction between these two kinds of the extraordinary witness of the Spirit, but shall only speak of them in general, as distinguished from the ordinary witness of the Spirit, by the more immediate sensations of divine love, that are impressed through the peculiar favour of God on the souls of some of his children.

I am very sensible that, in our present age, the Spirit of God is so much withdrawn from the christian church in all his operations, that a man exposes himself to the censure of wild enthusiasm, and a heated fancy, if he ventures to discourse at all on such a theme as this: But as I am persuaded these things were frequent matter of christian experience in the primitive days of the gospel, and in scenes of sharp persecution, so I am satisfied that God has not utterly withheld his divine favours of this kind from his churches and his children, for sixteen hundred years together; and I hope I shall make it appear, that a supposition of this extraordinary witness of the spirit may be maintained, without giving a loose to all the roving dreams of a distempered brain, or to the bold presumptions of weak and conceited men or false and deceitful impostors. The method of my discourse is this,

I. I will offer some very probable proofs that there has been and is, such a thing as the extraordinary witness of the Spirit of God,—II. I shall mention a few of the special seasons or con-

ons of such a divine favour.—III. Shew how it may be distinguished from delusions of Satan, and from the mere ferment and vacuity of animal nature, or a disordered fancy.—IV. Represent some other characters of it, and shew wherein it differs from the ordinary witness of the Spirit. And then—V. Conclude with a few directions relating to it.

I. Let me offer some proofs that there is such an extraordinary witness of the Spirit.

Now that this is not the language of wild enthusiasm, or a mere fantastic notion of the brain, will appear from these few considerations.

I. The great God, the Father of spirits, can reveal a truth to the mind of his creature, with such life, and power, and evidence, that the mind cannot dissent from it, or refuse to believe it; the overpowering light may be so divine and convincing, that the creature may be fully and justly persuaded it is a divine truth. Those who believe the prophets and apostles divinely inspired, have no reasonable doubt about this proposition.

II. It has pleased the great and blessed God to give such immediate assurance of his own love to some of his favourites of old, by visions and voices, and the message of angels, and by inward impressions on their minds by his own Spirit. Thus Abraham was assured that God was his God, and would be *his exceeding great reward*; Gen. xv. 1. Thus concerning Moses, it was made known that he was the *friend of God*; Ex. xxxiii. 11. Thus Daniel, was often informed that he was a *man greatly beloved*; Dan. ix. 23. and x. 11, 19. Mary Magdalene, and some others who conversed with Christ, when he was here on earth, had particular assurance that their sins were forgiven them. Paul was assured that he was a *chosen vessel*. And indeed, all the apostles had sufficient evidence of their acceptance with God, and their interest in the love of Christ, by the extraordinary communications of the Holy Ghost. It is the opinion of a late ingenious writer, that not only the apostles themselves, but even all the primitive christians, that were truly converted by their ministry, received these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost in some degree; which did not only witness to the christian religion, but to the comfort of those who had it, with the assurance of God'sardon and acceptance. See *Miscellanea Sacra*, Essay, i. p. 17, 126, 134.

III. There is no evidence from reason or scripture, that all such immediate divine favours are ceased; and though there is at the same occasion for the frequency of them as there was in the beginning of Christianity, yet the Spirit of God is a free and unconfined agent; and since it is plain from scripture, that he doth *still dwell in his people*, and carry on his divine work among the churches of Christ in all ages, to the end of the world, why

may he not sometimes discover his power and grace in an extraordinary manner, above and beyond his ordinary and usual operations?

IV. Some special seasons and occasions may arise, and indeed have arisen, wherein the blessed Spirit of God has thought it proper vastly to exceed the measures and rules of his ordinary operations in the exercise of his offices of illumination and sanctification? And why may it not be allowed in his consolations also?

1. There may be some reason for extraordinary acts of his illumination; as when persons are not able to read the holy scriptures, or when the bible is withheld from them, and when they have enjoyed but very poor and insufficient ministrations of the gospel? the blessed Spirit may sometimes shine into humble souls with some uncommon rays of divine truth, and they may enjoy more sensible teachings of the Holy Spirit: Or sometimes a person of low parts, and weak understanding, may have been illuminated in the knowledge of some scriptural doctrine, beyond what the mere exercises of their own feeble reason upon scripture would have attained to in so short a time: And perhaps some christians of better capacities may have enjoyed this favour also. Luther, that extraordinary servant of God in the reformation, is said to have oftentimes learned more of the gospel on his knees in prayer, than in his laborious studies.

2. There may be, and there have been, instances of an extraordinary work of sanctification. To what glorious degrees of piety, virtue, and true holiness, have some persons been raised in a very short time? A most astonishing change has been wrought in their souls, and a swift preparation for heaven, beyond what appears in the ordinary work of the Spirit, by the rational or persuasive influence of outward ordinances. And since the spirit of God appears sometimes, for the honour of his own grace, to be an extraordinary enlightener and sanctifier; why may he not be an extraordinary comforter also?

V. If we can credit the accounts which have been given by holy men in later ages, and some of which are recorded in the memoirs of their lives, we must confess that there have been instances and experiences of most sublime and extraordinary consolations of the Blessed Spirit bestowed on them; such as, upon the most rational survey of things according to scripture, we cannot but conclude to have been truly divine.

It would take up many whole pages to cite such instances as we find upon record, in the lives of particular persons. Many such may be found in the late Mr. Fleming's fulfilling of the scriptures, especially in Scotland. I shall mention one only, and it shall be a most incontestable example, in our land, in England, even in our own day; the example of a person whose solid sense

deep sagacity, whose sedate judgment, and the superior
 ence of his reasoning powers, leave no room to charge him
 vain and delusive raptures of heated imagination. The
 is the late venerable Mr. John Howe. The name com-
 respect, and confirms the narrative. He wrote the fol-
 g paragraphs in the blank leaf of his own bible :

December 26, 1689, After that I had long, seriously,
 repeatedly thought with myself, that, besides a full and un-
 ed assent to the objects of faith, a vivifying savoury taste
 elish of them was also necessary, that with stronger force,
 ore powerful energy, they might penetrate into the most
 d centre of my heart, and there being most deeply fixed and
 l, govern my life ; and that there could be no other sure
 d whereon to conclude and pass a sound judgment, on my
 estate godward ; and after I had, in my course of preach-
 ing largely insisting on 2 Cor. i. 12. *This is my rejoicing,*
testimony of a good conscience, &c. this very morning I awoke
 a most ravishing and delightful dream, that a wonderful
 pious stream of celestial rays, from the lofty throne of the
 Majesty did seem to dart into my open and expanded
 . I have often since, with great complacency, reflected on
 ery signal pledge of special divine favour, vouchsafed to me
 at noted memorable day ; and have with repeated fresh-
 ure, tasted the delights thereof."

But what of the same kind I sensibly felt through the ad-
 le bounty of my God, and the most pleasant comforting in-
 e of the Holy Spirit, on October 22, 1704, far surpassed the
 expressive words my thoughts can suggest. I then experi-
 an inexpressibly pleasant melting of heart, tears gushing
 mine eyes for joy that God should *shed abroad his love*
 antly through the hearts of men ; and that for this very
 se mine own heart should be so signally possessed of and by
 llessed Spirit ; Rom. v. 5." Besides this instance of so
 , so rational, and so judicious a person, there have been
 others of our pious fathers in England, but especially, as
 before, in the church of Scotland, have enjoyed such divine
 and given very sensible evidence that the Holy Spirit is
 terly withdrawn from men even as to his extraordinary in-
 es.

f any thing could be added to this testimony of Mr. Howe,
 dd be the instance of Mr. Flavel, the famous practical di-
 o the west of England, who in his treatise of the soul of
 gives us this account of himself, but with his name conceal-
 "That, in a journey on horseback, he fell into a divine me-
 on, wherein he had such tokens of the love of God, and his
 st in the divine favour manifested to him, that greatly sur-
 l all the rational and inferential evidences that ever be

had ; though he was known to be a close walker with God, and an eminent saint, and a lively preacher of the blessed gospel of Christ."

VI. There have been several learned and judicious divines, who have declared their firm belief of such extraordinary manifestations and witnessings of the blessed Spirit ; which belief has arisen from their acquaintance with the scriptures, and their observations of the dealings of God with the spirits of his people, in some uncommon cases, though they have not possessed any such experiences of their own. So the worthy and pious Mr. Caryl, on Job. x. The Spirit brings in the witness of the water and the blood, which is his mediate work. But besides and above these, he sometimes gives a distinct witness of his own, which is his immediate work ; and is, in a way of peculiarity and transcendency, called the witness of the Spirit.

The learned and venerable Dr. Owen, in his Treatise of Communion with God, page 293, saith, " There are are two ways whereby the Spirit worketh this joy in the heart of believers.— 1. He doth it immediately by himself, without the consideration of any other acts or works of his, or the interpositions of any reasonings, or deductions and conclusions. This does not arise from our reflex consideration of the love of God, but rather gives occasion thereunto. He so sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts, and fills them with gladness by an immediate act and operation. Of this joy there is no account to be given, but that the Spirit worketh it when and how he will : He secretly infuseth and distils it into the soul, prevailing against all fears and sorrows, filling it with gladness, exultations, and sometimes with unspeakable raptures of the mind." To this the doctor adds,

2. The Spirit works this joy also mediately by his other works towards us, &c. These are after the common or ordinary manner." That great and evangelical divine Dr. Goodwin, in vol. iv. part 2, pages 95, 96, declares, " That besides the testimony of the water and blood, that is, faith in the death of Christ and sanctification, there is a third testimony, and that is the Holy Ghost himself, which is immediate ; that is, though it backs and confirms what the other two said, yet it quotes them not, builds not its testimony on them, but raises the heart to see its adoption and sonship, by an immediate discovery of God's mind and love." And a little after he adds, " This witness is not a testimony fetched out of a man's self, or the common work of the Spirit in man, as the others were, but he speaks from himself : As when the broad seal is put to by a king, he writes *teste meipso*, so doth the spirit speak in the language of a king, *teste meipso*, witness myself ; and receives and borrows no witness from what is in us, but makes his own abundantly satisfy."

The late pious and judicious expositor of scripture, Mr.

Samuel Clark, has written in the defence of this extraordinary witness of the Spirit, and describes it thus: "When the Spirit of God, without consideration of, or reflecting upon, any of those gracious qualifications he has formerly wrought in the soul, does, by his own immediate power, imprint this persuasion upon the heart, Thou art a child of God; and by an inward and secret, yet powerful voice, doth say to the soul, Thou art a believer, thy sins are pardoned, or to that purpose; and so satisfies the soul concerning its state and condition.

I proceed in the *second* place, to consider the special seasons and occasions wherein such favours have been bestowed upon men.

1. The Spirit of God has in a more immediate manner, made extraordinary impressions of the love of God on the soul, when persons have been called to great and difficult services in the church, or to uncommon sufferings for the sake of Christ. St. Paul was in labours more abundant, and in sufferings above measure, beyond the rest of the apostles; he had need of eminent support: He was assured by a vision, that he was a chosen vessel: He was taken into heaven before-hand, and had a sight and taste of unseen future glories, to encourage his zeal and patience; *Cor. xii.* And if we read the history of the martyrs, even in later as well as in ancient times, we can hardly forbear to believe it true, when they have exulted under a sense of divine love, in the midst of racks and flames.

2. When the temptations of some humble souls have been extraordinary, and their afflictions above measure, pressing and overwhelming; when the hurry and tumult of their spirits hath not suffered them to recollect in a calm and rational way, the evidences of their adoption, the Spirit of God may see fit to give a fresh and such a divine cordial to keep him from sinking. When a Christian has been long contesting with doubts and darkneses, and had been oppressed with many fears, the blessed Spirit has sometimes let a sudden light into the heart, and with or without some word of scripture, has given surprising consolation. Mr. S. Clark tells us of a minister, who having been under a spirit of bondage many years, and now even ready to die in that condition, when *Rom. viii.* was begun to be read to him, a little before his last gasp, stopping at ver. 1. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit:* "Stay, said he, I never saw so much of those words in all my days, though I have read them often, I see now." This seems to be an instance of the sudden and extraordinary influence of the Holy Spirit in his enlightening power, as well as his witnessing and comforting power. This has been the case of some holy souls in their dying hours, or when departing from the body, they have, as it were, entered into

the world of sight before they have left this world of sense, and flesh, and blood; or rather, heaven itself hath entered into their spirits.

8. When christians of the first rank of piety, have been warmly engaged in most lively acts of devotion, in fervent and holy prayer, and they have been brought near to heaven in the frame of their spirits, they have had a divine foretaste of the joys of the upper world, and an assurance given them of their own interest therein. Daniel had been engaged in fervent and zealous intercession for the church of God, when a heavenly messenger was sent to acquaint him, that he was *a man greatly beloved*; Dan. ix. 23. Or,

4. Perhaps the Spirit of God may think it necessary to uphold some poor weak christians of the lowest rank of understanding, by some immediate impressions of the love of God, when he sees that their love to God is great and sincere, but they are unskilled in the exercises of their rational powers, that they hardly know how to compare their hearts with the scripture, and pass a determinate judgment on themselves. Such weak creatures, it may be, could never come to any settled hope or peace, without such divine condescensions; and especially if they are under some special temptation, which gives a confusion or darkness to their thoughts.

Thomas was but a weak believer; he knew not how to build his faith of a risen Saviour on what Christ himself had foretold, or on the testimony of his brethren, which were sufficiently just, and rational foundations for his faith: Therefore, in great condescension to his weakness, Christ appeared to him, and shewed him the print of the nails in his hands, and the wound of the spear in his side: Upon which discovery, Thomas cries out with joy, *my Lord, and my God*. It is possible that other occasions may arise in the course of divine providence, wherein the great and gracious God may see it necessary to bestow such peculiar and extraordinary favours on some of his people; but there seems to have been sufficient evidence already given, that some of the wise and the learned, as well as some of the weaker rank of christians, have had heavenly experience of this uncommon witness of the Spirit.

The third thing I proposed, was to shew how these extraordinary favours of heaven may be distinguished from the delusions of Satan, and from the mere ferments and fits of vivacity in animal nature, or a disordered fancy.

It has been said indeed, though perhaps too rashly, that they who go about to assert an immediate testimony, will never secure the soul from delusion: Satan will soon find artifices to counterfeit this testimony, and bear witness in the Spirit's stead; and when we think we have the Spirit of truth to assure us,

we shall have the father of lies to deceive us. But if christians are careful and watchful in this matter, there are signs hereby the testimony of the spirit may be distinguished from its delusions.

Some divines have supposed this testimony of the Spirit to be known as the sun is, by its own light; and a man who hath seen the sun, can never mistake the moon for it; the very glory of the sun manifests itself, and convinces every beholder. And perhaps in the ancient inspiration of the prophets, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the days of the apostles, there was a divine self-distinguishing light that accompanied these heavenly favours, which we know not how to judge of at this distance of time; we who never have experienced what divine inspiration is. But the surest way of our discerning the extraordinary witnessings or joys of the Holy Spirit, is by the effects; which are such as these.

I. It fills the soul with great degrees of humility and self-abasement, under a sense of its own vileness, guilt, and unworthiness; as holy Job, when he saw God in some more uncommon manifestations of his power and glory, he abhorred himself in dust and ashes; Job xlii. 4, 5. So Isaiah when he had beheld the Lord sitting upon a throne, high, and lifted up, *Woe is me*, saith he,—*I am a man of unclean lips*; Is. l. 1—5. But vain delusions puff up the soul with a high conceit of itself; as Simon Magus, when, by the power of the devil, he performed some strange feats, *he gave out that he was some great person*; Acts viii. 9, 10. Many other instances of the like kind might be produced out of the histories of the christian church.

II. By this testimony of the Spirit the soul is led to a more sensible dependance on divine grace, having an inward and effectual conviction how dark and weak it is in itself, and how powerful is the grace of God, and the operation of the Spirit; it makes the soul run to the protection and succour of almighty grace; whereas vain delusions of the fancy, or temptations of the devil, rather lead the soul away from divine grace, and incline it to a sort of self-sufficiency and dependance upon its own attainments, its own light, and its own strength.

III. The witness of the Spirit does more establish the soul in the great doctrines of the gospel, and particularly in faith on Christ Jesus. Many of these immediate testimonies of old were given to the primitive christians with this design, to confirm them in the doctrines of grace, and in the faith of Christ Jesus. When St. Paul was transported into the third heaven; 2 Cor. xii. and had doubtless an uncommon manifestation of the love of God; as soon as the next danger and trial appeared, he besought the Lord importunately, and could not be satisfied till he received

this answer from Christ, *my grace is sufficient for thee*; 2 Cor. xii. 9. He was weak in himself but strong in Christ. But, on the other hand, it has been evident too often, when the devil has endeavoured to delude weak creatures in this respect, he has drawn them off from Christ or filled their imaginations with some strange errors, and led them away into false and foolish opinions, contrary to the doctrines of the gospel. The blessed Spirit will perform his office when he becomes a *Counselor*, he will be an advocate for Christ, for so the word *paracletos* also signifies; *he will take of the things of Christ and shew them to the soul; he will guide his people into the same truths to which he witnessed so gloriously in the primitive times; and will confirm believers in the faith of the holy scripture* John xvi. 13, 14.

IV. The witness of the Spirit draws out the heart to some special degrees of love to God, and engages it in warm and lively thanksgivings for such divine and undeserved favours: The soul admires the rich grace and goodness of God in Christ Jesus. Thence will arise an utter aversion to all sin, an hatred of every thing that is displeasing to God, a powerful sense of indwelling corruption, a watchful care to please God in every thing and to make some humble returns of love for such inestimable favours, and divine manifestations; whereas the warm presumptions of fancy, or the delusions of the devil, leave the soul in a more careless and unholy frame; or, at least they are oftentimes attended, or quickly followed, by some powerful temptation to gross iniquity: which the deluded soul too often and too easily complies with: And there have been many instances, wherein persons under the power of various delusions from the devil, have been drawn away to the practice of various sorts of crimes, and particularly to foul and scandalous sins.

In the last place, I might add also, in general, that though the Spirit of God may witness in an extraordinary manner to our adoption, when the soul cannot plainly see or does not actually and plainly recollect the characters of adoption in itself; yet it never leaves the soul without awakening the exercise of such graces as are indeed the sure marks and evidences of the children of God: Where the Spirit comes, it will bring some of its own fruits with it, in a sensible manner. Now the *fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*; Gal. v. 22. If we are comforted by the Spirit, we shall *crucify the flesh with its affections, and lusts*, and endeavour to walk and live as become the sons and daughters of such a Father as God is.

Upon the whole I conclude, that it does not seem to be agreeable to the wisdom and providence of God, in the govern-

ment of the world, to suffer the devil so exactly to counterfeit the works of his own Spirit, as to leave no marks or evidences whereby to distinguish them from the impostures of Satan. Truth and holiness are the objects of the devil's hatred; and though he may *transform himself* in some particulars *into an angel of light*, yet he brings along with him some peculiar evil badge, whereby he may be known or distinguished: And if christians will be sincere and honest, watchful and diligent, to examine not only the present impressions, but the succeeding effects of such sort of assurances of their adoption, together with earnest prayer to be kept from all delusions, I can hardly think that God will suffer his own people to be imposed upon in a matter of so sacred importance.

The fourth thing I proposed, was to mention briefly some characters of this extraordinary witness of the Spirit, wherein it differs from the ordinary witness.

1. The extraordinary testimony of our adoption is a more sensible and strong impression upon the soul; which seems to be distinguished in itself from the more slow, successive, and rational operations of the human faculties. The spirit of a christian searching out his own interest in the love of God, exercises his reasoning powers, lays down these propositions: He that believes in Christ, or he that loveth God, is a child of God. Again, I believe in Christ, or I love God: And then it infers this conclusion; therefore I am one of his children. Now the Spirit of God in his ordinary and usual influences, does so gently, so secretly, and in such a con-natural manner, assist these operations of the soul, that it seems to be all our own work; and the influences of the Spirit are seldom sensibly distinguished from the operations of our own faculties; and we learn, that we have the assistance of the Holy Spirit herein, rather by the doctrine of scripture, and by its sanctifying effects, than by any powerful sensations of a superior influence on our souls: But in the extraordinary witness the case is otherwise: for the superior and external influence appears strong and sensible. The Holy Spirit impresses the conclusion, or the assurance of our adoption, with power upon the soul, without any successive deduction of it from any foregoing propositions, sets it in a bright light, and persuades the soul to believe it.

2. This extraordinary witness is usually short and sudden, the other is more durable; this is only a cordial to encourage us in an hour of danger, or support us in a fainting season; the other is our common food, and our daily refreshment. It has been said of this favour; it is *rara hora, brevis mora*: A visit seldom bestowed, of short continuance.

3. The ordinary witness of the Spirit of God with our spirits, proving our regeneration and adoption in a rational way,

may in some measure be made out to others ; but the extraordinary witness of the Spirit is like the *white stone* of absolution, and the *new name* written in it ; Rev. ii. 17. *which none knows but he that receives it.* It is like *hidden manna*, with which God, at special seasons, may feed his children in secret.

4. The extraordinary witness of the Spirit fills the soul with great and exceeding joy, and brings it, as it were, within the confines of heaven ; It is *joy unspeakable, and glorified* ; as the apostle Peter calls it ; 1 Peter i. 8. The other maintains the soul in such a degree of peace, comfort, and well grounded hope, as carries the christian onward through the difficulties and duties of life, though without such raptures of inward joy. There is an unknown sensation of heavenly light and love, which runs through the spirit of a christian, under such extraordinary assurances of divine love ; and it has been with a saint at such a time as it was with Peter in the mount, when he said, *Lord, it is good for us to be here* ; Mat. xvii. 4. When he was overwhelmed with revelation and pleasure, such a soul has felt more than feeble nature was able to bear, and has cried out, "it is enough, Lord ; or, it is too much for a state of flesh and blood ; Lord, either withhold thy comforts, or enlarge the vessel ; for I cannot bear these joys."

5. This extraordinary witness of the Spirit doth not belong to every saint. Many a christian, it may be, passes the whole course of his life, and practises a regular faith and holiness for many years, without this excess of joy, this assurance of God's love. Believers are generally led on in a rational way of evidence and hope ; and walking in the paths of holiness, having good hope through grace, hold fast an humble confidence unto the end. The extraordinary witness is exceeding rare and uncommon, at least in our days.

I proceed now to finish this discourse, by offering to your thoughts a few advices concerning these witnessings of the Spirit of God, both in his ordinary and extraordinary ways.

1. Though you have never felt any such immediate influences of the Spirit of God, giving you an extraordinary assurance of your interest in his love, yet have a care of ridiculing and reproaching these peculiar and uncommon operations of the Holy Spirit : Take heed of pronouncing them all at once, the delusions of the devil, the visions of an heated fancy, or vain and idle dreams. It is certain that God has bestowed some such favours on men in the primitive days of christianity. It is certain also, that there is no place of scripture that declares, that these influences are utterly ceased, or that God will bestow no more such divine favours. It is certain yet further, that wise, and judicious, and holy men, have had very extraordinary impressions of this kind made on their souls so that they were almost

constrained to believe that they were divine; and the effects of these impressions have been holy and glorious: We should set a guard therefore on our hearts and our tongues, lest we cast a reproach and scandal on such sacred appearances, which the Spirit of God will hereafter acknowledge to have been his own work.

2. Let not humble christians, who walk with God according to the ordinary methods of his grace, be discouraged, though they have never found this extraordinary witness of the Spirit, nor tasted of these peculiar favours. Value the evident marks and characters of the children of God, wrought in your hearts, more than ecstasies of joy and pleasure. Value mortification to sin more than raptures; for mortification is a certain sign that the Spirit of God dwells in us, and that we are heirs of life; Rom. viii. 13. *If you by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh you shall live.* Heaven is the place of complete joy; heaven is the state where sight and sense shall be exercised; but we are here ordained to *live by faith*; 2 Cor. v. 7. We may have the assisting presence of *the Spirit of adoption*, and by that Spirit may say unto God, *Abba, Father*, without the extraordinary witnessing of that good Spirit.

3. Dare not believe any sudden raptures to proceed from this extraordinary testimony of the Holy Spirit, unless you find some considerable measure of those sanctifying effects of them which I have described; I have granted that in particular seasons of trial when the natural spirits sink and fail, and temptations are exceeding strong, God may give this immediate testimony, on purpose to bear up the soul from sinking; yet we should not dare to trust such sort of vehement impressions, and pronounce them divine, if we neither find any of the plain scriptural marks of the children of God upon us, before or after these impressions. There is great danger of depending upon such raptures, if they leave no evident and lasting effects of sanctification behind them. Where the Spirit shines with such a divine light, he will warm the heart with uncommon love, and the soul must be conscious of some such rational evidence of adoption, such a love to God in the heart, as will effectually prove that God has first loved us. Perhaps this is one reason why some christians fall under so many doubts and fears, because they live more upon their inward sensations of joy, their transports of pleasure in religion, which they call the extraordinary witness of the Spirit, than they do upon the characters of the children of God, which should be written in their hearts, and by which they should endeavour to search out and to evidence their interest in the favour of God.

4. Let every believer walk humbly before God, in all the

nature, may first awaken, and then maintain the anger, or fear, or love, or other affections of the mind.

Thus most of the actions of man in this present state are of a mixed nature, wherein both flesh and spirit concur, and each perform their several parts; though in such a manner, that, in many cases, it is hard to say how far the flesh and how far the spirit have their distinct shares of influence. Yet there is one excellent and unfailing rule to judge of this matter, if we could but always apply it right; and that is, whatsoever knowledge, consent, or choice, is in any action, belongs to the mind; and what implies mere matter, shape, or proper motion, must be attributed to the body.

These appetites and affections of human nature, which are the mingled operations of flesh and spirit, are either lawful, sacred, or sinful; and they are properly and formally so called, partly according to the different objects of them, and partly according to their various degrees, or some other circumstances of time or place, that may attend them; as will be made evident by such instances as these: Thus it will appear that the same action or passion may be determined to be lawful, sacred, or sinful, if it be exercised toward different objects, or in different degrees. Thus it is lawful to be hungry and thirsty, and to desire proper food, bread and wine; and to desire, with faith and holy affections, to eat the bread and drink the wine at the Lord's-supper is a sacred action. But to covet that meat or drink, that bread, or that wine, which belongs to another man, is sinful; for it is a violation of the tenth command, and becomes a transgression. So to fear the great God, or to love him, is a sacred affection. To fear a robber or a roaring lion, or to love my house, or my servant, are very lawful affections: But if my love or my fear of any creature exceeds my fear or my love of God my Creator, it becomes hereby sinful. It is lawful, or rather it is religious and holy, to be angry, to hate, and to be ashamed, when sin is the object of these passions; but to be ashamed of virtue and religion, where I am called to profess them, or to hate my neighbour, or even mine enemy, or to be angry without a cause, or above a proper degree, are all criminal passions, and render a man guilty before God.

The mere motions and ferments of flesh and blood, or whatsoever share mere animal nature has in these actions or affections of the man, can have no moral good or evil in them, considered apart from the soul; nor are they properly called lawful or sinful in themselves; for they are the pure operations of brutal matter, till the soul or the will indulges them, or approves them, commands them, or complies with them. Yet if the objects of these fleshly motions be forbidden by the laws of God, or if the degree be excessive, or the time or place unlawful, then these motions and ferments of the flesh may be called sinful; not formally

in themselves, but occasionally ; because the soul so often complies with them, and becomes guilty ; and thus these operations of the flesh are sad occasions of sin.

Now in this present fallen state, wherein all the children of Adam are found, these sinful motions and ferments, appetites, and passions abound in our flesh and blood ; partly as we derive too much of them from our sinful parents, and partly as we have too much encouraged and strengthened them ourselves, by frequent practice and indulgence. It is evident also, that the greatest part of the actions of our lives are ready to be influenced by appetite or affection ; and it is plain, that the outward senses of the body, or the inward ferments, motions, and impressions of flesh and blood have so large a share in them, that they are called the deeds of the body, the desires, lusts, and affections of the flesh, in many places of scripture ; thence it comes to pass that our flesh becomes the chief cause and occasion of sin to the soul.

Now though it be difficult, as I have hinted, in many particular actions, to determine precisely how far the influence of the flesh reaches, and how far it is the act of the mind or spirit, yet it is of great use in the christian life to search into these matters, in order to find how far our actions are criminal and guilty, that we may abase our souls before God, and take shame to ourselves so far as we are culpable ; and on the other hand, that from a melancholy or superstitious mistake, we may not charge ourselves with more guilt than God charges us with, or lay heavier loads upon our own consciences than the divine law lays upon us.

We shall find these enquiries also of excellent use to lead us to proper methods for the mortification of sin, and to shew us the justice and wisdom of divine conduct, and the holiness and beauty of the providence of God, in appointing our present state of trial, in order to a future judgment.

I. The *first* thing I shall discourse on here, is the unhappy influence that our flesh or animal nature, has to tempt us to sin. And then II. I shall shew what powers the soul is furnished with to resist the sinful motions of the flesh, and to maintain the sacred warfare.

This is the proposition therefore that I shall first lay down in my discourse ; viz. That the principles, springs, and occasions of our sinful actions lie very much in the flesh ; and these have a fatal and unhappy influence to lead the soul or spirit into sin. I shall make this evident from the word of God, especially from the writings of the blessed apostles ; and shall confirm it by many common observations and an easy train of reasoning.

When those sacred writers have occasion to describe sin, in its principles or operations, they use the words flesh, fleshly, or

carnal, the body, or the members, with much freedom and frequency. St. Peter speaks of walking after the flesh; 2 Pet. ii. 20. of alluring men by the lusts of the flesh; 2 Pet. ii. 12. of fleshly lusts that war against the soul; 1 Pet. ii. 11. St Paul bids us mortify the deeds of the body; Rom. viii. 12. and he calls the principle of sin the body of death; Rom. vii. 24. He speaks of sin reigning in our mortal bodies; Rom. vi. 12. He places the sinful principle, which he calls the law of sin, in our very members; Rom. vii. 23. And particular sins he calls our members; Col. iii. 5. And in correspondence with him the apostle James speaks of lusts that war in our members; James iv. 1. And John and Jude make mention of the lusts of the flesh, and garments spotted with the flesh. And there are few words more frequent on St. Paul's tongue than the word flesh, when he would signify sin; the mortification whereof he calls crucifying the flesh, with its affections and lusts; Gal. v. 24. He names adultery, fornication, idolatry, hatred, envy, murder, drunkenness, revellings, and such like, the works of the flesh; Gal. v. 19. Persons in a sinful state are said to be in the flesh; Rom. viii. 8, 9. A course of sinning is called sowing to the flesh, living after the flesh, minding the things of the flesh, walking after the flesh, fulfilling the desires and lusts of the flesh, in several parts of his epistles.

But in sanctified and unsanctified persons, sin, in the judgment of St. Paul, lies very much in the flesh, as to the springs, principles and occasions of it. See Rom. vii. 5. compared with the 18th and 25th verses. In Rom. vii. 5. St. Paul speaks concerning the natural and unregenerate state: *When we were in the flesh, that is, all flesh, no spirit, that is, no spiritual life, then the motions of sin did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death.* And when he speaks concerning himself in a regenerate state, at the end of that chapter he describes sin still as having its occasion and cause much seated in the flesh. See verses 18, and 25. *I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind. With my mind I serve the law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin.* So that, considering himself either in a natural or in a regenerate state, still he supposes the great occasion of sinful actions to proceed from the flesh.

I confess that in some places of the New Testament, and perhaps in several of these which I have now cited, the word flesh may be used something figuratively, to signify all the principles of sin that are in human nature, whether they immediately reside in the mind, or in the body, as the subject; but the figure itself seems to be borrowed from this very sentiment, that the flesh, with its affections and appetites towards fleshly objects, is the chief spring and occasion of sin.

I might add also, that there are some other places of scrip-

sure, where the word *flesh* must necessarily be taken in a literal and proper sense, denoting the body to be the seat or spring of many sinful affections ; as Eph. ii. 3. where *the desires of the flesh* are distinguished from the sinful desires of the mind. And 2 Cor. vii. 1. where both the *filthiness of flesh and spirit* is mentioned ; and there are very few places which will not allow us to understand it in a literal sense. And it is evident to any one who compares the various parts of the writings of this apostle, that he speaks ten times of the *body, the flesh, or the members*, as the springs of sin, where he once mentions the lusts of the mind ; intimating, that the far greatest part of the sins of men, are derived from their flesh, and are owing to their compliance with the sinful desires or affections of the body.

I would not be mistaken here, as if I supposed the flesh to be the only immediate spring of all our sins ; though perhaps, it is the original, and remote spring of all, as I shall shew presently : But the soul of man, being once depraved, has many sinful qualities in it ; the understanding, and the will, the very *mind and conscience are defiled* ; Tit. i. 15. The soul itself has some propensities to things that are forbidden, as well as sinful aversions to God, and things holy and heavenly. There are the lusts of the mind as well as *lusts of the flesh*. There is a *filthiness both of flesh and spirit*. The devils, who have no flesh and blood belonging to them, are vile sinners ; these are called *spiritual wickednesses in high places* ; Eph. vi. 12. or, as it may be translated, wicked spirits in heavenlies ; that is, in the airy regions : So the spirit of man has sins of its own, that it borrows not immediately from the flesh : There is a pride in the mind, arising from learning, and intellectual powers, and accomplishments ; there are vain and excessive desires of human knowledge ; there is a sinful curiosity, prying into secret futurities ; there is a glorying in self, vanity of mind, and self-confidence, instead of trusting in God, and giving him the glory of all : There is, indeed, a secret dislike and aversion to God and holiness, in the soul of every un-*sanctified sinner* ; these are more spiritual iniquities.

I might add also, that there are several of those sins which, in some appearances of them, are numbered among the works of the flesh, because they are often excited, and almost always increased, by the humours and ferments of the body ; which yet, in some other operations and appearances, begin in the spirit, belong chiefly to the soul, and must be called spiritual sins, or lusts of the mind ; such as malice and envy, self-conceit, emulation, hatred of good men, &c. which are doubtless found in the fallen angels, those evil spirits, who have no flesh about them. Now as an un-*sanctified soul* may be sometimes guilty of these when in the body, and when it is dismissed from flesh, we must grant, that it would be filled with all these iniquities, these spiritual lusts, for ever,

though none of the carnal sins, no appetites to fleshly objects, should follow it into the separate state.

But the point which I propose to prove is this, that though there may be several sins that arise chiefly from the mind, yet there are multitudes of disorderly appetites, sinful inclinations and aversions, as well as violent immoderate tendencies towards lawful objects, seated in our animal nature, in our flesh and blood, in this mortal part of our frame and composition, wherein we are a-kin to the beasts that perish; and it is by the senses, by these sensitive motions and ferments of flesh and blood, that the human soul is most frequently led into temptation and sin: And more especially I may venture to say, that the soul of a true christian, which is sanctified by the Spirit of God, and has a new and heavenly temper and bias, and a divine nature given it, owes most of its actual transgressions to the flesh, and the lusts thereof, to which it is united in the present state.

There is one objection that seems necessary to be answered; and that is drawn from the words of our Saviour; Mark vii. 21, 23. *For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, &c. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.* Now some person may say, it is evident, that by the heart he did not mean that inward bowel so called, but the soul itself; because, according to the vulgar philosophy, and common sentiments of the Jews, the soul of man had its chief residence in the heart; and upon this account they attributed to the heart the several affections and inward operations of the soul, whether they were sinful or holy; and in this sense our Saviour may be supposed to attribute to the soul, or spirit in man, all these wickednesses. But it is easy to solve this difficulty two ways.

1. That neither the philosophy of the Jews, nor the common language which our Saviour used, did make any nice distinction in those principles of human actions what share the spirit had in them and what the flesh; but they used the word heart, for all those inward powers of the man whence outward actions proceeded; and this because the springs and motions of the blood and life, as well as the ferments of several passions, were found there: So that our Saviour using the common language of the people, does by no means exclude the inward ferments of the flesh from their share in these sinful actions; but rather includes them in the word heart.

2. If we could suppose the word heart in this place to signify merely the soul or spirit, yet it would by no means exclude the inward ferments of the flesh from being the first springs and occasions of many of these sinful practices; for they do not become sins till the soul has consented to them; nor can they break forth into outward acts without the command, or, at least, the sin-

ful compliance of the soul. Thus all those actions that may justly be called evil and wicked, such as Christ here mentions, proceed from the soul, so far as they are truly and properly sinful; and yet the first secret occasions and incentives of many of them may spring very much from the powers of the flesh.

Now as I have made it to appear in some good measure that the springs and principles of sin lie very much in our fleshly natures, from the frequent expressions of holy scripture, so it may be made yet more evident still, by these following considerations, drawn from reason, observation, and experience.

1. Consider how different are the sins of men, according to their peculiar constitutions of flesh and blood. These may be called the *sins that easily beset us*; Heb. xii. 1. because our temper and constitution is always present within us.

Those that are of a brisk and sanguine make, whose blood flows high and vigorous, how often are they tempted by the gay scenes of life, to pursue vanity, and to indulge forbidden pleasures? Luxury and intemperance are their peculiar vices: they allow after carnal mirth with eager gust, as well as with long forgetfulness of God, and of things spiritual. By this means they indulge a fatal security, and groundless presumption of long life here, or happiness hereafter, being ever animated by lively sensual fancies, appetites, and passions.

On the other hand, those that have melancholy humours mingled with their natural constitution, are inclined to sullen vices, to an unsociable and uncharitable behaviour among men, as well as that they are often tempted under the influence of these prevailing humours of the body, to despair of the mercies of God, and upon this account to abandon all religion. Some have a greediness of desire wrought into the very frame of their natures; and these are inclined to selfish and covetous iniquities, and often are found hard-hearted and uncompassionate to the necessities and cries of the poor. Others are sour and peevish in their native temper, having an excess of sharp juices mingled with their flesh and blood; and these are easily awakened to sudden wrath and resentment, and kindled into a flame of sinful anger upon the first and slightest provocation.

I might instance in several other qualities of the constitution, whereby multitudes of iniquities arise amongst men, and sufficiently discover that the flesh is a most fruitful spring of temptations, and a constant occasion of sin.

2. Consider how many particular sins we may be inclined to, by reason of some sudden distemper of body or long and habitual diseases that attend flesh and blood. When the *sour or acid humours in animal nature rise to an irregular height, or*

when the body is frequently exercised with sharp and tedious pains, even a well-tempered man becomes peevish and fretful; he vexes his own spirit with impatience; he murmurs against the hand of God; and this secret uneasiness, though it dares not appear in visible rage against his Creator, yet it cannot contain itself in silence, but breaks out with too much evidence and guilt, quarrelling with his fellow-creatures round about him: He tires out his best friends with perpetual disquietude; he loses his meek and gentle temper; and the man that was wont to be always pleased and easy, now resents every thing, and scarce any body can please him.

This appears with bright evidence to be occasioned by bodily disorders; for even our natural hunger makes us peevish: When sharp and corrosive juices prey upon the stomach itself, for want of food, how touchy and fretful does our temper grow, till a good meal provides matter for those digestive juices to act upon? then the flesh grows easy, and the good humour returns.—But to pursue the observation concerning diseases.

When the natural spirits are reduced very low by long weakness, how cold and inactive are some good men: When phlegmatic humours prevail in the body, how slothful are some christians in every duty? How backward to all active services of God or man? Even those very persons who were once chearful and zealous, and ready to every good work. After the same manner, when through distemper of body, black and melancholy juices get the ascendant over the more sprightly animal powers, how often do we find persons of a sweet affable behaviour grow sullen and unsociable? Those who were fond of company and conversation, seek dark corners and solitary chambers of retirement; they grow listless to every diversion, and will hardly admit a visitant, or give answers to the common questions of life.

Again, when the powers of nature are broken by continual diseases, the man of courage becomes fearful, and starts aside from duty, at every appearing difficulty: The man of faith gives in to fears and doubts, to perpetual unbeliefs, and suspicious thoughts, with regard to the promises of God, and all the encouragements of the gospel.

And to put this matter beyond all dispute, experience teaches us, that the very same persons who had been fretful, peevish, slothful, sullen, or excessively timorous, under the influences of these several distempers of body; when by the means of medicine they have been restored to health, they have returned again to the chearful practices of those single and social virtues, which so long lay cramped, confined, and buried under the diseases of the flesh. Now if the occasion of these several sorts of sins, both of omission and commission, did not chiefly arise from the flesh, why should the same christian so remarkably find his whole

temper and his conduct altered for the worse by the diseases of his body, and restored again by the recovery of his health?

2. Consider how different are the sins of youth and old age; how contrary are their several temptations. The youth delights in gay company, public vanities, sensual amusements, luxury, and profuseness; he contemns money, and despises his ease, and pursues with labour the gratifications of fancy and wanton appetite; and hereby he neglects all the duties of retirement, and serious thoughtfulness. The old man loves his ease above all things, except his money; he neglects and despises the pleasures of the flesh, and gay diversions; but he daily hoards up his gold for fear of want; and in counting over his treasure he wastes the latter hours of his life, which he should spend in a preparation for death at hand.

The youth fears nothing, and rushes on to guilt headlong; the old man is frightened at every thing, and shrinks back from the most necessary duties.

Whence are all these differences of sin? The natural philosopher will give happy hints toward the solving this question with ease and truth: He knows that one is occasioned by the florid blood, and juices, and active powers of young human nature; these hurry the soul on to pursue every fleshly delight. The other is owing to the languid and gross stagnant humours that mingle with the blood of old age: These render him dull and inactive; and his perpetual fears of want, and poverty, and of every other evil, arise partly from the poor low state of those feeble spirits that attend that last and expiring period of life. The unholy soul is too easily influenced by both these extremes in the different seasons of its dwelling in this mortal and sinful flesh; and the soul that is sanctified finds it hard work to resist.

4. Let us consider yet again, how great a part of the sins of men arise from the presence of tempting sensible objects, and these are conveyed to the mind by the sensitive powers of the flesh. What influence could the whole world of enticing objects have on the spirit, if the notices of them were not brought to the spirit by the senses? The presence of alluring temptations strikes strongly on the outward organs of sense, awakens the carnal appetite, and with a powerful, an unhappy, and an almost constraining force, persuades the soul to guilty practices and enjoyments. At other times it causes a sinful neglect of proper duties to God or man; or, at least, it calls in vain thoughts to mingle with our services, both civil and religious; and thus gives them a sensual taint, and pollutes and spoils them.

Particular circumstances of time and place, where sensual temptations attend us, become unhappy occasions of defiling the soul. And where is the time, or where the place, in which such

objects or occasions are not to be found? The day-light opens before us the scenes of a vain world, crowded with ten thousand allurements to sin; nor can the shadows of the night conceal or banish those temptations that attack us at other avenues besides the eye. A wanton song, an immodest touch, the scent of dainty meats, or the remembered relish of delicious wines, are sufficient to provoke the fleshly appetites, and to inflame the soul to the pursuit of iniquity. Thus every sense has a hand in the conveyance of sin to the spirit.

Not the board, nor the bed, nor the shop, nor the exchange; no not the closet nor the temples of worship, are secure from temptations that assault the soul, by means of this wretched flesh. We are in danger when in the midst of company; nor are we safe when solitary and alone. How often have eyes and ears been the unhappy torches to kindle either unlawful love, or malice and revenge, according as a man hath been casually led with-in sight or hearing of the person that has allured him to pleasure, or put him to pain? Pictures and stories have many a time become fatal instruments of the same mischief. When we sit at a well-spread table, does not our palate often tempt us to improper food, and to riot upon a beloved dish? We venture to taste of the luscious compound, even though we suspect, or are almost certain, it has sickness or disease lurking in it; and sometimes we indulge the freedom of appetite in the most wholesome provisions to a vicious excess and surfeit. How many a wretch is enticed to become a glutton, or a drunkard, or to rush on to the pursuit of adultery and polluted pleasure, by passing through some inauspicious occurrences of life, and having the soul united to the sinful flesh? The wanton eye, and the greedy palate are tempting engines, that draw the mind away to forbidden objects.

It is upon this account that our blessed Lord gives advice in his excellent sermon: *If thy right-eye offend thee, pluck it out; or, if thy right-hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast them both away from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell; Mat. v. 29, 30.* And though our Lord may be supposed here to speak metaphorically, and to bid us part with those beloved sins that are dear to us as an hand or an eye, yet he designs to teach us that the eye, and the hand and fleshly powers, may become wretched occasions of sin to us; and if there were no other way to avoid the danger, it is better to bear the pain of parting with those mischievous and offensive members, than yield to their temptations, and rush on to guilt and eternal misery.

I might here also take notice, that the very presence of all sorts of corporeal objects, even the most necessary and the most innocent, may become occasions of sin, at special seasons; as when we are engaged in any part of divine worship, the common, and

vious appearances round about us, the walls, the doors, the windows, the furniture of the place, or the persons present, impress our senses, and often turn away the thoughts from the sacred work. We forget God to pursue the creature, even in his own awful presence, and in the midst of our solemn devotions. A curious ear shall wrap up the soul in the melody of the song, and it has lost the divine sense and meaning. A vain and wandering eye roves among the faces, the postures, and the dress of our fellow-worshippers, and calls the mind away from prayer and devout attention. Oh how often does the criminal indulgence of these sensitive powers carry the soul afar off from God and religion! How does it break off many a holy meditation in a moment! What long intervals does it make in our addresses to our Creator, and interline our prayers with folly and sin! So when we are employed in any business of the civil life, that is our proper present duty, our senses glance at some other object, and draw the soul away to a quite different work, which is sinful at that season; though perhaps it might be the duty of the next hour, or the proper business of the morrow. And where is the man that has not reason to complain often of this sort of temptations every day, while his spirit dwells in this house of flesh?

5. Consider further, that most of the temptations that we meet with, even when the outward objects are absent, arise from the images of them remaining in the brain; which is, as it were, a shop, or storehouse, of the memory and the fancy. The impressions which those objects made on the outward senses, when they were present, are conveyed to the brain, and laid up there, ready to appear at the first call of the mind, when these objects are withdrawn. But they oftentimes also start out unbidden, and the whole scene of wickedness is spread all over the imagination, before the soul is aware; and sometimes when the soul expressly bids it too: Then the corrupt appetites are kindled, and sinful passions awake again. Thus the temptations return, and solicit the spirit to sin, even when the objects are afar off, and out of reach: For fancy and memory are but the pictures of sense; it is sight and hearing at second hand. Now if the soul seeks and longs for these tempting visions to appear, or if it indulges these pure exercises of the imagination; if it delights itself in these sensual ideas when they happen to arise, and please itself with the painted shapes of iniquity, then it too frequently repeats the crime, and renews its own guilt and defilement.

Such is the composition of our natures, that the images on the brain, the traces and footsteps of past sensations, and the springs of fancy and passion are linked together by unknown and unperceived ties: so that when one is touched and awakened, a whole train of images appears at once, and awakens all those desires, and those guilty passions, which were linked and con-

original law of creation, and becomes a part of the man, as much as the breath, which is borrowed from the air, or the blood, which is made out of the food of the mother.

2. Thence it follows, that the soul is not to be judged of, or considered, as a single separate being, but as in union with flesh and blood, as making up a compound creature of the human species.

3. Since in the very first moment of its being, by the old and general rules or laws of creation and providence, it belongs to a human body, derived from Adam, it is esteemed as propagated by the parents, and it becomes hereby a son or a daughter of fallen man, and is naturally, by the law of creation, involved in the same circumstance of ruin, has no claim to preserving or securing grace, above the mere and untaught faculties of its intelligent nature. Then,

4. Since this body has many sinful ferments and irregular appetites in it, conveyed down from the original sinner, the new-made spirit being created and joined to the flesh, is perpetually impressed and allured by these motions, passions, and appetites of the flesh, and willingly complies with these that are criminal as well as those that are innocent; and thus the young creature contracts actual and personal guilt, perhaps, as soon as it is capable of exerting any actions with understanding; and such as are properly human, and capable of moral differences.

Thus the soul is defiled by communion with the flesh; and, according to the original law of creation, which is called the covenant of God with Adam, it partakes of a sinful nature from degenerate parents, and by degrees becomes an actual sinner.—But I proceed no further on this head, having delivered my sentiments in another place more at large, in the deep and difficult controversy of original sin; which may be best accounted for in this manner, as far as my judgment reaches. What I have said here is sufficient to shew that, in the present state of human nature, the flesh is the chief cause and occasion of sin to the soul.

Meditation I.—And are we tempted to sin so often by our fleshly powers? Then how little should we *reckon ourselves debtors to the flesh*? How much mischief has it already done us? And how much still have we reason to fear from its influences, as we continue to dwell in it?

Little do ye think, O sinners; little do ye think what an enemy you caress, while you pamper the flesh, and *make provision to fulfil the lusts of it*; it is a foe that sits close to you, and is a partner of your very natures; and thus it has a thousand opportunities to do you mischief, when other adversaries are afar off: It has done you already more injury than the devil and the world joined together; for in all the pernicious and secret snares

is proceed from the ferments of our blood too? Have you never observed the resemblance of pride working in a peacock or a well bred horse; how those brutal beings exult and glory, the one in his beauty, the other in his strength and his peculiar endowments? This proud ferment heaves and swells their bodily natures: and why may not some of our pride be supposed to begin there too?

I confess these animals have no rational mind in them, no thinking spirit, no will, either to resist or consent to these motions of the flesh or blood; so that they are under no moral law: these actions of theirs are agreeable to their original nature, and are under a divine appointment rather than a prohibition; therefore they are not capable of sin and guilt. But man, who hath these same animal motions and ferments of the flesh, and the same appetites, and springs of passion, had nothing vicious in his original frame and constitution, but derived all that is faulty from his first parents, who were wilful sinners, and who spoiled their whole nature; and upon this account he will hardly be found innocent.

But his guilt appears much more evident, when we consider, that man has also an intelligent mind, a reasonable soul, capable, in some measure, of resisting these irregular tendencies of the flesh; therefore he becomes guilty in the sight of God, by wilful consent to them, and indulgence of them, contrary to the forbidding law of his Creator. Now this proposed contest between flesh and spirit is ordained by God our Maker in infinite wisdom, to be a proper state of trial for us, in order to future rewards and punishments.

7. I might add, in the last place, another argument to prove that our flesh is the chief occasion of sin to the soul, from this consideration; that the soul at first is tainted, corrupted, or defiled, with original sin, by its union to sinful flesh. You will immediately enquire, how is this possible, since the soul is a pure spiritual being, created immediately by God himself, and therefore innocent and holy; and since it cannot touch, nor be touched, by any thing corporeal, such as flesh and blood? In what manner can the soul, though united to the body, receive any such sinful pollution, or sinful impression, from the body?—Take this account of it in short, in these few propositions.

1. Though the spirit of man be incorporeal, and is created by God without depraved or sinful qualities in it, yet it never exists, or comes into being, but as a part of human nature; and that not as a piece of new workmanship, but as a part of mankind propagated from parents by the continued power of God's creating word; "Be fruitful and multiply." When the infant-body of man is so far formed as to become fit for union with a rational soul, the soul comes into existence in union with the body, by the

walk after it in the sinful appetites and inclinations which is quite contrary to the character of the children described by the apostle; Rom. viii. 1. *Those who are in Christ Jesus, to whom there is no condemnation, walk but after the spirit.*

II. Is the body such a foul and wretched mansion? Then what a heaven of purity and pleasure is reserved for the children of God at their death, and is contained in the words of the apostle, *absent from the body*; 2 Cor. v. 6. A child of Adam has received a new nature by the power of the Holy Spirit, and is become a son of God, it is thenceforward as it were, a prisoner in a mansion of flesh and blood: It is in a state of war, yet it cannot change these old sensual appetites, and once these long habits of irregular desire. It labours, it maintains a vigorous warfare against the power of sensible enticing objects, which are too often carried away into sinful compliances. *man that I am, saith the apostle, what an unwholesome mansion of sin, is there in my members, that carries me captive to the law of sin that is in my flesh! O wretched man! and who shall deliver me? O blessing that shall break the chain and set the prisoner free, and glorious moment of release from this bondage, my spirit early with its poisonous influence, enticing me away perpetually by its dangerous attractions, sensible, has kept me long at a painful distance.*

The Improvement.—The former part of the subject proposed this sentiment, viz. That the principal occasions of sin, lie chiefly in our bodily nature and blood: And as I have made this to appear from places of scripture, so I have proved it from reason; viz. how great an influence the different constitutions of mankind, their casual distempers, and their passions have upon the soul, to incline it to the practice of sin, and all these are plainly derived from flesh and blood. If we have considered further, what sinful actions are the consequence of the presence of tempting objects impressing the senses, and the images of them that are treasured up in the memory, become the seeds of impure imagination and sinful desires; of our sins also are nearly imitated by the passions, whose blood is their life and soul; and even conveyed to us by the flesh.

Hence we may learn to judge aright of the degrees of difficulty in the christian life, relating to the different constitutions, and find an answer to some practical questions of importance.

Quest. I. Whether the first start or motion of our nature towards unlawful objects, is properly sinful, and brings guilt on the soul? *Ans.* The mere ferments of the blood and spirits, the appetites and motions, that belong purely and only to the flesh, and spring entirely from it, are not properly sins; and the flesh, considered in itself, is but mere matter: Now matter, whether it were united to a rational mind or no, could be thus moved and acted by natural springs and impressions, and is under no moral law; and where no law is, there is no transgression. The brutal or animal nature, abstracted from the soul, is not capable of knowledge or will, consent or dissent; but the first moment that the soul indulges or consents to any of these irregular ferments, these springs of earthly passion in the blood, and yields to these inordinate appetites of the flesh, it commits sin; as soon as it complies with any of these desires, that are contrary to its duty, the soul becomes guilty in the sight of God; for the proper notion of sin is the tendency of an intelligent being to things disagreeable to the divine law; the practice of what is forbidden, or the neglect of what is commanded.

If the eye beholds food, though the man be assured there is deadly poison in it, yet the hungry stomach will have a natural appetite toward it, and this is not sinful; but if the soul consents, when the man eats it, or desires to eat it, he breaks the sixth command, which forbids all murder. Our Saviour has sufficiently decided this part of the controversy in his sermon on the mount, that the soul's very desire and consent to sin is sinful; Mat. v. 27. And the fuller and stronger the consent of the will is, and the further it goes on to encourage or impel the body to the forbidden action, so much greater is the sin.

When our blessed Saviour spake these words, *he that looketh upon a woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery ready in his heart*; Mat. v. 28. it cannot be supposed that he intended to give a law that should make the inward motions or ferments of mere animal nature sinful; for these were not originally naturally subject to the immediate command of the soul in the state of innocency, so as to be raised or prevented absolutely and immediately by the will, as the motion of the hand or foot is. But his design is to shew, that the soul itself inwardly consenting to these animal ferments and motions, or encouraging or indulging them but one moment, is really sinful in the sight of God, even though the man did never proceed to the outward actual commission of those sins in the flesh: And hereby he contradicted the law of God from those narrow and corrupt explications which the scribes, and doctors, and interpreters of those laws put upon it, who would allow nothing to be sinful but the outward act.

This will appear with fuller evidence, if we consider that there might be in the flesh of innocent Adam, some natural appetites towards objects that might be forbidden by the express and positive law of God ; for the flesh, merely considered in itself, has a natural propensity to things that please and gratify it, without any regard to the unseen circumstances or moral relations of things ; without any respect to a law that permits or prohibits them. Thus Adam, or his partner, might feel an innocent inclination in their animal natures, towards any fruit in the garden *that was pleasant to the eyes, and good for food*, even to that of *the tree of knowledge* : And this indeed was necessary, in order to make a proper state of trial : and it was fit and becoming divine wisdom, to appoint such a tree to be the test of their obedience. Now while they continued innocent, the soul resisted this inclination of the flesh, under a sense that the fruit was forbidden ; but the first moment that they indulged the flesh in this irregular appetite, or consented to it, they made themselves transgressors ; then their nature was corrupted ; thus they did eat the unlawful food, and became the parents of a sinful race.

The chief differences therefore in this matter, betwixt innocent and fallen man, are these :

1. That it is probable his flesh might have no natural inclination to objects apparently hurtful in themselves, but to such only as might be made unlawful by some attending circumstances, or by an express and positive law.—2. These inclinations also, perhaps, were but few and feeble, in comparison of the multitudes of violent appetites, and irregular desires, that are found in our degenerate natures, to all sorts of unlawful objects.—And 3. That his soul had power in itself, by due consideration, to resist and subdue these appetites of the flesh, though not absolutely to prevent them ; whereas in our present corrupt state we are soon transported and hurried away into a sinful compliance with them : The spirit is ready to yield as soon as it feels the temptations of the body ; so that there are scarce any such inordinate ferments or propensities arising or stirring in our flesh and blood, but the soul more or less consents to them in some degree.

Thus, though the first motions towards sin that are in our members, are not in themselves properly sinful, nor is the sense or perception of the mind sinful neither, for this is natural and necessary, according to the composition of human nature, if the mind were never so holy : Yet these motions seldom arise in our members, especially in an unregenerate state, but the soul is defiled, and becomes guilty ; and that is by some consent of will, some degree of indulgence to them, or compliance with them. Well then may we cry out with the Psalmist, Ps. xix. 12. *Who can understand his errors ? Cleanse us, O Lord, from the*

multitudes of our transgressions, and the millions of our iniquities: *Cleanse us from secret offences, and keep us free from presumptuous sins.*

Quest. II. Whether all impure imaginations and blasphemous thoughts are properly sinful; and render us guilty before God? *Ans.* It is possible that some peculiar qualities of the constitution, some distempered humours of the body or some sort of improper food, may excite impure images on the brain; and this is often done also by the casual and unavoidable occurrences of human life. An indecent picture, an immodest or profane song, or the vile, the impious, or uncleanly language of the wicked world, may spread a dangerous scene over the fancy. The devil also is a watchful and a busy adversary, and we know not what secret power he has to draw evil pictures on the brain, to write blasphemy there, or to awaken some old traces of immorality. The powers and devices of wicked spirits are a great and unsearchable secret to us, who dwell in the flesh. He may buzz into the ear some impious syllables, or lewd and profane sounds, especially when his chain is a little lengthened, and he has a divine permission to approach human nature.

But all these things that I have here described may be impressed on the animal powers of an innocent person: The soul may have a very painful perception of all this without actual sin, supposing still, that it strives and *wrestles* both *against its own flesh and blood*, and *against those principalities and powers of darkness*: supposing that it fights, watches, and prays for divine aid, and uses all the holy armour and the weapons of sacred appointment, to fence against these assaults of fleshly and spiritual enemies, these sore invasions of its holiness and peace.

I confess it is hard in this fallen and imperfect state, to be thus attacked on any side, without some degree of compliance in an unguarded moment; and especially if we are beset on all sides, and assaulted by the flesh, the world, and the devil at once. It is seldom or never that the best of men can pass through such a scene of conflict and sharp trial, without something of defilement. Our Saviour himself indeed was assaulted by Satan, and by the world; but *the prince of darkness found nothing within him to promote or assist his temptations*; John xiv. 30. But he finds so much tinder in our nature, ready to catch fire, and blaze, at every spark of iniquity, that it is scarce possible we should pass through such dangerous hours of contest, and keep our spirits pure and unpolluted.

Yet still it must be determined, that where there is perpetual resistance, and no manner of indulgence of these vicious scenes, where there is no consent of the will to them, nor a neglect of any proper and appointed means to oppose and suppress them, here is no sin.

Let this be a word of consolation and sacred encouragement to those poor melancholy christians who are sorely buffeted by *Satan*, and his hellish suggestions, or are vexed with the wild and unruly insults of fancy, under some distemper of the flesh. Let them enquire whether these evil thoughts be not their constant burthen; whether it is not their daily and hourly toil of spirit, to suppress and cast them out; whether they do not make this the matter of their holy complaint and mourning before God night and day; whether they are not wrestling hard with these adversaries of their peace, and pleading hard at the mercy-seat, for grace to resist and subdue them: Then let them take the same encouragement that St. Paul does, who is an excellent example both of such sufferings, and of such hope and consolation. 2 Cor. xii. 7—10. He had *a thorn in the flesh*, he had *an angel of satan sent to buffet him*, he besought the Lord thrice, that is, often and earnestly, for deliverance: And though God did not answer him immediately, by a full release from the temptation, yet he afforded him such a sufficiency of grace, that he could glory in hope of final victory. Nor did he call the buffetings of *Satan* nor *the thorn in the flesh*, his own sins; but his infirmities, which he durst even glory in, from his great assurance of the grace of Christ to assist him in the combat, verse 9.

I have written this to prevent the humble holy soul, that lies under these exercises, from charging itself with more guilt than the law or justice of God charges it with: Let such a one also take comfort from those words of the apostle, as *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh*, in the course of their lives; Rom. viii. 1. so there is no guilt in such instances of sinful imagination, where there is no indulgence.

Yet here it is necessary to take notice, that some persons have heretofore given so criminal indulgence to their sensual lusts, or have been so freely engaged in profane or immoral conversation in their younger years, that they have tainted their fancy with many foul and impious representations, inscribed it with vicious words and images, and lodged a fatal treasure of iniquity there. They have often recalled these scenes with so much delight, that when divine grace has been pleased to awaken them to a sense of their folly, and give a pious turn to their souls, they have been many years perplexed with the vile workings of imagination: These scenes of iniquity have returned unbidden, and risen up incessantly, in spite of all their sacred labour to abolish them: These have filled their spirits with sorrow and perpetual anguish; and there is just reason they should deeply humble themselves before God on this account. For though it is possible such wicked thoughts may be suggested to holy souls, who have kept themselves in their youth from this sort of defilement; yet

ten persons themselves have been so far accessory to their own guilt and misery, they ought to take fresh occasion from their present temptations, to renew and maintain repentance for their old sins.

Besides the habit or customary return of such corrupt imaginations, that these unhappy sinners have entailed upon themselves, they have also given hereby such a fatal handle to the temptations of the devil, and furnished such a pleasing habitation for unclean spirits, that lewd and blasphemous thoughts have been continually imposed upon them with ease, by the sport and malice of the tempter; these have given them many grievous days and sleepless nights, constant fatigue and combat, and sorrow of heart; nor could they ever free these inward recesses of the brain, these secret chambers of the fancy, from the impure pictures which they themselves have hung up there, till the whole mortal tabernacle has been abolished. Those wicked images have been graven so deep, and lasted so long, that all their pious labours, and tears have never been able to blot them out, till the flesh itself has been destroyed in death.

Betimes then, O ye young sinners, awake betimes to serious duty, and *flee every youthful lust*; avoid the persons and the places that would tempt you to sensual or profane practices; turn your eyes away from the very appearances of guilt, and from all filling representations; lest your ears be deaf to all the language of profaneness or immodesty, let you suffer a fatal inroad to be made upon the avenues of the fancy, and admit such a guilty treasure of mischief and iniquity there, that may lay a foundation for toil and anguish, and much bitterness of soul, in the following and the better years of life.

Quest. III. Whether we may be guilty of sin in our dreams, hours of delirium, under a fever or in seasons of distraction and madness? *Ans.* I join all these three together, because they all agree in this, that the representations made on the brain are so strong and predominant in all of them, that imagination is almost equal to sense; it imitates sight and hearing, and the appearances and actions of life so nearly, that the soul cannot distinguish them; and sometimes the wild operations of the brain overpower even the present impressions made upon the senses, and fancy prevails above the ear or the eye. Dreaming is but sleeping distraction, as the distraction of a delirious hour is but a waking dream.

Now where the images of fancy are so prevalent, the soul even of a holy man may be so far overpowered, as that reason is quite driven out of its seat; the understanding is dazzled and deceived by the glaring flashes of imagination; the notions of conscience, the rules of duty, and the sacred motives of religion, are, as it were, confounded and overwhelmed, and lost for a season, under

the constant strong impressions of the animal spirits revelling in the recesses of the brain : And where the disorder rises to such a degree as this, the springs of carnal appetite and passion are soon touched and awakened ; and being of a kindred nature, are suddenly inflamed ; so that a man of piety may be hurried to consent to sinful practices, under any of those waking or sleeping distractions. In such a case the guilt seems to be lessened so far as the reason is drowned in confusion and darkness, and the thought and conscience overpowered and cheated with false impressions. Perhaps, at the end of this disorder, when the man awakes into day-light and reason again, he knows nothing of what has passed ; or if he recollects the folly, he blushes and mourns over the infirmity of his nature, and while he asks forgiveness of God, he can scarce forgive himself, that he should yield the least consent to criminal inclination.

Where the confusion of thought does not arise to such an overwhelming degree, but there are some debates of reason, some notions of duty, some workings of conscience, and yet the soul complies at last, there the guilt is increased, and rises higher in proportion to the exercise of the intellectual faculties. But this crime can never become near to the guilt of the same actions, done in a waking hour, or in a season of health, and soundness of mind and memory. I have known a man of serious piety take the name of God in vain, and curse under the power of distraction, which he would have abhorred with all his soul if he had been in his senses, and not absolutely overpowered by the disordered humours of the flesh.

Yet take this awful caution by the way : That where these disorders or diseases of the brain, sleeping or waking, are caused by our own folly or wickedness, by luxury, by unmortified lusts, or by any immoral practices, the case seems to be far worse, and perhaps the guilt of every irregular action is proportionably enhanced and aggravated thereby ; as in the wild freaks of a drunkard, who has indulged his vicious appetite, till it has overcome all his better faculties ; for there reason itself, and the common judgment of mankind, determine the crimes then committed against the society to be justly punishable : He that kills a man in his drunken fit must be put to death when he is grown sober. And how far God will impute every thing that is criminal, and whether he will not deal with such a one in rigour, according to the full guilt of the crime, can be determined only by God himself. He sees all the secret motions of the flesh and spirit ; he weighs every circumstance in a true balance ; he knows perfectly all the rules of strict and impartial justice ; and will judge the world with divine equity and wisdom.

Let us watch and pray then, lest we enter into temptation, in the healthful and waking hours of life : Let us carefully shun all

those practices that have any tendency to discompose the brain, or introduce disease or disorder into that part of our animal powers ; lest if we bring these inconveniences upon ourselves by our own guilt or negligence, we expose ourselves to more just censure and punishment, for the unhappy effects and attendants of such a disordered imagination.

And there is another reason too why we should take care at all times to employ our thoughts and our time aright ; and that is, that we may introduce a better habit into animal nature, and provide better against those seasons wherein either the daily course of nature, or the afflictive providence of God, may seem to give the powers of the flesh, an excessive or superior influence over the faculties of the mind. Let us never indulge the corrupt appetites, the unlawful desires, or the sinful passions that work within us : Let us be watchful against every rising enemy, and subdue the vicious propensities of nature, by holy diligence in our proper duty, and by earnest addresses to the throne of grace : Let us treasure up in our imagination the sacred histories of the bible, and fill our memory with the things of religion ; that the ideas of better things than riches, honours and pleasures, may be ever ready to start up and appear to the soul, when it is at leisure from other necessary business. This might happily furnish out safer sweeter scenes to entertain fancy and at midnight-hours, or when the brain labours under worse disorders by reason of some bodily distemper. The wise man tells us, *that a dream cometh through the multitude of business* ; Eccl. v. 3. And by the multitude of thoughts that pass through the mind, and are entertained with delight, in the vigorous and wakeful parts of life, the animal powers of fancy and passion will generally be in some measure influenced and regulated. The best way then to cure covetous, or ambitious, or luxurious dreams, is to fight against the workings of these iniquities when we are awake ; for a very pure fountain, even under some casual disturbance, will not send forth its streams so much defiled, and so muddy, as where the spring is filthy or corrupt, and under some disturbance too.

Quest. IV. Whether all persons are equally defiled with original sin ? *Ans.* We must hear distinguish between the guilt of sin belonging to the person, and the power of sin that is in the nature. Now whatsoever guilt is derived to any person from Adam, by communion with him in his first apostacy, the same is derived to all the posterity ; nor is this the thing that is doubted or enquired here. But as to the power of sin in the nature, it is evident that there are not the same degrees of sinful propensity, vicious appetite and passion, in the bodies of all, even from their very birth and infancy. *The constitution of animal or fleshly nature in some, is much more sullen or greedy, more wanton or*

peevish, more slothful, or proud and haughty, than it is in others, according to the various mixture of the blood and humours, and the different ferments that arise thence, whereby the soul is early impressed and governed, and habituated to particular vices betimes.

Though we are all *conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity*; Ps. li. 5. yet there are some who are emphatically wicked in their very constitutions, who are more remarkably estranged to all that is good from the womb, *and go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies*; Ps. lviii. 3. Whereby the psalmist may seem to intimate that some persons have wickedness more eminently running through their families; they are born and bred utter strangers to God, honesty, and goodness; and they have a sort of craft and knavishness mingled with their temper, that they practise lying as soon as they can speak.

It is evident enough to the observation of every man, that some persons are of a more temperate, more chaste, more modest, more friendly and kind disposition, even in animal nature: they are more plain-hearted, and of a more honest and sincere make from their very infancy; they have more of the dove and of the lamb in them, than of the fox, the bear, or the lion; and the soul is not led astray to the practice of the contrary vices, either so far, or so early, as those who, perhaps, from their immediate parents, have received flesh and blood more tainted with these iniquities. And if this be called a different degree of original sin, I will not stand now to contest the word, nor can I utterly deny the matter.

But still it is abundantly evident also concerning every one of us, who are sons or daughters of Adam, how sinful or how holy soever our immediate parents were, that we bring vicious propensities enough with our flesh and blood into this world, that if we encourage and indulge them, and *walk after the flesh*, we shall soon be found sufficiently wicked here, and grow meet for a just condemnation hereafter; and this will be the case of the best constitution, unless a mighty change pass upon nature, by the power of renewing and sanctifying grace. *All that is born of the flesh is flesh*, or sinful; and *except a man be born of water and the spirit*, that is, regenerated by the Spirit of God, which is typified by baptismal water, *he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*; John iii. 3, 5, 6.

Quest. V. Whether the same sin always carries equal guilt with it in different persons, who have the same advantage or the same degrees of knowledge? *Answ.* It seems to be supposed in the question, that different means or different measures of knowledge make the sinner more or less guilty in the sight of God; and indeed our Saviour himself has determined that point beyond all dispute; Mat. xi. 21, 22. Chorazin and Bethsaida having

seen the miracles of Christ and heard his doctrine, were much more culpable than Tyre and Sidon, whose great ignorance would render their case *more tolerable in the day of judgment*.

But to answer this question, let it be considered that there are other things besides knowledge that make sins more or less venial. The same crime committed under a small and single temptation, is much more culpable than when the temptations are many and strong, whether they be within us or without us. Now if a person of a sharp and fretful constitution, or whose natural juices of the flesh are soured by long sickness and pain, would fall into frequent passions of sinful anger, notwithstanding all his labour and watchfulness against it, he is not quite so criminal in the sight of God as another, who has no such peevish and fretful springs of passion in his nature, neither by original constitution, nor by any accidental distemper. The man that perpetually carries about with him the vigorous and active seeds of any sinful appetite or affection, may take ten times more pains in mortification than another does who is of a happier temperance, and yet may fall more frequently into his own peculiar iniquities, and be overcome by *the sin that easily besets him*: Nor is his guilt so great as it is in those who are blessed with a better animal nature, but either take no care to guard against those sins, or perhaps excite nature to practise the same iniquities, beyond its own inbred appetite. And for this reason it is evident, that a person, who in different periods of life, commits the same sins, may deserve much more blame at one time than another; so wanton practices are more hateful and criminal in old age, and slothfulness and inactivity in duty is a greater fault in the days of youth; because in those different seasons of human life, there is less temptation to those sins arising from the flesh.

So fear, and sudden anger, and sorrow, wheresoever they are found excessive in persons of enfeebled constitutions, labouring under sharp pains, or oppressed by nervous maladies, and weak natural spirits, have not quite so much guilt in them as those sins would have in the same persons, when they were in a state of vigour and health; for then they had less uneasiness within to contend with the provocations and temptations from without; and besides they were much more capable of bridling the inferior powers, of countermanding the animal motions and evil fermentations: Then they could more easily maintain a wise self-government, they could range their thoughts in better array to resist these sudden attacks of the flesh.

I might add further also, that under these sort of infirmities, they are more exposed to sudden surprizes; the hurry of the natural spirits shakes the whole network of the nerves in a moment; they throw all the blood into the face at once: or, by a

contrary operation, spread an universal chill and tremor over the body, and clothe the countenance in paleness and the image of death. They flash like gunpowder, they force the sweat through every pore, and convey a ferment of passion through the whole nature at once, so that the soul is sometimes seized into a sudden consent to the sinful motions of the body before it is aware, which dangers are much more easily prevented in a calm and healthful state of life. But here let me insert a cautionary remark or two, to guard against the abuse of this doctrine, which is designed for the relief of holy, humble, and dejected souls :

1. Many who return frequently to the commission of the same sin, excuse their own slothful and sottish negligence by throwing the blame on their constitution ; let them take heed, lest it be found that it is their own wilful indulgence of sinful appetite and temptation, and not constitution, hath made the habit of sin so strong within them, and hath formed their very temper into such vice and iniquity, which was by no means born with them in any uncommon degree, but is owing to their own wicked practice : God sees through such vile hypocrisy and disguise as this, and will punish the sinner with a double stroke of vengeance, one for his guilty sensuality, and the other for his hateful dissimulation. If I would give an instance of this pretence, I think it is found no where more frequently than among the drunkards, the passionate, and the unclean ; and such persons also discover the vanity of their pretences, in that they always excuse their sin, and seldom or never mourn under them.

2. If your iniquity that frequently besets you, arise from any bodily disorder, which you have brought on yourself by your own sins, dare not murmur, and charge the providence of God with this your disease or impotence, but maintain a humbling sense of your own guilt, which, perhaps, God hath thus chastised in righteousness : And let younger sinners avoid all those guilty practices that may turn their very nature and better constitution into vice and raging appetite, or into such diseases as may expose them to the violent and unruly insults of flesh and blood. Let them take heed of indulging vehement desires or aversions, even to common, indifferent, or lawful objects, lest affection get the ascendant, and subject the flesh ; and, by that means, the soul also, to a slavish habit of appetite and passion.

3. Let not those persons, whose happier constitution, or uninterrupted health, gives them some advantages in this respect, throw off their daily watchfulness, or neglect prayer, lest a vain self-confidence betray them into foul iniquities : And let them remember too, that their guilt will be the greater. Nor should those whose appetites and passions are become more unruly, either by the original temperature of their flesh and blood, or by

particular distempers, indulge themselves more easily in a sinful compliance, under pretence that their guilt is less; unless they are content to dwell for ever in fire and sorrow, upon this condition; that some of the sorrows of hell be sharper than theirs, and some part of the flame be hotter and fiercer. O rather think that you are called by the providence of God to a stricter watch, to more frequent and fervent prayer, and to a more laborious resistance of the flesh; and the grace of Christ is sufficient to assist the weakest warrior, and make him an overcomer even in the hardest conflict. But this naturally leads me on to the next question.

Quest. VI. Whether there be not a very unequal distribution of providence in these various constitutions of mankind? And how can this be reconciled to strict justice, to make the difficulties of the state of trial so much harder in one man than it is in another, by exposing him to much stronger temptations?

Answer. This difficulty, which dwells on the lips of profane sinners, is easily solved by attending to a few such propositions as these:

1. This must be laid down as an eternal and an unmoveable truth, that the great God has all possible perfections belonging to his nature, and his whole conduct in providence is ever regulated by those perfections; so that he can no more be unjust, than he can be impotent or ignorant; nor can any part of his conduct be unrighteous, any more than it can be weak or unskilful.

2. It is evident to the universal observation of heathens as well as christians, that mankind is a fallen and degenerate rank of beings, who have lost their primitive innocence and happiness; and are running on to deeper guilt and misery, with head-long and thoughtless haste: Though it is only the scripture that informs us how this came to pass, which philosophers, by the light of nature, could never find out.

3. If the whole race of creatures, which were so degenerate, had been put under the most difficult tests of obedience, in a state of trial appointed in order to their recovery from ruin, not one of them had any just reason to complain, or murmur against their sovereign Ruler in the methods of his wisdom working toward their recovery.

4. If some of these fallen and degenerate beings, have therefore some easier circumstances of trial appointed to them, such ought to be very thankful indeed, but others ought by no means to quarrel with their Maker, or treat their fellow-creatures with envy. *Is thine eye evil because he is good; Mat. xx. 15.*

5. Perhaps many of those who have less inward temptations in the flesh, are, in the course of providence, exposed to

greater outward temptations in the world ; and in this case, the state of trial for both of them may be equally difficult ; the one is balanced with the other.

6. How great soever the difficulties appear which any soul is exposed to by the unhappy circumstances of flesh and blood, to which it is united, there is sufficient relief provided in the covenant of grace ; there is sufficient atonement and pardon in the blood of Christ to remove the deepest guilt, and sufficient aids of the blessed Spirit promised in the gospel, to mortify the most violent appetites, and perverse affections of the flesh ; and there are many souls now in heaven, who wrestled hard with as vile constitutions of body here on earth as you are vexed with, but have been made conquerors by the power of this gospel.

7. Consider also, that the harder the fight is, the brighter shall be the crown, and the most laborious combat shall be attended with the fairest prize. Maintain your conflict with flesh and blood, though the strife may be never so sharp and painful ; hold out till you are called up to the world of spirits, and you shall find *that your labour was not in vain.*

Have a care then, O man, of contending with God thy Maker ; nor let the earthen vessel say to the potter, *why hast thou formed me thus ?* If thou givest a loose to thy corruptions because they are strong, thou practisest the same folly as if the keeper should give a loose to a lion, because it is a very wild and large one, and let him run at random because he is full of rage. What dost thou think the event will be, O sinner ? When thy native appetites are still grown stronger by indulgence, and become utterly ungovernable, and thou art plunged into unspeakable guilt, and endless misery, what a cutting reflection it will be to thy conscience, that, instead of watching, praying, and striving against thine inbred sins, thou wert ever quarrelling at the great God thy Maker, that he did not form thy nature just according to thy directions : Especially when thou shalt see others advanced to high seats in glory, and reaping the joys of the christian conquest, who had as many adversaries to wrestle with in the days of their flesh, and each of them as violent and as mighty as thine.

Quest. VII. If the springs of sin lie so much in the flesh, are not some methods of reforming the flesh proper to be practised, in order to facilitate the work of mortification, to cure our sinful distempers, to prevent actual transgression, and break the habits of sin ? *Ans.* Since the seeds and occasions of sin lie so much in the flesh and blood, doubtless it is our duty to take some care that these seeds of iniquity be suppressed and killed, as far as possible, by all proper methods ; such as do not necessarily interfere with other commands of God, or plain duties of christi-

tiarity. But in all matters of this nature, persons are in danger of running into extremes.

The papists require a certain abstinence from meats, and *forbid to marry*, without a due attendance to the circumstances of times, places, and persons; whereby superstition is supported and sinful appetites are often irritated, instead of suppressing them. At other times they wear sackcloth on their flesh, they scourge and whip themselves, they lay their bodies under much painful discipline, and sometimes too under bloody correction, in order to mortify sin. But it was never required of God, that we should break the sixth command in order to keep the seventh; for the advice of Christ about parting with a *right-hand* or a *right-eye*; Mat. v. 29. is to be taken metaphorically for the mortification of darling sins, or at least, in a comparative sense, that it is better to bear the loss of a limb than to be eternally miserable, if there were no other possible way of escape.

Besides, it is part of their design also in *popery*, to make some sort of atonement and satisfaction for past sins by these superstitious severities, which are so far from being acceptable to God in this sense, that they dishonour the blood of Christ, and will be abhorred of the Father. Some *protestants* run to another extreme, and because our religion is spiritual, therefore they neglect many due restraints of the flesh, and think to secure themselves from sin merely by the exercises of the mind, without due guard or care to keep the body under proper discipline, in order to mortify *the lusts thereof*. They are ready to imagine that this is too legal a way of mortification, that it detracts from the liberty and privilege of the christian state, to *keep under the flesh* by any such methods of self-government.

But in opposition to these two extremes, the scripture seems plainly to lead us to a medium; and the rules which may be drawn from the word of God, may be chiefly comprised under these few heads:

1. Never dare indulge the craving of the flesh in any one sinful appetite or inclination; much less *make provision for it, to fulfil the lusts thereof*; Rom. xiii. 14. Here indeed you should be well informed what is and what is not sinful, and not bind the body to extravagant and unreasonable restraints, under a mistaken notion of sin and duty. But when you are once upon just grounds satisfied what is unlawful, then, if sinful neighbours, or if sinful self *entice, consent thou not; for, every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed*; Prov. i. 10. James i. 14. Compliance with sin is the way to make sin strong: Every such indulgence gives it courage to demand more, and makes the inclinations grow into a confirmed habit. It is the character of the children of wrath, that they *fulfil the desires of the flesh*; Eph. ii. 3.

2. Keep out of the way of temptation. Whatsoever company, diversion, or unnecessary business, you have ready to provoke a corrupt passion, avoid it as much as you can. *Remove thy way afar off, and come not nigh the door of the house*; Prov. v. 8.

3. Deny the flesh sometimes in its lawful appetites, to it subjection, and let it learn to be governed, by being sometimes restrained and disappointed in its innocent desires, that it may with more ease be withheld when unlawful objects appear. The holy apostle seems to have this in his eye, when he tells the *Corinthians* that he that *striveth for the mastery must be under in all things*: And he assures them, that he *keeps his own under, and brings it into subjection*; 1 Cor. ix. 25, 27. At the last verse of the eighth chapter, *he will eat no flesh of the world stands rather than make his brother offend*. Surely he would use the same self-denial, rather than be in danger of letting himself leave to offend.

4. Keep the body in such temper and circumstances as to render it fittest for the present duty. If excess of faintness or feeble spirits make it unfit for service, refresh it with the comforts of life. If through excess of vigor and a florid complexion the blood, it grow unfit for any duties of religion, or let the mind stray to dangerous vanities and allurements, it may sometimes be kept under by diligence in labour, by sparingly diminishing hours of sleep. When *Jeshurun waxed fat, he fell*; Deut. xxxii. 15. And the danger of Sodom was plain luxury, which the scripture describes by *fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness*; Ez. xvi. 49.

And it is upon this account that you find fasting joined with prayer, in the New Testament as well as in the Old; and the word watching, which is coupled therewith, may in some places be supposed to include its literal sense also: for absence from full measures of food and sleep may give occasion to the soul in devout exercises; and where experience finds that a full indulgence either of sleep or food unfits the body or clogs the soul in any duties of religion, there those appetites of the flesh are certainly to be restrained.

I might add, in the last place, that if any sharp disorder the body, or disordered humours, awaken the sinful ferments, any passion or appetite, in a more than ordinary manner, seek relief from the physician, to restore the flesh to its best state, and vice to the soul; that it may be delivered, through the blessing, from vexing inquietudes, from sudden surprises from the feeble flutterings of animal nature, from languor, heaviness, and every other infirmity; and may join cheerfully and regularly with thy willing soul, to glorify God, thy Father and thy Saviour.

But after all, never imagine that these, or any other methods of mortification, will be effectual to suppress and cure one sin, without converting and renewing grace, without the knowledge and faith of Jesus Christ, who is the only Redeemer of mankind, appointed to save us from our sins; the only physician able to cure our spiritual maladies. It is a deep sense of the universal corruption of nature, together with a betrusting our whole selves to the hands of Christ, to be sanctified and saved, is the only effectual and sure way to holiness. It is *faith* must purify the heart; Acts xv. 9. It is by the influences of the *great and precious promises* of the gospel, that we must be made partakers of divine nature, and escape the corruption that is in the world brought lust; 2 Pet. i. 4. All our labours, short of regeneration, and an entire change of the whole soul, by the mighty work of the Spirit of Christ, are but like nipping the blossoms of a poisonous tree, like cutting off the twigs, or lopping the branches, while the fatal stock stands firm still, and the root maintains its life and full vigour. Thus it will be ever springing with new shoots, and bring forth fruits of guilty and mortal savour. But converting grace is a blow at the root; it kills the sinful principle, or, at least, gives it a deadly wound. Seek earnestly therefore the Spirit of Christ, to renew your whole natures; *Walk under the influences of this blessed Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh*; Gal. v. 16, 24. For it is only *they that are Christ's, who have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts*; and if, by the assistances of this Spirit, you mortify the deeds of the body; you shall have a life here on earth, made up of the peace and beauty of holiness, and you shall die out of this world, into a diviner life of glory. *Amen.*



DEATH AND HEAVEN,

OR THE

LAST ENEMY CONQUERED,

AND

SEPARATE SPIRITS MADE PERFECT.

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DEATH AND HEAVEN,

OR

The Last Enemy conquered, and Separate Spirits made perfect:

With an Account of the rich Variety of their Employments and Pleasures; Attempted in Two Funeral Discourses, in Memory of SIR JOHN HARTOPP, Bart. and his Lady, deceased.

WITH THE PREFACE TO THE GERMAN TRANSLATION.

To Sir John Hartopp, Baronet.

SIR,

TO descend from such parents as yours, is no common favour of heaven; nor is it the blessing of every descendant to inherit the natural virtues of his progenitors: yet I know that you esteem your happiness incomplete, without the imitation of their heavenly graces, and the attainment of their sublimest hopes.

Forgive me, Dear Sir, if I take the liberty to say, it is with a sort of fond pleasure that I have beheld your victories over the most dangerous scenes and temptations of youth; and every step in your progress towards perfect triumph, is an addition to my joy. The world and the church hold their eyes fixed upon you, while God and angels, and, perhaps, the souls of your sacred ancestors, look down from on high to observe your conduct. Never was there a more proper time to awaken your zeal for the religion of Christ, than in a day of spreading infidelity and heathenism; nor can there be a fitter season to exert your utmost efforts for the support of serious piety, than in an age of numerous and growing iniquities. Your just sense of religious liberty will shine in its fairest glory, while you stand as a barrier against the fearful inroads of a wild and unbounded licentiousness. Nor can your attachment to the cause and interest of the Protestant Dissenters appear with more honour, than while they are defamed and scorned by the proud and the profane, and while their own imprudent contests stand in need of your candour and charity.

Many are the advantages you enjoy for this purpose. Divine Providence has placed your circumstances above the bribery of a flattering world, and a corrupt generation. Your superior sense has no need to stand in awe of fools, who make a mock of sin and godliness. Let your native modesty and gentleness then arm itself with an unshaken courage in the cause of God; and fear not the malicious scoff and censure of sinners, since you have nothing to expect or hope from them.

Go on, Sir, and prosper, in the things of heaven, and become an example of shining holiness in a degenerate world. Let the libertines of the nation know, that you also dare to think freely for yourself, and with all that freedom of thought you dare to chuse the paths of your holy ancestors.

The peculiar favour of God has provided you a consort, whose natural and pious accomplishments and assistances will attend you through all the way. These will soften the seeming severities of strict religion with the

tenderest endearments of life, and make the pleasures of it double and transcendent. The name, the title and the character of your excellent father deceased, require and demand an eminent degree of goodness in his successor. The pious lady your mother, now in heaven, would have rejoiced in the present prospect, and would have purchased your felicity even with her own life, and your numerous relatives around you suspend their happiness upon yours. The piety you have shown towards your worthy parents from your infancy, and the affectionate honours which you now pay their memory, give us further assurance that this is your aim, and your glorious ambition. And that you may ever keep in mind their example and your duty, you have commanded me to make public these discourses, which were framed on the occasion of their decease.

You well know, Sir, I am no friend to loose panegyric, nor am I wont to bestow it on the dead or the living. What I have written of the late Sir John Hartopp at the end of the second discourse, is the first attempt that ever I made of concluding a funeral sermon with a distinct and particular character of the deceased, through the whole space of twenty-three years of my ministry; and surely the world will not envy nor detract from the just honours of a name so much beloved. As for the lady, your mother, she affected retirement to such a degree, that it would have placed her in a wrong light to have drawn out her virtues at length, and set them to public view. I have therefore only interspersed a few hints of her eminent piety, as the text and argument led me into them: And indeed this is the utmost that I have ever done before on such occasions.

I have much reason to ask pardon that I have so far enlarged these discourses, and especially the last; for I hate the thoughts of making any thing in religion heavy or tiresome: But having entertained myself many a time with some of these meditations on the business and the blessedness of Separate Spirits, I took this opportunity of shewing them to the world, enshrined in the lustre of two such names as adorn my title-page.

To render the reading of them yet more agreeable to yourself and to all your friends, I have cast them into distinct sections, that my readers may leave off almost where they please, and peruse so much of them at one time as suits their present inclination and convenience.

You know, Sir, I pretend to no authority to pronounce effectual blessings upon you; but you will accept the sincere good wishes of a man that loves you, and is zealous for your felicity in the upper and lower worlds. May the best of mercies descend daily on yourself, your lady, and your little offspring! May the closet, the parlour, and public assemblies be constant witnesses of your piety; and the house where a Sir John Hartopp dwells be a house of prayer and of praise in every generation, nor the name be extinguished in your family till the heavens be no more! May the ladies your sisters live happily under the sweet influence of that mutual affection that has been always remarkably cultivated amongst you! Their interests are your care: And I am well persuaded that their solicitude and tender concern for your welfare, will ever deserve and find such returns of love, as I have long observed with delight! May the prayers of your progenitors in past ages be answered in hourly benefits descending on you all, and be fruitful of blessings in ages yet to come! Such a lovely scene, with such a long and joyful prospect, will advance the satisfactions of my life, and give pleasure even in a dying hour, to him who had once the honour to be your affectionate monitor, and must ever write himself,

Sir,

Your obliged, humble servant,

I. WATTS.

July 6, 1722.

THE PREFACE

To this Book of Death and Heaven, when it was translated into the German Language, and published at Halle, in Saxony, 1727.

TO THE READER.

HERE is communicated to you a treatise, in which the late pious Mr. Frank, professor of divinity at Halle, found so much edification and satisfaction that he engaged an able person to translate it into our German tongue, to make others partake of the same spiritual benefit. This treatise consists of two funeral sermons, which an English divine, who perhaps is still living, composed on the death of two eminent persons, which he enlarged afterwards for their publication. The subject of the first is death, taken from 1 Cor. xv. 26. The second is heaven, from Heb. xii. 22. From this last he takes an occasion of flying with his thoughts into the blessed mansions of the just made perfect, by giving us not only a very probable and beautiful idea of the glory of a future life in general, but also an enumeration of the many sorts of employments and pleasures, that are to be met with there.

After the several false notions, people of different complexions have of eternal life, are laid open, the author of the preface goes on and quotes some German authors, who have writ upon that subject, and says at last: I hope nobody will presume to aver this doctrine to have been so far exhausted by those authors, that nothing new could be said upon it. For several learned writers in England, who in meditating and searching after hidden truths, have shewn an extraordinary capacity, prove the contrary; and amongst others there is the treatise, called, *The future State*, published 1683, by a gentleman whose name is concealed, which appeared in French 1700, and is now printed in German with a preface of the famous Dr. Pritius, senior, at Frankfurt ad Mœnum. There is among Sir R. Blackmore's *Essays*, one upon the future beatitudes. The traces of these two English gentlemen are followed by our present English divine I. WARRS, who however, in many points has outdone these predecessors, and advanced a step farther in his contemplations.

Though the first sermon contains many elegant passages worthy to be read, yet the latter seems to be a more elaborate piece, because it sets the doctrine of eternal life in a greater light, and enriches it with many probable inferences drawn from the word of God. He proposes his excellent thoughts in most emphatical terms, in that beautiful order and with such a vivacity of style that he keeps the reader in a continual attention, and an eager desire to read on. It is plain the author's mind was so taken up with the beauty of heaven, that *his mouth could not but speak from the abundance of his heart*. There is a secret unction in his expressions, which leaves a sweet savour in the reader's heart, and raises in him a desire after the blessed society he speaks of. And though the reader should not entirely agree with the author's notions, yet he will not peruse this treatise without a particular edification and blessing. I cannot deny but the author's conjectures may be sometimes carried a little too far, but that doth not prejudice the subject in the least. Besides, he is generally so happy as to find some arguments for his probable notions in the word of God, and to answer very dexterously all the objections that can be made against him.

May the ever-living God give a blessing to this work, and grant that those sweet and relishing truths proposed in these leaves may make such an impression upon the minds of the readers as those noble truths deserve. May he prevent all the abuse of this delightful subject, and never permit it to be turned into a mere dry or fruitless speculation; but may he inflame every reader with a holy desire after a blessed eternity, and rouse and excite all those, that have not begun yet to tread the path of salvation, to enter into the same without delay, that they may not rest in a mere delightful prospect of the land of Canaan, nor be for ever excluded by their unbelief from the eternal enjoyment of it.

Given at Halle, July 10, 1727.

JOHN JACOB RAMBACH, S. Theol. Prof. Ordinarius.

DISCOURSE I.

The Conquest over Death.

Described in a Funeral Discourse in Memory of the Lady Hartopp, deceased.

THE INTRODUCTION.

I persuade myself that none of you are unacquainted with that mournful providence that calls me to the service of this day*. The words which were borrowed from the lips of the dying, I am desir'd to improve for the instruction and comfort of those that live. They are written in

1 COR. xv. 26.—The last enemy that shall be destroyed, is death.

WHEN a nation hath lain for whole ages under the power of some mighty tyrant, and has suffered perpetual ravages from his hands, what gladness runs through the land, at the sure prediction of his ruin? and how is every inhabitant pleased, when he hears of the approaching downfall of his great enemy? “For this is he that has slain my father or my mother, my children, or my dearest relatives, and is still making havoc of the remnant of my friends, while I myself stand in hourly danger.” This pleasure grows up into more perfect joy, when we are assured this is the last tyrant that shall arise, *the last enemy* that shall afflict us for he shall have no successor, and we shall be for ever free. Such should be the rejoicing of all the saints, when they hear so desirable and divine a promise as the words of my text; *The last enemy that shall be destroyed, is death.*

To improve this glorious proposition, let us consider these four things, with a reflection or two upon each of them :

I. How death appears to be an enemy to the saints.—II. Why it is called the last enemy, or the last that shall be destroyed.—III. How it is to be destroyed, and what are the steps or gradual efforts towards its destruction.—IV. What are the advantages that the saints receive by the destruction of this last enemy.

Section I.—*Death an enemy even to good men.*—The first enquiry is, how, or in what sense death appears to be an enemy to the saints? That it is in general an enemy to human nature is sufficiently evident from its first introduction into the world for it was brought in as an execution of the first threatenin

* Nov. 9, 1711, the Lady Hartopp died, and this discourse was deliver'd at Stoke-Newington, Nov. 25, following.

given to Adam in paradise, Gen. ii. 17. *In the day thou eatest thou shalt die.* It came in as a punishment for sin, and every punishment in some respect opposes our interest, and our happiness. When it seized on man at first, and planted the seeds of mortality in his nature, he then began to be deprived of that peace and health, that vigour and immortality which he possessed before his fall, till at last it brought him down to the dust; and ever since, all the sons of Adam have found and felt it an enemy to their natures.

To sinners indeed it is an enemy in a more dreadful sense, and its attendants are more terrible a thousand-fold. For besides all the common miseries of the flesh which they sustain, it delivers over their spirits into everlasting misery; it finishes their reprieve and their hope for ever; it plunges them at once into all the terrors of a most awakened conscience, and cuts them off from all the amusements and cares of this life, which laid their guilt and their conscience asleep for a season. Death consigns over a sinner to the chains of the grave, and the chains of hell together, and binds and reserves him a prisoner of despair for the most complete torments of the second death.

But I would confine my discourse here only to believers, for it is with respect to them this chapter is written. I know death is often called their friend, because it puts an end to their sins and sorrows; but this benefit arises only from the covenant of grace, which sanctifies it to some good purposes to the children of God. It is constrained to become their friend in some instances, contrary to its own nature and its original design: But there is reason enough, if we take a survey of its own nature, and its present appearances, to call it an enemy still, upon these following accounts:

1. Death has generally many terrible attendants and fore-runners when it comes; terrible to nature and the flesh of the most exalted christians.

Here, should I begin to describe the long and dismal train of death, the time would fail me. Shall I mention the sickness and the pain, the sharp anguish of the body, and sometimes the sharper methods of medicine to relieve it, all which prove useless and vain in that day? Shall I recount the tedious and uneasy hours, the tiresome and sleepless nights, when the patient longs for the slow return of the morning; and still when the light breaks, he finds new uneasiness, and wishes for the shadow and darkness again? Shall I speak of the dulness of the natural spirits, and the clogs that hang heavy upon the soul in those hours; so that the better part of man is bound and oppressed, and shut up, and cannot exert itself agreeable to the character of an intellectual being?

Besides, all the designs of the mind are interrupted and

broken in death ; all that the saint intended to do for God, is cut off at once, and his holy purposes are precluded, which often adds to the trouble of a dying christian ; Ps. cxlvi. 4. *When man returns to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish.*

Shall I put you in mind of the sighs and sorrows of dearest friends that stand around the bed all in tears, and all despairing ? Shall I speak of the last convulsions of nature, the sharp conflict of the extreme moments, and the struggling and painful efforts of departing life, which none can know fully but those that have felt them, and none of the dead come back to give us an account ? Is it possible for us to survey these scenes of misery, and not to believe that the hand of an enemy has been there ? The bodies of the saints are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and the members of Christ ; 1 Cor. vi. 15, 19. Death murders these bodies, these members of the Lord, and ruins these temples to the dust, and may well be called their enemy upon this account.

2. Death acts like an enemy, when it makes a separation between the soul and the body. It divides the nature of man in halves, and tears the two constituent parts of it asunder.

Though this becomes an advantage to the soul of the saint through the covenant and appointment of grace, yet to have such an intimate union dissolved between flesh and spirit carries something of terror in it ; and there may be an innocent reluctance in the nature of the best christian against such an enemy as this : therefore St. Paul, in 2 Cor. v. 4. does not directly desire to be *unclothed*, but rather to be *cloathed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life* ; that is, to be translated at once into an immortal state. The soul and body have been long acquainted with each other, and the soul has performed almost all its operations by the use of the senses and the limbs : It sees by the eye, it hears by the ear, it acts by the hands, and by the tongue it converses. Now to be separated at once from all these, and to be at once conveyed into a new strange world, a strange and unknown state both of being and action, has something in it so surprizing, that it is a little frightful to the nature of man, even when he is sanctified and fitted for heaven.

And as the soul is dismissed by death into a state of separation, so the body, like a fallen tabernacle, is forsaken, lies uninhabited and desolate. Shall I lead your thoughts back to the bed where your dear relatives expired ? and give you a sight of the dead, whose beauty is turning apace into corruption, and all the loveliness of countenance fled for ever ? The body, that curious engine of divine workmanship, is become a moveless lump : Death sits heavy upon it, and the sprightliness and vigour of life is perished in every feature and in every limb ? Shall we go down to the dark chambers of the grave, where each of the dead lie in

their cold mansions, in beds of darkness and dust? The shadows of a long evening are stretched over them, the curtains of a deep midnight are drawn around them, and the worm lies under them, and the worm covers them.

A saint is no more exempted from all these frightful attendants of death than a sinner is. Those eyes that have been perpetually lifted up to the God of heaven in prayer, lie closed under ground. That tongue that has spoken much for God in the world, lies silent in death. Those hands that have ministered to the necessities of the saints, and those feet that have gone often to the house of God, death has confined them in his chains. Those natural powers that have been active in the service of the gospel, can speak, can move, can act no more. But I need not recite these things to you, the images of them are too fresh and painful, and sit too heavy upon your remembrance.

3. Death is an enemy to the saint, so far as it hinders him from the enjoyment of his perfect heaven, for it keeps one part of him in the grave for many years or ages.

Let us think of the dust of the ancient martyrs, the dust of the apostles, and the holy prophets: Let us look many ages backward to the dust of David, and Abraham, and Noah, to the dust of Adam, the first of men: How long have their souls waited in heaven, as it were in a widowed estate? How long has their flesh been mingled with common earth, and laid confined under the bands of death, useless to all the glorious purposes of their formation and their being? A tedious extent of time! Four or five thousand years, wherein they have done nothing for God in the body, and in the body received nothing from God? For death hinders a believer from some of the business of heaven, and some of the blessedness of it.

1. From some of the business of heaven: It is only the soul that is then received to glory, and dwells there alone for a season, while death keeps the body prisoner in the grave; it is only the soul that glorifies its Maker in that upper world, the world of spirits, for the flesh lies silent in the dust: *The grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee, O Lord*; Isa. xxxviii. 18. The body is redeemed with the blood of Christ, as well as the soul, but death puts fetters upon it, and forbids it to serve its Redeemer.

2. The believer is restrained also by death from some of the blessedness of heaven; it is only the soul enjoys the delight, and that too only in its abstracted nature, and pure intellectual capacity; it is cut off by death from all that rich variety of pleasure which rises from its communion with so noble a frame as the body of man is. It has no senses to receive the satisfactions that arise from the material part of heaven: It has no eyes to behold the glorified flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ; no ears to hear his

of death? I am not afraid to enter into eternity; the grace of Christ, and his gospel, have given me hope and courage enough to be dead; but I am still afraid of dying; it is a hard and painful work, how shall I sustain the sharp conflict? I shiver at the thoughts of venturing through that cold flood that divides betwixt this wilderness and the promised land."

Another christian is too much unacquainted with the world of spirits, with the nature of the separate heaven, with the particular business and blessedness of holy souls departed; and he is afraid to venture out of this region of flesh and blood, into a vast and unknown world. Though he has good hope through grace, that he shall arrive safe at heaven; yet the heavenly country is so unknown a land, and the valley of entrance to it so dark, that he fears to pass into it through the shadow of death.

Another is terrified at the thoughts of death, because he knows not how to part with his dear relatives in the flesh, and to leave them exposed to an unkind age and a thousand dangers. "If I had none to leave behind me, I could die with cheerfulness; but while I think of such a separation, the thought of death has terror in it."

Thus upon various accounts a good man may have fearful apprehensions of dying; and that which carries so much terror about it, may well be called an enemy.

Before we proceed any further, let us make two reflections on the first general head:

I. If death be an enemy to the best of men in so many respects, then we may infer the great evil of sin: For it was sin that brought death into this our world; Rom. v. 12. *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*

We are too ready to conceive a slight opinion of the evil of sin, because it is so common to the best of men, and so constant an attendant on human nature daily and hourly; we entertain too gentle and harmless thoughts of it, because its biggest evil is of a spiritual kind, and invisible; we see not that infinite majesty which it dishonours, that spotless holiness of God which it offends, the glory and perfectionⁿ of that law which is broken by it: We can take but short and scanty notices of the injury that it does to God the supreme Spirit, while we are shut up in tabernacles of flesh. But here in these scenes of death, we may survey the sensible and mighty injury that sin has done to the nature of man, and thence infer how offensive it is to God. By our eyes and our ears, we may be terribly convinced, that it is no little evil that could occasion such spreading and durable mischief.

We cannot frame a just notion of what man was in his state

of perfect innocency, in his original beauty, and honour, and immortal frame; and therefore we cannot so well judge of the vastness of the loss which we sustain by sin: but we can see and feel the formidable attendants of death, and learn and believe that it is a root of unknown poisoned bitterness, that has produced such cursed fruit: Especially if we remember that all the sorrows before described, fall upon the saints themselves, even where sin is pardoned, and *death has lost its sting*. But if we descend in contemplation to the endless and unknown misery that waits upon the death of a sinner, and say, all these are the effects of sin; how inexpressibly dreadful will the cause appear? The wise man has pronounced them fools, by inspiration, that make a mock at such mischief; Prov. xiv. 9.

II. We may here learn the greatness of the love of Christ, that would venture into the land of death, and conflict with this mighty enemy, and yield to the power of it for a season, for our sakes. *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends; John xv. 13. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he died for us; 1 John iii. 16. Rom. v. 8.*

Many terrible attendants of death did our Lord meet and struggle with beyond what any of his saints can feel. Death, like a lion, ran furious upon him, as it does upon a sinner, its proper prey. He met death in its full strength and dominion, for he had all our sins upon him; and death had its own sharp sting when our Lord entered the combat. There was the wrath of God which was threatened in the broken law to mingle with his pangs and agonies of nature: This made *his soul exceeding sorrowful*; all his inward powers were amazed, and his heart oppressed with heaviness; Mark xiv. 33, 34. He was almost overwhelmed in the garden, before the thorns or the nails came near him; and on the cross he complains of the forsakings of God his almighty friend, when death his mighty enemy was just upon him; and all this, saith he, to every believer, I bore for thy sake; *My love was stronger than death.*

Sect. II.—*Death is the last enemy.*—I proceed now to the second general proposed, and that is to enquire, in what sense death is said to be the last enemy, or the last that shall be destroyed: For we may join this word last, either to death, or to destruction; and in each sense it affords comfort to the saints.

1. It is the last enemy that the saints have to grapple with in this world. The three great adversaries of a christian are the flesh, the world, and the devil, and they assault him often in his life. Death comes behind, and brings up the rear; the saint combats with this enemy, and finishes all the war. Every believer has listed himself under the banner of Christ, who is the

Captain of his Salvation. When he first gives himself up to the Lord, he renounces every thing that is inconsistent with his faith and hope, he abandons his former slavery, undertakes the spiritual warfare, and enters the field of battle. It is a necessary character of the followers of Christ, that they fight with the flesh, subdue corrupt nature, suppress their irregular appetites, give daily wounds to the body of sin; Col. iii. 5. Rom. viii. 13. They fight against this world; they refuse to comply with the temptations of it, when it would allure them astray from the path of duty; they defy its frowns and discouragements, and break through all its oppositions in their way to heaven; James iv. 4. They resist Satan when he tempts them to sin, and vanquish him by the sword of the Spirit, the word of God; Eph. iv. 11, 12, 17. and when he accuses them, and attempts to bring terror, into their souls, *they overcome him, and cast him down by the blood of the Lamb*; Rev. xii. 10, 11. They are made conquerors over these adversaries in the strength of Christ. Now the pangs of death are the last troublers of their peace; *death is the last enemy* that attacks them, and some have very terrible conflicts with it.

It was in these agonies, in this sharp contention, the words of my text were uttered by that honoured saint whose memory will be always precious, and whose loss we this day mourn. This cheerful language of hope, among many other scriptures, broke out from her lips. Thus lively was her faith in a dying hour. Methinks I hear her speaking the words with a firm trust in the promise; *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.* And this encouraged her onward through the few remaining struggles of life and pain. It is as if she had said, "I have given myself up long ago to Christ, I engaged myself young in his service, I have fought with sin, I have learned to subdue flesh and sense, and to live by the faith of the Son of God: I have not courted the flatteries of the world, the vain shews of life; and I have been enabled to despise the frowns of it, and been kept stedfast in my profession, in the most discouraging and the darkest times. Through the grace of Christ *I have overcome the evil one*; there remains but one enemy more, whose name is death; and I trust in the ~~same~~ grace still to obtain complete victory." Rejoice ye dear relatives, let all the friends of the deceased rejoice, her name is now written down in heaven amongst the overcomers.

2. Death may be called the last enemy, because it is not utterly destroyed till the resurrection, till Christ hath done all his work upon earth, till he has subdued all his other adversaries, and made use of death as his slave, to destroy many of them. It is in this sense especially that the words of my text are written by St. Paul; 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25. *Then cometh the end, when he*

He has delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; and he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and all power; for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed, is death. With regard to each particular christian, all other enemies are destroyed when he dies, for *whither he goes, they cannot come*; he puts off his body of flesh and of sin together; he leaves every corruption behind him, when he ascends to the company of the spirits of the just made perfect. The smiles and the frowns of this vain and changing world, are too far off to influence the inhabitants of heaven; and Satan, the tempter and accuser, is for ever forbidden entrance at the gates of that holy city. But death holds one part of our saint in his prison, the grave: And though the departed soul soon overcome the terrors of this enemy, and triumphs in this expression, *O death, where is thy sting?* yet the body is confined a prisoner under his power: *But the hour is coming, when those that are dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and live.* All the prisons of the saints shall be broke to pieces, and burnt up, and the keeper destroyed for ever.

Let us make these two reflections on the second general head of this discourse:

I. What abundant encouragement may we derive from this promise, to engage us betimes in a war with all the other enemies of our salvation, that having overcome them, we may be assured *that is the last enemy* we shall meet with: And then also we may overcome death with a braver courage, may conflict with it with better success, may vanquish it by a lively faith, and rejoice in the prospect of its final destruction. The same armour of God, the same divine weapons, and the same almighty assistances by which we have subdued our former adversaries, sin, Satan, and the world, shall be sufficient to gain this conquest too. We cannot begin the holy warfare too soon; none of us are too young to be assaulted by death; but let it come never so early in the morning of our days, it is the last enemy that we can fear, if we are listed in the army of Christ and have begun the glorious war.

I would address myself to the younger branches of the mourning house, and say, have ye had such a noble example of victory over sin and death in vain? Will ye basely submit to the slavery of the flesh, and yield tamely to the oppositions of this world, which were so bravely resisted by her that is gone before you? Will ye love this world, which is *at enmity with God*, and has ever been at enmity with all the saints? Are ye content to have your names forever excluded from that honourable list of conquerors, where the names of your ancestors shine before the throne of God, and are recorded with honour in the memory of his churches? Think how dreadful a moment that will be, when

you shall look death in the face, if ye have not begun to wage war with sin and Satan before ! How dreadful to have many enemies at once assaulting you ! the lusts of your own heart, raging desires after the enjoyments of this world, the horrors of conscience, the buffetings of the devil, and the pangs of death. What will ye do in the day of such a visitation ? And remember, that though *death be the last enemy* of the saints, it is not thus with sinners ; it does but transmit them into the world of damned spirits, where enemies multiply upon them, and grow more outrageous. Besides the bitter anguish of their own conscience, they have the wrath of God whom they have long provoked, and the malice of evil angels their tormentors, to conflict with to all eternity. *But we hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak ;* Heb. vi. 9.

II. What divine comfort is there in my text for aged christians and dying saints, who have been watchful and vigorous in their war with sin, and gained many victories over this world and Satan, who is called the God of it ? What a delightful view such persons have, when upon the borders of life ! Bear up with divine boldness ye heirs of glory, for you have but one adversary more to fight with : Let your faith and patience and holy courage hold out a little longer, and victory and triumph are yours for ever. There is no enemy lies in ambush behind the tomb ; when you have passed the bars of death, you are out of the reach of all adversaries. Beyond the grave, the coast is all clear for ever : The country flows with rich and untasted pleasures ; every inhabitant is an inward friend, and peace, and joy, and love smile in every countenance. Will an old saint complain that he finds many infirmities attend his age, that his senses are feeble, that his eyes are dim, that Satan now and then arises from hell, and casts a gloom and darkness around his soul, and buffets him sorely in that darkness ? Will he complain that his natural spirits are heavy, that the world is troublesome to him, and every thing in life painful ? Methinks it is a consolation equal to all these sorrows, that he is just entering into the last field of battle ; the last hour of controversy is begun ; a few strokes more will decide the strife, and make him an eternal conqueror. *Behold I come quickly, saith our Lord, hold fast that which thou hast gained, that no man take thy crown ;* Rev. iii. 11.

Sect. III.—*The destruction of death.*—The third thing we are to enquire, is, how death is destroyed, and what are the steps or gradual efforts towards its destruction.

The person that has this honour put upon him to subdue this universal tyrant is our Lord Jesus Christ ; so the words inform us all around my text. Though his mediation for sinners was sufficient to have prevailed with God to destroy death at once, yet it was agreed upon in the eternal counsels, that for wise ends and

purposes it should be done by degrees. His blood was of sufficient value to have procured for his elect a deliverance from every enemy at once, and a translation to heaven as soon as they were born; but it was wisely concerted betwixt the Father and the Son, that we should pass through temptations, difficulties, and death itself; that by feeling the sharp assaults of our enemies, we might be better acquainted with the greatness of our salvation, and pay a larger tribute of thanks and honours to our deliverer.

The steps whereby death is destroyed, are these: 1. It is subdued by the death of Christ; Its sting was then taken away, that is, the guilt of sin; 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57. *The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Which verses may be thus explained: Death was the punishment threatened by the law of sin, but Christ, as our surety, having sustained the execution of that threatening, and answered the law by a satisfaction equal to the offence, death has no power over him. *God has raised him up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it; Acts ii. 24.* And as Christ by his dying is said to finish transgression, and make an end of sin, because he has taken away its power to condemn believers, though he has not yet utterly destroyed its being, so he is said to have abolished death; 2. Tim. i. 10. Because he has so far diminished, and made void its power, that it shall not do any mortal mischief to the saints. It is like a serpent whose sting is taken away, and whose teeth are broken out; it may fright us, and do us some injury, but it cannot inflict a venomous or fatal wound. Now the believer, by a lively faith, shares in this victory of Christ over death, and gives thanks to God for it. He knows that though it may hurt his body, and bring it down to the grave for a season, yet it cannot send the soul to destruction, nor confine the body to the dust any longer than Christ shall permit.

2. Death is taken captive and enslaved by Christ at his resurrection and ascension, and made to serve his holy purposes; Ps. lxxviii. 18. *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive.* This is spoken of our Lord Jesus, who has taken into his own dominion death and the devil, who led the world captive. The enemy is not escaped out of the hands of this conqueror, but is put under his yoke, and constrained into his service. Death, in its first character, was the very threatening and curse of the law of God, and includes in it all misery: but Christ having borne the curse, has redeemed his people from it; Gal. iii. 13. And now he has taken as many as he pleases of the threatenings and terrors of the law into his own new covenant, the covenant of grace; and has sanctified their nature, and made them blessings to the saints; he has turned the curse into a blessing; Deut. xxiii. 5. so that afflictions, and pains, and sorrows,

and death itself, are no longer a curse to them; for they are ordained by the wisdom and grace of Christ to promote their best interest.

Death, in its original design, was the under servant of God's avenging justice; it was the jailor to bring the soul out of the body before the divine tribunal, there to receive its condemnation to hell. It was the executioner both to torment and to destroy the flesh, and send the spirit into everlasting misery. But Christ having answered all the demands of this avenging justice, has also purchased the sovereignty over death; and though sometimes when it seizes a saint, it may for the present signify his displeasure, as in *1 Cor. xi. 30.* yet it always fulfils the designs of his love, and conveys them into his own delightful presence; therefore as soon as we are *absent from the body*, we are said to be *present with the Lord*; *2 Cor. v. 8.* and when we depart from the flesh, it is to be *with Christ*; *Phil. i. 23.* Death was ordained at first to be a slave to Satan, by the righteous appointment of God, both death and the devil are executioners of his wrath; and Satan is said to have some power over death; *Heb. ii. 14.* But Christ by dying, has subdued Satan, spoiled him of his destroying weapons, has made void his authority, especially with regard to believers; he has taken death out of his power, and manages it himself; and thus *he delivers them who through fear of death were held in a long and painful bondage*; *ver. 15.*

It is in such views as these that the apostle says to the Corinthian believers, *all things are yours, things present, and things to come, this world in the joys or sorrows of it, life and death, all are yours, and ye are Christ's*; *1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.* You have an interest and a share in the possessions and the power of Christ over all things so far as may promote your happiness: Christ makes *all things, even death, work together for the good of his people*; *Rom. viii. 28.* By death he puts an end to the body of sin, and frees the soul from all those ruffling passions, those inquietudes of the blood, and disorders of nature; those strong and perverse appetites, that cost the christian so much toil to subdue, and brought him so often under guilt, darkness, and sorrow. By death he delivers the believer from the pains and infirmities of the body, the perpetual languishings of a weakly constitution, and the anguish of acute diseases. He constrains death to give the weary saint release from all the miseries of the present state, and to hide him from the fury of the oppressor. The grave is God's hiding-place from the storms and tumults of the world; *there the weary are at rest, and the wicked cease from troubling*: and instead of consigning us over to the full malice of the devil, death is made a means to convey us away from all his assaults, and translate us into that country, where he has no power to enter. And when the soul is dismissed into the bosom of a reconciled God, by the ministry of death; the

body is put to rest in the grave ; the grave, which is sanctified into a bed of rest for all the followers of Christ, since their Lord and Master has lain there.

In the gospel of Christ, the name of death is altered into sleep. Christ, who has subdued it, seems to have given it this new name, that it might not have a frightful sound in the ears of his beloved. Though it was sometimes called sleep in the Old Testament, yet that chiefly regarded the silence, and darkness, and inactivity of that state ; whereas in the New Testament, and in the xiith of Daniel, it is called sleep, to denote that there is no waking time. The ancient christians, upon this account, called the church-yard, where they buried the dead, *χοιμητηριον*, a sleeping-place. And though the grave may be termed the prison of death, yet death is not lord of the prison ; he can detain the captives there but during the pleasure of Christ, for he who is *the key for evermore, has the keys of death and hell*, that is of the separate state ; Rev. i. 18. Now this is the true reason why christians have spoken so many kind things of death, which is the king of terrors to a natural man. They call it a release from pain and sorrow, a messenger of peace, the desired hour, and the happy moment. All this is spoken while they behold it with an eye of faith in the hands of Christ, who has subdued it to himself, and constrained it to serve the designs of his love to them.

3. When it has done all Christ's work, it shall be utterly destroyed. After the resurrection, there shall be no more dying. The saints shall rise immortal, and dwell in heaven for ever, in the complete enjoyment of all that is included in the name of LIFE. As the angel in prophecy lifts up his hand, *and swears by Him that lives for ever and ever, that time shall be no longer* ; Rev. x.

So Christ Jesus, the Lord of angels, shall, as it were, announce with a sovereign voice, that death shall be no more. He shall send the great archangel with the trumpet of God ; it shall sound through the deepest caverns of the grave, and shall summon death from its inmost recesses. The tyrant shall stand and obey, and restore all his captives out of prison ; *the dead all hear the voice of the Son of God, and live*, John v. 25, 28, 29. *They that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.* After this our Lord has no employment for death his slave ; the bodies of men shall die no more : There shall be no more any state of separation between the flesh and spirit ; Rev. xv. 14. *And death and Hades, were cast into the lake of fire* ; that is, there shall be no more death, no grave, no separate state of souls, all these shall be for ever destroyed.

I. We may infer from this third general head, the great power and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ ; we may learn the honour that is due to him from mortals ; it is he that hath sub-

dued death, and that by his own dying. A wondrous method of victory! a surprizing conquest! and he lives for ever to destroy it in his appointed time. How great and honourable must he be in the eyes of all mankind, who has vanquished so universal a conqueror? How desirable is his person, and how delightful the sound of his name to every believer! for he suppresses all the enemies and shall destroy them even to the last. How well did he fulfil the great engagement? Hosea xiii. 14. *I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be had from mine eyes.* Let us salute the Prince of life, Acts iii. 15. and adore him under that character. He dispossesses death of all its dominions. He approves himself a complete Saviour of all his saints, and a Redeemer of his captive friends.

II. We may learn also from this head of discourse, the power and excellency of the gospel of Christ, for it discovers to us how this great enemy is vanquished, and when it shall be destroyed and thus it lays a foundation for courage at death, and gives assurance of a joyful rising-day. Death being abolished by the mediation of Christ, *immortality and life are brought to light* by his gospel; 2 Tim. i. 10. That is, there is a brighter discovery of the future state, and of everlasting happiness, than ever before was given to the world.

Here in the name of Christ, and of his gospel, we may give a challenge to all other religions, and say, which of them has borne up the spirit of man so high above the fears of death: this has done? or has given us so fair, so rational, and so divine an account how death has been overcome by one man, and how by faith in his name we may all be made overcomers? How vain are the trifles with which the heathen priests and their prophecies amused the credulous multitude? What silly and insipid fables do they tell us of souls passing over in a ferry-boat to the other world, and describe the fields of pleasure, and the prisons of pain in that country of ghosts and shadows, in so ridiculous a manner that the wise men of their own nations despised the romance, and few were stupid enough to believe it all. If we consult the religion of their philosophers, they give us but a poor, lame, and miserable account of the state after death. Some of them deny it utterly, and others rave at random in mere conjectures, and float in endless uncertainties. The courage which some of the heroes professed at the point of death, was rather a stubborn indolence, than a rational and well-founded valour; and not man arrived at this hardiness of mind, except those that supposed their existence ended with their life, and thought they should be dissolved into their first atoms. Aristotle, one of the greatest men amongst them, tells us that futurity is uncertain, and calls death the most terrible of all terribles.

If we search into the religion of the Jews, which was a scheme of God's own contrivance and revelation to men, we find the affairs of a future world lay much in the dark; their consciences were not so thoroughly purged from the guilt of sin, but it some terrors hung about them, as appears from Heb. x. 1, 3. and having so faint and obscure notices, of the separate state of souls, and of the resurrection, these were the persons, who in a special manner, *through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage*; Heb. ii. 15. But christianity lays a plain and rational foundation for our confidence and triumph in the dying hour. It shews how guilt is removed by an all-sufficient sacrifice; and makes it evident that no hell, no vengeance, shadows of misery await the believer in that invisible world. It makes the christian venture into it with a certain boldness, and a becoming presence of mind. The doctrine of Christ shews how the sting of death is taken away, and calls us to fight with a vanquished enemy, a serpent without a sting; it gives us assurance that we shall rise again from the dust with bodies nobler and fairer, glorious in their frame, and their constitution immortal; for death shall be no more. Exalted by so sublime a hope, what is there in death sufficient to depress our spirits, if our faith were but equal to this admirable doctrine? The holy apostles are witnesses, the noble army of martyrs are witnesses, and many a saint in our day is a witness to this truth, who gives honour to this gospel. How many thousands have met death, and all its frightful attendants, with a steady soul, and a serene countenance; and have departed to heaven with songs of praise upon their lips, a smile upon their face, and triumph in their eyes? And this was not owing to any extravagant flights of enthusiasm, nor the fires of an inflamed fancy, but it has been performed often, and may be done daily by the force of a regular faith, on the most solid and reasonable principles; for such are the principles of the gospel of Christ.

Sect. IV.—Blessings gained by the destruction of death.—The fourth and last general head of discourse, is an enquiry into the advantages which the saints receive by the destruction of their last enemy. This is a large and endless field, for it includes a great part of the happiness of the final heaven. But I shall attempt to mention briefly a few of the benefits that attend my text, and that without a nice distinction of particulars.

When death is destroyed, we shall share in the joy and triumph of Christ for absolute conquest over all his enemies; for there is scarce any glory given to Christ, considered as man, but the saints are said to be humble partners in it, or at least to enjoy a resemblance. Is he appointed the judge of all? It is promised *also to the saints that they shall judge angels, and the twelve tribes of Israel.* Do we suffer with him? we shall also

reign with him. If we conquer death by faith, we shall rise and triumph. Here we labour and fight with many adversaries, and we think we have routed them, but they rally again, and give us fresh vexation, so that we hardly know how to attempt a song of victory on this side the grave. Besides, death still remains for our trial and conflict; but there we shall rejoice over all our enemies, subdued, destroyed and abolished for ever.

Then God will be all in all to his saints. This is a consequent which St. Paul mentions in the verses where my text is: God will manage the affairs of his heavenly kingdom in a more immediate way, than he has managed his kingdom on earth. Christ having destroyed all the enemies of his church, and presented it safe before the Father, has finished all those divine purposes for which the mediatorial kingdom was entrusted with him; then he shall resign his commission to the Father again; and the ever blessed God shall in a more immediate and absolute manner reign over all the creation. He shall more immediately impress devils and damned spirits with a sense of infinite wrath; and with a more immediate sense of his love and eternal favour, shall he for ever bless all the inhabitants of heaven. So much as this seems to be implied in the words of the apostle; 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25; &c. But it is impossible that in this state we should know either the full extent, or the just limitations of that promise, *God shall be all in all*. Our honoured and departed friend had these words dwelling upon her heart; these were often in her lips in the days of her faith and hope, and in the hours of her passage through the dark valley: She enjoys part of the pleasure of them in her present heaven, and with pleasure she expects the more absolute accomplishment, when the resurrection shall complete the blessedness of all the saints.

Another consequent of the destruction of death, is the employment of all the powers of human nature in the service of God, and they shall be neither weak nor weary. For all the inconveniences that attend mortality shall be swallowed up and lost for ever.

Alas how poor and imperfect is the service which our bodies yield to God in this world! How heavily do our souls complain of the clog of this flesh, and move onwards heavily in the discharge of duty! and in the grave the body is quite cut off from all service. But when death shall be dispossessed, when we shall arise from the dust, and put on bodies of glory; then will our whole natures and with all their powers, we shall do honour to God our Creator, our Redeemer, and our King. The time will come when we *shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more*; and the refreshments of sleep shall be no more necessary to support life. When death shall be destroyed, sleep, the image and picture of death, shall be destroyed too. There shall be nothing

that looks like death in all that vital world, that world of immortality. *We shall serve the Lord day and night in his temple; that is continually, for there shall be no night there; Rev. vii. 15, 16. and xxi. 25.* Then we shall taste all the true blessedness that human nature is capable of, and that without danger of excess or sin. When God first united these two pieces of his workmanship, the soul and body, and composed a man, he designed him the subject of various pleasures, wherein each part should have been subservient to the other, to render the felicity of the creature perfect. It is sin and death that have entered into our natures, and prevented this noble design in our present state: but the counsel of the Lord shall stand. And when he raises up the body from the grave, it shall leave all the seeds of death behind it. The faculties and the senses shall awake in all their original sprightliness and vigour, and our future heaven shall be furnished with objects suited to entertain those powers, and to convey intense pleasure to glorified minds without danger of satiety or weariness. When the time comes that *there shall be no more death, God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes; there shall be no sorrow nor crying, nor any more pain; for the former things are passed away, and he that sits upon the throne shall say, behold I make all things new!* Rev. xxi. 4, 5.

Then shall we enjoy the constant society of our best friends, and dearest acquaintance; those that have arrived at the new Jerusalem themselves, and have assisted us in our travels thither. And we shall delightfully entertain, and be entertained with the mutual narratives of divine grace, and the wise and holy methods of providence, whereby we have been conducted safe through all the fatigues and dangers of the wilderness to that heavenly country. And that which shall add an unknown relish to all the former blessings, is the full assurance that we shall possess them for ever. For every one of our enemies are then destroyed, and the last of them is death. Here on earth it is a perpetual pain to the mind to think, that those whom we love are mortal; the next moment may divide them from us far as the distance of two worlds. They are seized on a sudden from our eyes, and from our embraces; and this thought allays the delight that we take in their company, and diminishes the joy; but in that world all our friends are immortal, *we shall ever be with the Lord, and ever with one another too; 1 Thess. iv. 17.*

May I be permitted here to make a short reflection on that mournful providence that has joined two lovely relatives in death*, and given occasion for the sad solemnities of this day! The

The Lady Hartopp, daughter of Charles Fleetwood, Esq. and wife to Sir John Hartopp, of Newington, baronet, died Nov. 9, 1711. Mrs. Gould, their daughter, and wife to Mr. Gould, now Sir Nathaniel Gould, of Newington, died 2 days after, viz. Nov. 15, and left their households behind them oppressed with double sorrows.

pious mother led the way to heaven but a few days before the pious daughter followed, each of them the parent of a reputable family, and the descendants from a progenitor*, whose name is in honour among the churches. As mutual affection joined their habitations in life, so the care of surviving friends has laid them to rest in their beds of earth together. We trust they are also joined in the world of blessed spirits on high, and they shall be joined again in the world of glorified saints in the morning of the resurrection. Death their common enemy has taken them both captives together; has bound in his chains the mother and the daughter: but they are prisoners of hope, and together they shall obtain a glorious release.

I would copy a line from that most beautiful elegy of David, and apply it here with more justice than the psalmist could to Saul and Jonathan, 2 Sam. i. 23. *Lovely and pleasant were they in their lives, and in death they were not divided.* Silent were they, and retired from the world, and unknown except to their intimate friends: But God was a witness of their hours of divine retirement. The graces of christianity, and the virtues of domestic life, which are the proper ornaments of the sex, were the mark of their utmost aim and ambition: nor did they seek the flatteries of the court, or the city, nor affect the gaieties of a degenerate age. Humble they were, and averse from public shew and noise; nor will I disturb their graves by making them the subject of public praise. In the hearts of their families, their memory, their image, and their example will live. O may the brightest and best part of their image and example live in the character and practice of all that are left behind!

What a dreadful and overwhelming thought is it to suppose that any of that honoured and numerous household should be divided asunder at the last day! Give all diligence then, my worthy friends, to *make your calling and your election sure*; devote yourselves to the God of your predecessors; trust in the same Saviour; tread in the same paths of holiness; and pursue the same glory. What a joy will it be to that pious lady that is gone before, to find, that those that were dear to her as her own soul have overcome sin and death, and in a blessed succession arrive at the same heaven? Let me intreat you to give her this satisfaction, and not disappoint her prayers and her hopes. Let your venerable surviving parent, who is now confined at home under sorrows and sharp pains, obtain this pleasure. Let that dear partner of her joys and cares behold the power of religion appearing and reigning in all your hearts before his eyes are closed in death. Give both of them this consolation at the appearance of Christ, that they may say, "*Lord, here we are, and*

* Charles Fleetwood, Esq. of Norfolk.

the children that thou hast given us. Here we are with our ancestors, and our offspring, and our kindred around us, adoring thy rich grace together, and entering together into the state of perfect glory which thou hast prepared."

It remains only that I should propose some reflections on the last head of discourse for the meditation of this whole assembly, and especially for those that are engaged in the spiritual warfare, and proceed to daily conquests.

Shall death, with all its attendants, be destroyed for ever? And are these the blessings that shall succeed? Then enter into this joy before-hand by a lively faith, and begin the song of triumph—*O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory?* 1 Cor. xv. 55. *Rejoice not over me, O mine enemy, when I fall I shall arise;* Mic. vii. 8.

After you have fought many battles with Satan, subdued many sins, and encountered a thousand temptations with success, perhaps you find new adversaries still arising; look forward then to this joyful hour, and say, "But I shall one day be for ever free from all these toils and labours of war, for all my enemies shall be overcome, since death the last of them shall be subdued." When you feel the infirmities of this mortal body hang heavy upon your spirits, and damp your devotion, read the words of this promise, and rejoice; "These pains and these langours of nature shall one day vanish and be no more; for death, with all its train, must be destroyed."

When some of your dearest friends are seized by this tyrant, and led away to the grave in his chains, while you are wounded to the very soul, remember, that Christ your Captain, and your Saviour, shall revenge this quarrel upon your last enemy; for he has appointed the hour of his destruction. Mourn not therefore for the dead, as *those that sorrow without hope, for those that sleep in Jesus, the Lord shall bring with him* when he comes; 1 Thess. iv. 13. And he shall join you together in a blessed and durable friendship where it shall be eternally impossible for enemies to break in upon your peace; for death, the last of them, shall be then destroyed. And the Lord has left us this comfort in the end of his sacred writings, *Surely I come quickly.* Let each of us with a cheerful heart reply, *even so, come, Lord Jesus.* Amen.

DISCOURSE II.

The Happiness of Separate Spirits, &c.

Attempted in a Funeral Discourse in Memory of Sir John Hartopp, &c.
deceased.

THE INTRODUCTION.

It is a solemn and mournful occasion that has brought me to this place this day*. Divine Providence, and the will of surviving relatives, call to pay the last sacred and pious respect to the memory of the deceased worthy gentleman, and an excellent christian, who has lately left our world in a good old age.

It is something more than ten years since I was engaged in the same service to the memory of his honoured and pious lady, when by a double and painful stroke the mother and daughter were joined in death; when the two united families were smitten in the tenderest part, and each of them sustain loss that could never be repaired†.

This town was the place which they had all honoured with their habitation, and spent the largest parts of their lives amongst you; but they are become inhabitants of the heavenly city, they dwell in the world of blessed spirits, and I would lead your devoutest thoughts to follow them thither. Come then, let our meditations take their rise from those words of the great apostle, in

HEB. xii. 23.—The Spirits of just men made perfect.

IT is a much sweeter employment to trace the souls of our departed friends into those upper and brighter regions, than to ever dwelling upon the dark prospect, and fixing our eyes upon death, and dust, and the grave: and that not only because it gives us a comfortable view of the persons whom we mourn, but thus it relieves our most weighty and smarting sorrows; but cause it leads us to consider our own best interest, and our highest hopes, and puts us in mind of the communion that we have with those blessed spirits in heaven, while we belong to the church on earth. *We are come*, says the apostle, ver. 22. *We in gospel state, are come to mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem to the innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just made perfect.* What sort of communion it is that good men here below maintain with those exalted spirits, is not my present business.

* Sir John Hartopp died April 1, 1722, in the 85th year of his age the substance of this discourse was delivered briefly at Stoke-Newington April 15, following.

† See a particular account, p 371 of the foregoing discourse in the margin.

ness to describe ; therefore I apply myself immediately to the words of my text, and confine myself to them only. And here I shall consider these four things :

I. Who are particularly designed by *the spirits of the just* ; and here I shall make it evident the apostle intends not merely the spirits of good men, but such good spirits as are dismissed from their mortal bodies.—II. We shall enquire, wherein consists the perfection to which they have arrived, and what are the excellencies in which they are made perfect.—III. What sort of perfection it is they enjoy, and what are the peculiar characters of it.—IV. How they arrive at this perfect state, and what influence the dismissal from their bodies has towards their attainment of it.—And then conclude with a few remarks for our instruction and practice suitable to the present providence.

Sect. I.—*Of the spirits of the just.*—Our first enquiry is, whom are we to understand by the spirits of the just here spoken of? The name of just or righteous men, taken in a large and general sense, as it is often used in scripture, signifies all those who fear and love God, and are accepted of him. In the New Testament they are frequently called saints, believers, or children of God : but in both parts of the bible they are often described by the name of just or righteous, and they are properly called so upon these three accounts :

I. Their persons are made righteous in the sight of God, having their sins forgiven, and their souls justified through the death and righteousness of Jesus Christ. So the word is used ; Rom. v. 19. *By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.* They have seen themselves all guilty and exposed to the wrath of God, they have fled to lay hold on the hope set before them, they have mourned before God, and been weary of sin, they have received the great atonement, they have committed their case by living faith to Jesus the righteous, the surety and the Saviour of perishing sinners ; and that God hath received them into his favour, and has imputed righteousness to them, even that God who is just, and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus. Now his sense cannot reasonably be excluded from the character of a saint, though the word righteous is more frequently taken in the following senses.

II. Their natures are made righteous, and sanctified by the spirit of grace. They have a principle of grace and holiness wrought in them ; so the word signifies ; Eph. iv. 24. *The new man, which is created after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness.* They were once sinners, disobedient and unholy. They were born into this world ; but they are born again, and made new creatures by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Their understandings are enlightened to see the dreadful evil of sin, and a divine beauty of holiness. Their wills are turned from folly and va-

nity, from the love of earth, and sense, and sin, to a holy contempt of the world, and a hatred of all that is sinful ; from a neglect of religion to desires after God, and a delight in him ; from a mere formal profession of the gospel, to the faith and love of Christ, and a zealous pursuit of holiness ; and they place their highest hopes and their joys in things divine, spiritual, and eternal.

III. Their lives are righteous, and conformable to the will of God revealed in his word. So the term righteous signifies, 1 *John* iii. 7. *He that doth righteousness is righteous.* The just man makes it the business of his life to do works of righteousness, taken in the largest sense ; to worship God, to seek his glory, to obey his will, which is the rule of righteousness ; to do him all the service on earth that his station and circumstances admit of, and to deal faithfully and justly among men, and do them all the good that lies in his power.

These are the just men whose spirits are spoken of in my text. Now it is evident the apostle here means their spirits which are in heaven, and departed from these mortal bodies, because the train of blessed companions, which he describes just before, leads our thoughts to the invisible world.

If we can suppose any part of these two verses to refer to earth, and our present state, it must be when he says, *ye are come to mount Zion, to the city of the living God*, that is, to the visible church of Christ, under the gospel dispensation. But then he adds, *you are come also to the heavenly Jerusalem*, which may probably include all the inhabitants of heaven in general ; and descending to particulars, he adds, *to an innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first born who are written in heaven* : whereby we must understand the whole invisible church of God among men, if we do not confine it to those who are already of the church triumphant. And next he leads us to *God the Judge of All*, and to *the spirits of just men made perfect* ; that is, spirits released from flesh and blood, who have stood before God their judge, and are determined to a state of perfection in heaven.

Besides, when St. Paul speaks of fellow-christians here on earth, it is not his manner to call them spirits, but men, or brethren, or saints, &c. therefore by the naked and single term spirits, he distinguishes these persons from those who dwell in mortal bodies and raises our thoughts to the world of blessed souls, released from the wretched ties and bondage of flesh and blood, the spirits of good men departed from this earth, and dwelling in the better regions of heaven.

I would here take notice also, that the apostle perhaps in this place chuses rather to call them just or righteous men, which is a term used frequently both in the Old and New Testament, that he might include the patriarchs and the Jewish saints as well

the souls of departed christians. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Joseph, Daniel, and David, Job, Moses and Elijah, dwell in that happy world, with a thousand other spirits of renown in the ancient church, as well as the spirits of those that have seen the Messiah, and believed in Jesus of Nazareth. What a noble and glorious assembly! What an amazing and blissful society of many souls, gathered from various nations, and from all ages, and joined together in the heavenly Jerusalem, the family of God above!

I shall proceed now to the second thing I proposed.

Sect. II.—*Of their perfection in knowledge, holiness, and joy.* The second enquiry is this, wherein consists the perfection at which these spirits are arrived? The word perfect cannot be taken here, in its most extensive, absolute, and sublime sense, for that sense it can belong only to God; he is and must be the fountain and centre of all perfection for ever; all excellency and all blessedness in a supreme degree meet in him; none besides him can pretend to absolute perfection. Nor is the word used here in its most sublime sense, in which it may be applied to a creature; for when the spirits of just men are made never so perfect, the blessed soul of our Lord Jesus Christ will be more perfect than they; for *in all things he must have the pre-eminence*; 1 Cor. i. 18.

Perfection therefore is taken in a comparative sense here, as in many other places of scripture. So St. Paul calls those christians on earth perfect, who are advanced in knowledge and christianity far above their fellows; as in 1 Cor. ii. 6. *I speak wisdom among them that are perfect.* Phil. iii. 15. *Let as many as are perfect be thus minded.* So that blessed souls above are only perfect in a comparative sense. They are advanced in every excellency of nature, and every divine privilege, far above all their fellow spirits here on earth.

I desire it also to be observed here, That the word perfect doth not generally imply another sort of character than what man possessed before; but a far more exalted degree of the same character which he was before possessed of. The perfection then of the spirits of the just in heaven, is a glorious and transcendent degree of those spiritual and heavenly qualifications and blessings which they enjoyed here on earth in a lower measure; implying also, a freedom from all the defects and disorders which they were here exposed, and which are inconsistent with their present felicity.

If I were to branch it into particulars, I would name but these three, viz. 1. A great increase of knowledge without the mixture of error. 2. A glorious degree of holiness without the mixture of the least sin. 3. Constant peace and joy without the mixture of any sorrow or uneasiness. Let us consider them dis-

tingly. 1. A great increase of knowledge, without the mixture of error; and in this sense it is perfect knowledge. Part of the happiness of spirits consists in contemplation; and the more excellent the object is which we contemplate, and the more perfect our acquaintance with it, the greater is our happiness. Therefore the knowledge of God, the infinite and eternal Spirit, is the true felicity of all the ranks of created spirits in the upper and lower worlds. What unknown and unrivalled beauties are contained in the attributes of his nature! What a heavenly pleasure is it to lose ourselves amongst the boundless perfections of his self-sufficiency and eternal existence, his wisdom, his power, his justice, his holiness, his goodness, and his truth! And what a divine harmony amongst them all!

How does the philosopher entertain and feast himself with daily discoveries of new wonders amongst the works of God, and beholds the print of the hands of his Creator on them all! What superior glories are seen by the inquiring christian amongst the greater wonders of his grace! and he receives the discovery of them with superior delight, for his eternal life is in them. John xvii. 3. *This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* To know the Father and the Son according to the revelation which they have given of themselves in the gospel, is not only the way to obtain life eternal, and consequently the business of the saints below; but the knowledge of this Son and this Father in their natural glories, in their personal characters, in their sublime and mysterious relations to each other, and in their most amazing contrivances and transactions for the recovery of lost sinners, may be matter of the most pleasing enquiry, and delicious contemplation, to the angels themselves; 1 Pet. i. 12. *These are the things which the angels desire to look into.* And the spirits of the just made perfect are employed in the same delightful work; for which they have much more concern; and a dearer interest in it. We know something of God by the light of nature. The reason that is within each of us, shines like a slender candle in a private room, and gives us some twinkling and uncertain notions of our Creator. The notices that we obtain by the light of grace, or the gospel here on earth, are far brighter and surer, like the moon at midnight shining upon a dark world, or like the rise of the morning star, and the dawning of the day. But the knowledge which departed spirits obtain of their Creator and their Redeemer in the light of glory, is as far superior to that of nature and grace, as the lustre of the meridian-sun exceeds the pale moon-beams, or the glimmering twilight of the morning.

This is what the apostle describes, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 11, 12
 "For we know but in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be

gone away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." The imperfection of our knowledge in this world consists much in this, that we are liable to perpetual mistakes. A thousand errors stand thick around us in our enquiries after truth, and we stumble upon error often in our wisest pursuits of knowledge; *for we see but through a glass darkly, but then we shall know, even as we are known, and see face to face*; that is, we shall have a more immediate and intuitive view of God and Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, without such mediums as are now necessary for our instruction. We shall know them in a manner something a-kin to the way whereby God knows us, though not in the same degree of perfection; for that is impossible. Yet in these respects our knowledge shall bear some resemblance to the knowledge of God himself, viz. that it shall be not merely a rational knowledge, by inferences drawn from his works, not merely a knowledge by narration, or report and testimony, such as we now enjoy by his word; but it shall be such a sort of knowledge as we have of a man when we see his face, and it shall also be a certain and unwavering knowledge, without remaining doubts, without error or mistake. O happy spirits that are thus divinely employed, and are entertaining themselves and their fellow-spirits with those noble truths and transporting wonders of nature and grace, of God and Christ, and things heavenly, which are all mystery, intanglement and confusion to our thoughts in the present state!

II. This perfection consists in a glorious degree of holiness without the mixture of the least sin; and in this sense it is perfect holiness.

All holiness is contained and summed up in the love and the delightful service of God and our fellow-creatures. When we attempt to love God here on earth, and by the alluring discoveries of grace try to raise our affections to things of heaven, what sinful damps and coldness hang heavy upon us? What counter-allurements do we find towards sin and the creature, by the mischievous influences of the flesh and this world? What an estrangement from God do the best of christians complain of? And when they get nearest to their Saviour in their exercises of holy love, they find perpetual reason to mourn over their distance, and they cry out often with pain at their hearts, "What a cursed enemy abides still in me, and divides me from the dearest object of my desire and joy!" But *the spirits of the just made perfect*, have the nearest views of God their Father, and their Saviour; and as they see them face to face, so, may I venture to express it, they love them with a union of heart to heart; for *he that is*

joined to the Lord in the nearest union in heaven, may well be called *one spirit with him*, since the apostle says the same thing of the saints on earth; 1 Cor. vi. 17.

As our love of God is imperfect here, so is all our devotion and worship. While we are in this world, sin mingles with all our religious duties: We come before God with our prayers and our songs, but our thoughts wander from him in the midst of worship, and we are gone on a sudden to the ends of the earth. We go up to his temple, and we try to serve him there an hour or two; then we return to the world, and we almost forget the delights of the sanctuary, and the God we have seen there. *But the spirits of the just made perfect are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple*; Rev. vii. 15. And though they may not be literally engaged in one everlasting act of worship, yet they are ever busy in some glorious services for him. If they should be sent on any message to other worlds, yet they never wander from the sight of their God: For if the guardian angels of children *always behold the face of our heavenly Father*; Mat. xviii. 10. even when they are employed in their divine errands to our world; much more may we suppose the spirits of just men made perfect never lose the blissful vision, whatsoever their employments shall or can be.

And as our acts of worship on earth, and converse with God, are very imperfect, so is our zeal and activity for God extremely defective, but it shall be ever bright and burning in the upper world.

When we would exert our zeal for God on earth, how many corrupt affections mix with that zeal and spoil it? *Dead flies, that cause that noble ointment to send forth a stinking savour!* How much of self, and pride, and vain ambition too often mingle with our desires to serve Christ, and his gospel? Some have preached Christ out of *vain glory*, or envy; and a mixture of those vices may taint our pious ministrations. When we seem to *drive furiously* like Jehu to the destruction of the priests and the worship of Baal, too often the wild-fire of our lusts and passions, our envy and wrath, and secret revenge join together to animate our chariot-wheels. When we are ready to say with him, *come, and see my zeal for the Lord*, perhaps God espies in our hearts too much of the same carnal mixture; for Jehu exalted the true God, that he might establish himself a king; 2 Kings x. 16. But the spirits of the just are perfect in zeal, and pure from all mixtures. Their very natures are like the angels, they are so many flames of sacred and unpoluted fire, *the ministers of God that do his pleasure*, and then hide their faces behind their wings; when they have done all for God, they fall down and confess they are nothing.

Temptation and sin have no place in those happy regions.

These are the evils that belong to earth and hell ; but within the gates of heaven nothing must enter that tempteth, *nothing that defileth* ; Rev. xxi. 27. It is the mixture of sinful thoughts and idle words, sinful actions and irregular affections, that makes our state of holiness so imperfect here below. *We groan within ourselves, being burdened* ; we would be rid of these criminal weaknesses, these guilty attendants of our lives : But the spirits above are under a sweet necessity of being for ever holy ; their natures have put on perfection ; the image of God is so far compleated in them, that nothing contrary to the divine nature remains in all their frame ; for they see God in all the fairest beauties of his holiness, and they adore and love. They behold him without a veil, and are *changed into the same image, from glory to glory*, 2 Cor iii. 18. If these words are applicable to the state of grace, much more to that of glory. They see Christ as he is, and they are made completely like him, 1 John iii. 2. which is true concerning the state of separate spirits, as well as the hour of resurrection.

As their love to God is perfect, so is their love to all their fellow-saints. We try to love our fellow-creatures and fellow-christians here on earth ; but we have so many corrupt passions of our own, and so many infirmities and imperfections belong to our neighbours also, that mutual love is very imperfect. *Love is the fulfilling of the law* ; Rom. xiii. 10. But we shall never fulfil that law perfectly till we are joined to the spirits of the just in glory, where there is no inhabitant without the flame of sacred love, no single spirit unlovely or unbeloved.

In those happy mansions there is no envy raised by the perfections or the honours of our neighbour spirits ; no detracting thought is known there, no reproachful word is heard in that country ; and perhaps, no word of reproach is to be found in the whole heavenly language. Malice and slander, and the very names of infamy, are unknown in those regions ; and wrath and strife are eternal strangers. No divided opinions, no party quarrels, no seeds of discord are sown in heaven. Our little angry jars and contentions have no place there, and the noise of war and controversy ceases for ever. There are no offences given, and none are taken in that world of love. Neither injury, nor resentment, is ever known or practised there, those bitter and fatal springs of revenge and blood. Universal benevolence runs through the whole kingdom ; each spirit wishes well to his neighbour as to himself ; and till we arrive there, we shall never be made perfect in love, nor shall we see the blessed characters of it described in the scriptures fully copied out in living examples.

In that holy world dwells God himself, who is original love ; there resides our Lord Jesus Christ, who is love incarnate ; and from that sacred head flows an eternal stream of love through

every member, and blesseth all the inhabitants of that land with its divine refreshments. Holiness is perfect among the spirits of the just, because love is perfect there.

Object. But are there not several graces and virtues that belong to the saints on earth that are finished at death, and have no room in heaven? How then can perfection of holiness in heaven consist in an increase of the same graces we practice on earth?

Ans. Yes, there are several such virtues and such graces, as faith and repentance, and godly sorrow, patience and forbearance, love to enemies, and forgiveness of injuries, &c. But these arise from the very imperfection of our present state, from the sins or follies of ourselves or our fellow-creatures. Faith arises from the want of sight; repentance from the return of guilt; godly-sorrow from the workings of sin in us: Patience owes its very nature and exercise to the afflictions we sustain from the hand of God; and forbearance and forgiveness respects injuries that we receive from our fellow-creatures. But in heaven, faith, so far as it regards the absence of God and Christ, is lost in sight and enjoyment, as the light of a glimmering taper is lost in the blaze of sun-beams. Repentance of old sins, so far as it is attended with any painful or shameful passions, ceases for ever in heaven; and there is no new guilt for us to repent of: there shall be no evil working in us to give pain to the spirit; no affliction from God to demand a patient submission; no injuries from men to be borne or forgiven.

But there is the same pious temper still continues in the spirits of the just made perfect, which was the spring of those graces on earth; and could the objects or occasions of them remain, every spirit there would exercise the same grace, and that in a more glorious and perfect manner, for their very natures are all over holy.

III. The last thing I shall mention, wherein the perfection in the saints above consists, is, their constant peace and exalted joy, without any mixture of sorrow or uneasiness; and this is joy and peace in perfection:

If our knowledge, our love, and our holiness, are imperfect on earth, our joys must be so. The mistakes and the follies (which we are liable here below, the guilt that pains the conscience, and the sin that is restless and ever working within us, will bring forth fruits of present sorrow, where they do not produce the fruit of eternal death. A saint in this world will groan under these burdens; and it is divinely natural for him to cry out, *wretched man! who shall deliver me from the body of this death* Rom. vii. 24.

Thus there are many things that are within us, and that belong to us in this world, that forbid the perfection of our joy

besides all these, we are attached and tied down, to many uneasinesses, while we dwell on earth.

This world is a fair theatre of the wisdom and power of God, it is hung round and replenished with temptations to fallen, proper for a state of trial; soft and flattering temptations, by the senses are ever drawing away the soul from God and ven, and breaking in upon its divine repose and joy; and le we are surrounded with a thousand dangers, we cannot be to dwell in *perfect peace*. The follies and crimes of others ict the soul of a good man, and put him to pain, *as the righteous of Lot was vexed in Sodom from day to day with their unlaudeeds*; 2 Pct. ii. 8. The greater vexations, and the little zing accidents of life that attend us, disturb the sacred rest of saint, and ruffle or wound his spirit. And the best of men on account are sometimes ready to cry out with David; *Psal. l. 5, 6. Woe is me that I sojourn in Meshech, and dwell in the is of Kedar: My soul hath long dwelt with them that hate peace: hat I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away, and be est*; *Psal. lv. 6.*

And sometimes God himself is absent from the soul that longs r him; *he hides his face, and then who can behold it?* We are itten with a sense of sin, and the conscience is restless. We nder from thing to thing in much confusion of spirit; we go n providences to ordinances, from one word in the bible to ano r, from self-examination and inward guilt to the blood of Christ, l the mercy of the Father; and it may be outward sorrows fall us at the same time, guilt and judgment attend us at once: ic deep of affliction calls to the deep of sin at the noise of : floods of divine anger; *Psal. xlii. 7.* We are kept in the :rk for a season, and we see not the light of his countenance, nor ow our own interest in his love. *We go forward, as Job did, he is not there; and backward, but we cannot perceive him, &c.* l the comfort that a good man hath at such a season, is to ap- al to God, *that he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath ed me, I humbly hope I shall come forth as gold*; Job xxiii. 8, 10.

But the spirits of the just made perfect, are in peaceful and joy- is circumstances. They know God, for they see his face; they now that they love him, for they feel and enjoy it as the warm- t and sweetest affection of their hearts: and they are sure God res them too; for every moment they taste his love, and live on it in all the rich varieties of its manifestation. O what un- own and endless satisfactions of mind arise from the full assu- nce of the love of God! What tongue can express, or what art can conceive the sacred pleasure that fills every soul in hea- n, under the immediate impressions of divine love? When the or trembling doubting believer, that knew himself to be infinitely

unworthy of the favour of God or of the meanest place in his house, shall be acknowledged as a son in the midst of his Father's court on high, and amongst millions of congratulating angels!

No cloud shall ever interpose, no melancholy gloom, no shadow of darkness shall ever arise in those regions: for the countenance of God, like the sun in its highest strength, shall shine and smile upon them for ever. And through the length of all their immortality, there shall not be the least interruption of the sweet intercourse of love, on God's side, or on theirs. In that world there is no sorrow, for there is no sin; *the inhabitants of that city, of the heavenly Jerusalem, shall never say I am sick; for the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity*; Is. xxxiii. 24. When the righteous are dismissed from the flesh, *they enter into peace, their bodies rest in their beds of earth, and their spirits walk in heaven, each one in his own uprightness*; Is. lvii. 2. And as there is no sin within them to render them uneasy, so there is no troublesome guest, no evil attendant without them, that can give them fear or pain; no sinners to vex them, no tempter to deceive them, no spirit of hell to devour or destroy; Is. xxxv. 9, 10. No lion shall be there, nor any venomous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

God himself shall never be absent, and then they cannot be unhappy. *They behold his face in righteousness, and they are satisfied when they awake with his likeness*; Ps. xvii. 15. When they leave this world of dreams and shadows, and awake into that bright world of spirits, they behold the face of God, and are made like him, as well as when their bodies shall awake out of the dust of death in the morning of the resurrection, formed in the image of the blessed Jesus. That glorious scripture, in Rev. xxi. 3, 4. be the sense of it what it will, can never be fulfilled in more glory on earth than belongs to the state of heaven. The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

The saints above see their blessed Lord and Saviour in all his exalted glories, and they are with him where he is, according to his own prayer and his own promise; John xvii. 24. and xiv. 3. *They are absent from the body, and present with the Lord.* They have esteemed him on earth above all things, and longed after the sight of his face, *whom having not seen they loved*; 1 Pet. i. 8.

but now they behold him, the dear Redeemer that gave his life for them, they rejoice with joy much more unspeakable and full of superior glory.

Thus have I shewn wherein this perfection of spirits in heaven consists. It is a high and glorious degree of all those excellencies and privileges they were blessed with on earth, without any mixture of the contrary evil. It is a perfection of knowledge, holiness and joy.

And canst thou hear of all this glory, O my soul, and meditate of all this joy, and yet cleave to earth and the dust still? Hast thou not often mourned over thy ignorance, and felt a sensible pain in the narrowness, the darkness, and the confusion of thy ideas, after the utmost stretch and labour of thought? How little dost thou know of the essence of God, even thy God, and how little of the two united natures of Jesus thy beloved Saviour? How small and scanty is thy knowledge of thyself, and of all thy fellow-spirits, while thou art imprisoned in a cottage of clay? And art thou willing to abide in this dark prison still, with all thy follies and mistakes about thee? Does not the land of light above invite thy longing and awaken thy desires; those bright regions where knowledge is made perfect, and where thy God and thy Redeemer are seen without a veil. And is not the perfect holiness of heaven another allurement to thee, O my soul? Dost thou not stretch thy wings for flight at the very mention of a world without temptation and without sin? How often hast thou groaned here under the burden of thy guilt, and the body of death? How hard hast thou wrestled with thy inbred iniquities? An hourly war, and a long toilsome conflict! How hast thou mourned in secret, and complained to thy God of these restless inward enemies of thy peace? And art thou so backward still to enter into those peaceful regions where these enemies can never come, and where battle and war are known no more, but perfect and everlasting holiness adorns the inhabitants, and crowns of victory and triumph.

O the shattered and imperfect devotion of the best saints on earth! O the feeble fluttering efforts of praise! What poor hallelujahs we send up to heaven on notes of discord, and as it were, on broken strings? Art thou not willing, O my soul, to honour thy God and thy Saviour with sweeter harmony? And yet what a reluctance dost thou shew to enter into that world of joy and praise, because the dark shadow of death hangs over the passage? Come, awake, arise, shake off thy fears; and let the sense and notice of what the spirits of the just above enjoy, raise thy courage, and excite thee to meet the first summons with sacred delight and rapture.

But I fear I have dwelt too long upon these three last particulars, because they are matters of more obvious notice, and more

frequent discourse ; yet they are so entertaining, that I knew not how to leave them. But I would not spend all my time on common topics, while I am paying honour to the memory of an uncommon christian. I proceed therefore to the next general head.

Sect. III.—*Of the various kinds and degrees of the employments and pleasures of heaven.*—Having shewn that by the *spirits of just men* in my text we are to understand the souls of all the *pious* and the good that have left the body ; and having described their perfection as a state of complete knowledge, holiness and joy ; the third thing I am to consider, is, what sort of perfection this is, or what are some of the special characters of it. And here I beg your attention to some pleasing speculations which are agreeable to the word of God, and to the nature and reason of things, and which have often given my thoughts a sacred entertainment.

I. It is such a perfection as admits of great variety of employments and pleasures, according to the various turn and genius of each particular spirit. For the word perfection does not necessarily imply a state of universal and constant uniformity.

That the mind of every man here on earth has a different turn of genius, and peculiar manner of thought, is evident to every wise observer. And why should not every pious mind or spirit carry to heaven with it so much of that turn and manner, as is natural and innocent ? I grant it is a possible thing, that many different geniuses of men on earth may perhaps be accounted for by the different constitution of the body, the frame of the brain, and the various texture of the nerves, or may be ascribed to the coarser or finer blood, and corporeal spirits ; as well as to different forms of education and custom, &c. These may be able to produce a wondrous variety in the tempers and turns of inclination, even though all souls were originally the same : But I dare not assert that there is no difference betwixt the souls themselves, at their first creation and union with the body. There are some considerations would lead one to believe, that there are real diversities of genius among the spirits themselves in their own nature.

God, the great Creator, hath seemed to delight himself in a rich variety of productions in all his worlds which we are acquainted with. Let us make a pause here, and stand still and survey the overflowing riches of his wisdom, which are laid out on this little spot of his vast dominions, this earthly globe on which we tread ; and we may imagine the same variety and riches overspreading all those upper worlds which we call planets or stars.

What an amazing multiplicity of kinds of creatures dwell on this earth ? If we search the animated world and survey it, we shall find there are some that fly, some that creep or slide, an

some walk on feet, or run : And every sort of animals cloathed with a proper covering ; some of them more gay and magnificent in their attire than Solomon in all his glory ; and each of them furnished with limbs, powers, and properties fitted for their own support, convenience and safety. How various are the kinds of birds and beasts that pass daily before our eyes ! The fields and the woods, the forests and the deserts, have their different inhabitants. The savage and the domestic animals how numerous they are ! and the fowl both wild and tame ! What riches of dress and drapery are provided to clothe them in all their proper habits of nature ? What a number of painted insects fill the air, and overspread the ground ? What bright spangles adorn their little bodies and their wings when they appear in their summer livery ? What interwoven streaks of scarlet beauty, mingled with green and gold ? We behold a strange profusion of divine wisdom yearly in our climate, in these little animated crumbs of clay, as well as in the animals of larger size. And yet there are multitudes of new strange creatures that we read of in the narratives of foreign counties : And what a vast profusion of entertainments for them all ? How are the mountains and meadows adorned with a surprising plenty of grass and herbs, fruits and flowers almost infinite, for the use of man and meaner animals ?

In the world of waters a thousand unknown creatures swim and sport themselves, and leap with excess of life even in the freezing seas : Millions of inhabitants range through that liquid wilderness with swiftest motion, and the wonders of their frame and nature proclaim the skill of an Almighty Maker. Others of the watery kind are but half alive, and are tossed from place to place by the heaving ocean. Think of the leviathan, the eel, and the oyster, and tell me if God has not shewn a rich variety of contrivance in them : And as various as their nature is, so various is the means of their life ; proper beds of lodging are provided for them, and a variety of food suited to uphold every nature.

Mankind is a world of itself, made up of the mingled or united natures of flesh and spirit. What an infinite difference of faces and features among the sons and daughters of men ? And how much more various are the turns of their appetites, tempers, and inclinations, their humours and passions ? And what glorious employment hath divine wisdom ordained for itself, in framing these millions of creatures with understandings and wills of so inconceivable a variety, so vast a difference of genius and inclination, to be the subjects of its providential government ? And what a surprising harmony is there in the immense and incomprehensive scheme of divine counsels, arising from the various stations and businesses of men so infinitely diversified and distinct from one another, and centring in one great end the divine glory ? *An amazing contrivance, and a design worthy of God.*

Now is the pure intellectual world alone destitute alone of this delightful variety? Is the nature of spirits utterly incapable of this diversity and beauty, without the aids of flesh and blood? Hath the wisdom of God displayed no riches of contrivance there? And must there be such a dull uniformity no where but in the country where spirits dwell, spirits the noblest parts of God's creation and dominion? Has he poured out all the various glories of divine art and workmanship in the inanimate and brutal or animal world, and left the higher sort of creatures all of one genius, and one turn and mould, to replenish all the intellectual regions? Surely it is hard to believe it. In the world of angels we find various kinds and orders; St. Paul tells us of *thrones* and *dominions*, and *principalities*; Col, i. 16. and St. Peter speaks of *angels* and *authorities*, and *powers*; 1 Pet. iii. 22, and in other parts of the word of God we read the names of an *archangel*, a *seraph*, and a *cherub*. And no doubt, as their degrees and stations in the heavenly world differ from each other, so their talents and genius to sustain those different stations are very various, and exactly suited to their charge and business. And it is no improbable thought, that the souls of men differ from each other as much as angels.

But if there were no difference at first betwixt the turn and genius of different spirits in their original formation, yet this we are sure of, that God designed their habitation in flesh and blood, and their passage through this world as the means to form and fit them for various stations in the unknown world of spirits. The souls of men having dwelt many years in particular bodies, have been influenced and habituated to particular turns of thought, both according to the various constitutions of those bodies, and the more various studies and businesses, and occurrences of life. Surely then we may with reason suppose the spirits departing from flesh to carry with them some bent and inclination towards various pleasures and employments. So we may reasonably imagine each sinful spirit that leaves the body, to be more abundantly inflamed with these particular vices which it indulged here, whether ambition, or pride, or covetousness, or malice, or envy, or aversion to God, and to all goodness, and their various sorts of punishments may arise from their own variety of lusts, giving each of them a peculiar inward torment. And why may not the spirits of the just made perfect have the same variety of taste and pleasure in that happy world above, according as they are fitted for various kinds of sacred entertainments in their state of preparation, and during their residence in flesh and blood? *He that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God*; 2 Cor. v. 5.

In the world of human spirits made perfect, David and Moses dwell: Both of them were trained up in feeding the flocks of their fathers in the wilderness, to feed and to rule the nation

of Israel, the chosen flock of God. And may we not suppose them also trained up in the hearts of holy government on earth, to be the chiefs of some blessed army, some sacred tribe in heaven? They were directors of the forms of worship in the church below under divine inspiration: And might not that fit them to become leaders of some celestial assembly, when a multitude of the sons of God above come at stated seasons to present themselves before the throne? Both of them know how to celebrate the praise of their Creator in sacred melody; but David was the chief of mortals in this harmonious work: And may we not imagine that he is or shall be a master of heavenly music, before or after the resurrection, and teach some of the choirs above to tune their harps to *the lamb that was slain*?

But to come down to more modern times, is there not a Boyle, (a) and a Ray, (b) in heaven? Pious souls who were trained up in sanctified philosophy; and surely they are fitted beyond their fellow-saints, to contemplate the wisdom of God in the works of his hands. Is there not a More, (c) and a Howe, (d) that have exercised their minds in an uncommon acquaintance with the world of spirits? And doubtless their thoughts are refined and improved in the upper world, and yet still engaged in the same pursuit. There is also a Goodwin, (e) and an Owen, (f) who have laid out the vigour of their enquiries in the glories and wonders of the person of Christ, his bloody sacrifice, his dying love, and his exalted station at the right-hand of God. The first of these, with a penetrating genius, traced out many a new and uncommon thought, and made rich discoveries by digging in the mines of scripture. The latter of them humbly pursued and confirmed divine truth; and both of them were eminent in promoting faith and piety, spiritual peace and joy, upon the principles of grace and the gospel. Their labours in some of these subjects, to doubt, have prepared them for some correspondent peculiarities in the state of glory. For though the doctrines of the passion, the priesthood, and the grace of Christ, are themes which all the glorified souls converse with and rejoice in; yet spirits that

(a) The honourable Robert Boyle, Esq. a most pious enquirer into nature, and an improver of the experimental philosophy.

(b) Mr. John Ray, one of the ministers ejected for nonconformity 1662, he employed most of his studies afterwards in the cultivation of natural philosophy, in collections and remarks on the variety of plants, birds, beasts, fishes, &c. and writ several treatises to improve natural philosophy in the service of religion.

(c) Dr. Henry More, a great searcher into the world of spirits, and a pious reformer of the church of England.

(d) Mr. John Howe, a name well known and highly honoured for his sagacity of thought, his exalted ideas, and converse with the spiritual world, as appears in his writings.

(e) Dr. Thomas Goodwin. And

(f) Dr. John Owen, two famous divines of prime reputation among the churches in the last century.

have been trained up in them with peculiar delight for forty or fifty years, and devoted most of their time to these blessed contemplations, have surely gained some advantage by it, some peculiar fitness to receive the heavenly illuminations of these mysteries above their fellow-spirits.

There is also the soul of an ancient Eusebius, (*g*) and the latter spirits of an Usher (*h*) and a Burnet, (*i*) who have entertained themselves and the world with the sacred histories of the church, and the wonders of divine providence, in its preservation and recovery. There is a Tillotson, (*k*) that has cultivated the subjects of holiness, peace, and love, by his pen and his practice: There is a Baxter, (*l*) that has wrought hard for an end of controversies, and laboured with much zeal for the conversion of souls, though with much more success in the last than in the first.

Now though all the spirits in heaven enjoy the general happiness of the love of God and Christ, and the pleasurable review of providence; yet may we not suppose these spirits have some special circumstances of sacred pleasure, suited to their labours and studies in their state of trial on earth? For the church on earth is but a training-school for the church on high, and as it were a tiring-room in which we are drest in proper habits for our appearance and our places in that bright assembly,

But some will reprove me here; and say, what must none but ministers, and authors, and learned men have their distinguished rewards and glories in the world of spirits? May not artificers, and traders, and pious women be fitted by their character and conduct on earth for peculiar stations and employments in heaven?

Yes doubtless, their zeal for the honour of God, their fervent love to Christ, their patience under long trials, and the variety of their graces exercised according to their stations on earth, may render them peculiarly fitted for special rewards on high: The wisdom of God will not be at a loss to find out distinguishing pleasures to recompence them all; though where the very station and business of this life is such as makes a nearer approach to the blessedness and business of heaven, it is much easier for us to guess at the nature of that future recompence.

Let me ask my own soul then, "soul what art thou busy

(*g*) Eusebius, one of the fathers of the christian church, who wrote the history of the primitive ages of christianity.

(*h*) Dr. John Usher, in the last century, archbishop of Armagh, whose chronological writings and his piety have rendered his name honourable in the world.

(*i*) Dr. Gilbert Burnet, late bishop of Salisbury, whose serious religion and zeal to promote it among the clergy, made him almost as famous as his *History of the English Reformation*.

(*k*) The names of Dr. John Tillotson, late archbishop of Canterbury; and

(*l*) Mr. Richard Baxter, a divine of great note among the protestant dissenters, need no further paraphrase to make them known.

out? What is thy chief employment during thy present state of trial? I hope thou art not making *provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof*; for then thou art fit for no place in heaven, the doors will be for ever shut against thee. But what special works of the spirit art thou engaged in? Dost thou redeem what hours thou art able, from necessary businesses of life, to do more immediate service for God, to converse with things heavenly? Art thou seeking to gain a proper meetness for the sublimer employments of that upper world, and a relish of the most refined pleasures?"

But I proceed to the second particular:

II. The perfection of the spirits above, not only admits of a great variety of entertainments, according to the various relish and inclination of the blessed, but it is such a perfection as allows of different degrees even in the same blessedness, according to the different capacities of spirits, and their different degrees of preparation. The word perfection does not always require equality. If all the souls in heaven were of one mould, and of one nature, and inclination, yet there may be different sizes of capacity even in the same genius, and a different degree of preparation for the same delights and enjoyments; therefore though all the spirits of the just were uniform in their natures and pleasures, and all perfect; yet one spirit may possess more happiness and glory than another, because it is more capacious of intellectual blessings, and better prepared for them. So when vessels of various size are thrown into the same ocean, there will be a great difference in the quantity of the liquid which they receive, though they might be full to the brim, and all made of the richest metal.

Now there is much evidence of this truth in the holy scriptures. Our Saviour intimates such differences of rewards in several of his expressions. Mat. xix. 28. He promised the apostles, that they *shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*. And it is probable this may denote something of superior honour or dignity above the meanest of the saints. And even among the apostles themselves he seems to allow of a difference; for though he would not promise James and John to be next to him, *on his right-hand and his left in his kingdom*, Mat. xx. 20, &c. yet he does not deny that there are such distinct dignities, but says, *It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of his Father*, ver. 23. Again our Lord says; Mat. x. 41, *he that receives a prophet, and entertains him as a prophet, shall have a prophet's reward*; and he that entertains a righteous man, agreeable to his character, and from a real esteem of his righteousness, *shall have a righteous man's reward*: And even the meanest sort of entertainment, *a cup of cold water given to a disciple for the sake of his character, shall not go without some reward*. Here are three sorts of degrees of reward mentioned,

extending to the life to come, as well as to this life : Now though neither of them can be merited by works, but all are entirely conferred by grace, yet, as one observes here, " The Lord hath fixed a proportion between the work and the reward ; so that as one has different degrees of goodness, the other shall have different degrees of excellency.

Our Saviour assures us, that the torments of hell shall admit of various degrees and distinctions ; some will be more exquisite and terrible than others ; *It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, who never sinned against half so much light, than it shall be for Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum where Christ himself had preached his gospel, and confirmed it with most evident miracles ; Mat. xi. 21—24.* And the servants who did not the will of their Lord, shall be beaten with more or fewer stripes, according to their different degrees of knowledge and advantages of instruction ; *Luke xii. 47, 48.* Now may we not, by a parallel reasoning, suppose there will be various orders and degrees of reward in heaven, as well as punishment in hell ; since there is scarce a greater variety among the degrees of wickedness among sinners on earth, than there is of holiness among the saints ? When the apostle is describing the glories of the body at the great resurrection, he seems to represent the differences of glory that shall be conferred on different saints, by the difference of the great luminaries of heaven ; *1 Cor. xv. 41, 42.* " There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars : for one star differs from another in glory : So also is the resurrection of the dead.

The prophet Daniel led the way to this description, and the same Spirit taught the apostle the same language ; *Dan. xii. 2, 3.* *And many of them, that 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, with common glory at the brightness of the firmament ; and they that turn many to righteousness, shall have a peculiar lustre, as the stars for ever and ever.* And if there be a difference in the visible glories of the saints at the resurrection, if *those who turn many to righteousness* shall sparkle in that day, with brighter beams than those who are only wise for their own salvation ; the same reason leads us to believe a difference of spiritual glory in the state of separate spirits, when the recompence of their labours is begun. So *1 Cor. iii. 8.* *He that planteth and he that watereth are one, and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.* If all be rewarded alike, the apostle would not have said, each man shall receive according to his own labour. Surely since there is a distinction of labours, there will be a distinction of rewards too. And it is with this view that the same apostle exhorts the Corin-

thians, 1 Epist. xv. 58. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Now that great labour and diligence, that stedfastness in profession, and that zeal in practice, to which the apostle exhorts them, might seem to be in vain, if those who were far less laborious, less zealous, and less stedfast, should obtain an equal recompence.

It is upon the same principle that he encourages them to holy patience under afflictive trials; 2 Cor. iv. 17. when he says, "our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not to the things that are seen," and temporal, but to the things invisible and eternal. Now if the saint, who was called to heaven almost as soon as he was made a christian, and went through no sufferings, should possess the same weight of glory with the martyrs and confessors, under the long and tedious train of cruelties which they sustained from men, or painful trials from the hand of God; I cannot see how their afflictions could be said to work for them *a far more exceeding weight of glory*. He urges them also to great degrees of liberality from the same motive; 2 Cor. ix. 6. "This I say, he that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall also reap bountifully." Which words may reasonably be construed to signify the blessings of the life to come, as well as the blessings of the present life; for this apostle speaking of the same duty of liberality, expresses the same encouragement under the same metaphors; Gal. vi. 6, 7, 8, 9. "Let him, that is taught in the word, communicate to him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap: For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." When God distributes the riches of his glory amongst the saints in heaven, he pours them out in a large and bountiful manner upon those who have distributed the good things of this life bountifully to the poor; but he rewards the narrow-souled christian with a more sparing hand.

With the same design does the apostle encourage christians to great watchfulness against sin and heresy, as well as ministers to a solicitous care of their doctrine and preaching; 1 Cor. iii. 12, 13, 14, 15. *If any man, build gold, silver, or precious stones upon the true foundation Jesus Christ, and raise a glorious superstructure of truth and holiness, he shall receive a reward answerable to his skill and care in building; for his work shall stand, when it is tried by the fire of the judgment day: But if he*

build wood, hay, and stuble upon it, evil inferences, and corrupt practices, or trifles, fruitless controversies, idle speculations, and vain ceremonies, his works shall be burnt, and he shall suffer loss, shall obtain a far less recompence of his labour : Yet, since he has laid Christ for the foundation, and has taught and practised the fundamental doctrines and duties of christianity, though mingled with much folly and weakness, he himself shall be saved; yet in so hazardous a manner as a man that is saved by fire, who loses all his goods, and just escapes with his life.

When you hear St. Paul or St. John, speaking of the last judgment, they give hints of the same distinction of rewards ; 2 Cor. v. 10. " For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Eph. vi. 8. " Whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free ;" Rev. xxii. 12. " And behold, I come quickly ; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Though the highest and holiest saint in heaven can claim nothing there by the way of merit, for it is our Lord Jesus Christ alone, who has purchased all those unknown blessings, yet he will distribute them according to the different characters and degrees of holiness which his saints possessed on earth ; and those larger degrees of holiness were also the free gift of God our Saviour.

I have often represented it to my own thoughts under this comparison. Here is a race appointed ; here are a thousand different prizes, purchased by some prince to be bestowed on the racers ; And the prince himself gives them food and wine, according to what proportion he pleases, to strengthen and animate them for the race. Each has a particular stage appointed for him ; some of shorter, and some of longer distance. When every racer comes to his own goal, he receives a prize in most exact proportion to his speed, diligence, and length of race : And the grace and the justice of the prince shine gloriously in such a distribution. Not the foremost of the racers can pretend to have merited the prize ; for the prizes were all paid for by the prince himself ; and it was he that appointed the race, and gave them spirit and strength to run ; and yet there is a most equitable proportion observed in the reward, according to the labours of the race. Now this similitude represents the matter so agreeably to the apostle's way of speaking, when he compares the christian life to a race ; 1 Cor. xi. 24, &c. Gal. v. 7. Philip iii. 14. 2 Tim. iv. 7. Heb. xii. 1. that I think it may be called almost a scriptural description of the present subject.

The reason of man and the light of nature, entirely concur with scripture in this point. The glory of heaven is prepared for those who are prepared for it in a state of grace ; Rom. ix.

It is God who makes each of us meet for our own inheritance among the saints in light; Col. i. 12. and then he bestows on us that inheritance. As grace fits the soul for glory, so a larger degree of grace advances and widens the capacity of the soul, and prepares it to receive a larger degree of glory. The work of grace is but the means, the reward of glory is the end: now the wisdom of God always fits and adjusts the means in a due proportion to answer the end he designs, and the same wisdom never makes the end answerable to the means he useth; and therefore he infuses more and higher glories into vessels more enlarged and better prepared.

Some of the spirits in heaven may be trained up by their labours and sacred services on earth for more elevated employments and joys on high. Can we imagine that the soul of David, the sweet psalmist, the prophet, and the king of Israel, is not fitted by all his labours and trials, all his raptures of faith, and love, and zeal, for some sublimer devotion and nobler business than his own infant child, the fruit of his adultery? And yet our saviours have generally placed this child in heaven, because David ceased to mourn for him at his death, and said that he himself would go to him? 2 Sam. xii. 20, 23. Deborah, the prophetess, judged Israel, she animated their armies, and sung their victories: was not Deborah engaged in some more illustrious employment among the heavenly tribes, than good Dorcas may seem to be capable of whose highest character upon record is, that she was full of alms-deeds, and made coats and garments for the poor; Acts ix. 36, 39. And yet perhaps Dorcas is prepared too for some greater enjoyments, some sweeter relish of mercy, or some peculiar taste of the divine goodness above Rahab the harlot; Rahab, whose younger character was lewd and infamous; and the best thing that we read of her is, that her faith under the present terror of the armies of Israel taught her once to cover and conceal their spies: And unless she made great advances afterward in grace, surely her place is not very high in glory.

The worship of heaven, and the joy that attends it, may be exceedingly different in degree according to the different capacity of spirits; and yet all may be perfect and free from sinful defects. Does not the sparrow praise the Lord its Maker upon the ridge of a cottage, chirping in its native perfection? and yet the lark advances in her flight and her song as far above the sparrow, as the clouds are above the house top.

Surely superior joys and glories must belong to superior powers and services. Can we think that Abraham and Moses, who were trained up in converse with God face to face, as a man converses with his friend, and who followed him through the wilderness and unknown countries in a glorious exercise of faith, were not prepared for a greater intimacy with God, and nearer

views of his glory in heaven, than Sampson and Jephthah, rude heroes, who being appointed of God for that service, their days in bloody work, in hewing down the Philistines the Ammonites! For we read little of their acquaintance with God, or converse with him, beside a petition now and then or a vow for victory and for slaughter; and we hardly have charity enough to believe they were as good as if St. Paul had not placed them among the examples of holiness in his eleventh chapter to the Hebrews. Can we ever believe that the thief upon the cross, who spent his life in plundering and mischief, and made a single though sincere confession of the name of Jesus just in his dying hour, was preferred for the same high station and enjoyment in paradise, so near the right-hand of Christ, as the great apostle Paul, whose piety and sermons, whose miracles of labour and suffering filled and finished a long life, and honoured his Lord and Saviour more than all the twelve apostles besides? Can we imagine that the child that is just born into this world under the friendly shadow of the covenant of grace, and weeps and dies, and is taken to heaven, is fit to be possessor of the same glory or raised to the same degree there, as the studious, the laborious and the zealous christian, that has lived above fourscore years on earth, and spent the greatest part of his life in the study of religion, the exercises of piety, and the zealous and painful services of God and his country? Surely, if all these who have named must have equal knowledge and joy in the future world, it is hard to find how such an exact equity shall be played in the distribution of final rewards, as the word of God frequently describes.

Object. But in the parable of the labourers hired to work the vineyard; Mat. xx. 9, 12. Does not every man receive a penny, they who were called at the first and third hour, and they who were called at the last? Were not their rewards all equal, *those who had wrought but one hour, and those who had borne the burden and heat of the day.*

Answ. It is not the design of this parable to represent the final rewards of the saints at the day of judgment; but to show that the nation of the Jews, who had been called to be the people of God above a thousand years before, and had borne the burden and heat of the day, that is, the toil and bondage of many ceremonies, should have no preference in the esteem of God above the Gentiles who were called at the last hour, or at the end of the Jewish dispensation; for it is said, verse 16. *the last shall be first, and the first last*, that is, the Gentiles, who waited long ere the gospel was preached to them, shall be the first in receiving it, and the Jews to whom it was first offered, from an inward pride shall reject it, or receive it but slowly: And Christ adds this confirmation of it, *for many be called, but few chosen.*

that is, though multitudes of Jews were called to believe in Christ, that few accepted the call. There is another reason why this parable cannot refer to the final rewards of heaven; because verse 11. it is said, some of them *murmured against the good-man of the house*. Now there shall be no envy against their fellow-saints, nor murmuring against God in the heavenly state. But the Jews, and even the Jewish converts to christianity, were ready often to murmur that the gospel should be preached to the Gentile world, and that the heathens should be brought into privileges equal to themselves.

Thus it sufficiently appears from the frequent declarations of scripture, as well as from the reason and equity of things, that the rewards of the future world shall be greatly distinguished according to the different degrees of holiness and service for God, even though every spirit there shall be perfect; nor is there any just and reasonable objection against it.

Is it certain then that heaven has various degrees of happiness in it, and shall my spirit rest contented with the meanest place there, and the least and lowest measure? Hast thou no sacred ambition in thee, O my soul, to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Or dost thou not aspire, at least, to the middle ranks of glorified saints, though perhaps thou mayest despair of those most exalted stations which are prepared for the spirits of chief renown, for Abraham and Moses of ancient time, and for the martyrs and the apostles of the Lamb? Wilt thou not stir up all the vigour of nature and grace within thee, to do great service for thy God and thy Saviour on earth, that thy reward in heaven may not be small? Wilt thou not *run with zeal and patience the race that is set before thee*, looking to the brightest cloud of witnesses, and reaching at some of the richer prizes? Remember that Jesus thy judge is coming apace: He has rewards with him of every size, and the lustre and weight of thy crown shall most exactly correspond to thy sweat and labour.

But I must not dwell always on this head: I proceed therefore to the next.

III. The spirits of the just in heaven enjoy such a perfection as is consistent with perpetual changes of business and delights, even in the same person or spirit. They may be always perfect, but in a rich and endless variety.

It is only God who possesses all possible excellencies, and powers, and happinesses at once, and therefore he alone is incapable of change: But creatures must possess and enjoy their delights in a succession, because they cannot possess and enjoy all that they are capable of at once. And according to this consideration the heavenly state is represented in scripture in various forms both of business and blessedness.

Sometimes it is described by seeing God; Mat. v. 8. by

beholding him face to face; 1 Cor. xiii. 12. by being present with the Lord; 2 Cor. v. 8. by being where Christ is to behold his glory; John xvii. 24. Sometimes the saints above are said to serve him as his servants; Rev. xxii. 3. Sometimes they are represented as worshipping before the throne, as being fed with the fruits of the tree of life, and drinking the living fountains of water; Rev. vii. 15, 17. and xxii. 1, 2. and let it be noted that twelve manner of fruits grew on this tree, and they were new every month also. Sometimes they are held forth to us as singing a new song to God, and to the Lamb; Rev. xiv. 3. And at another time they are described as wearing a crown of righteousness and glory, of sitting on the throne of Christ, of reigning for ever and ever, and ruling the nations with a rod of iron; 2 Tim. iv. 8; 1 Pet. v. 4. Rev. xxii. 5. Rev. ii. 26, 27. And in another place our happiness is represented as sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; Mat. viii. 11. Now surely this rich variety of language, whereby the heavenly state is proposed to us in scripture, must intend a variety of entertainments and employments, that may in some measure answer the glory of such expressions. It is not only the powers of our understanding that shall be regaled and feasted in those happy regions with the blissful vision of God and Christ, but our active powers shall doubtless have their proper entertainments too. When angels are so variously and delightfully employed in service for God, in his several known and unknown worlds; we cannot suppose the spirits of just men shall be eternally confined to a sedentary state of inactive contemplation.

Contemplation indeed is a noble pleasure, and the joy of it rises high when it is fixed on the sublimest objects, and when the faculties are all exalted and refined. But surely such a sight of God and our dear Redeemer as we shall enjoy above, will awaken and animate all the active and sprightly powers of the soul, and set all the springs of love and zeal at work in the most illustrious instances of unknown and glorious duty.

I confess heaven is described as a place of rest, that is, rest from sin and sorrow, rest from pain and weariness, rest from all the toilsome labours and conflicts that we endure in a state of trial; but it can never be such a rest as lays all our active powers asleep, or renders them useless in such a vital and active world. It would diminish the happiness of the saints in glory to be unemployed there. Those spirits who have tasted unknown delight and satisfaction in many long seasons of devotion, and in a thousand painful services for their blessed Lord on earth, can hardly bear the thoughts of paying no active duties, doing no work at all for him in heaven, where business is all over delight, and labour is all enjoyment. Surely *his servants shall serve him* there, as well as worship him. They shall serve him perhaps as

priests in his temple, and as kings, or viceroys, in his wide dominions : for they are made kings and priests unto God for ever ; Rev. v. 10.

But let us dwell a little upon their active employments, and perhaps a close and attentive meditation may lead us into an unexpected view and notice of their sacred commissions and embassies, their governments, and their holy conferences as well as their acts of worship and adoration.

That heaven is a place or state of worship, is certain, and beyond all controversy ; for this is a very frequent description of it in the word of God. And as the great God as been pleased to appoint different forms of worship to be practised by his saints, and his churches under the different æconomies of his grace ; so it is possible he may appoint peculiar forms of sacred magnificence to attend his own worship in the state of glory. Bowing the knee, and prostration of the body, are forms and postures of humility practised by earthly worshippers. Angels cover their faces and their feet with their wings, and cry, *holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts!* Is. vi. 2, 3. But what unknown and illustrious forms shall be consecrated by the appointment and authority of Christ, for the unbodied or the bodied saints in heaven to adorn their sacred offices, is above our reach to describe or to imagine.

Let us consider now what parts of worship the blessed are employed in.

The various parts of divine worship that are practised on earth, at least such as are included in natural religion, shall doubtless be performed in heaven too ; and what other unknown worship of positive and celestial appointment shall belong to the heavenly state, is as much above our present conjecture, as the forms of it are.

Heaven is represented as full of praises. There is the most glorious and perfect celebration of God the Father and the Saviour in the upper world : And the highest praise is offered to them with the deepest humility. The crowns of glory are cast down at their feet, and all the powers and perfections of God, with all his labours of creation, his cares of providence, and the sweeter mysteries of his grace, shall furnish noble matter for divine praise. This work of praise is also exhibited in scripture, as attended with a song and heavenly melody. What there is in the world of separate spirits to answer the representations of harps and voices, we know not. It is possible that spirits may be capable of some sort of harmony in their language, without a tongue, and without an ear, and there may be some inimitable and transporting modulations of divine praise, without the material instruments of *string or wind*. The soul itself by some philosophers is said to *emerge harmony* ; and surely then it will not wait for it till the

body be raised from the dust, nor live so long destitute of all melodious joys, or of that spiritual pleasure which shall supply the place of melody, till our organs of sense shall be restored to us again.

But is all heaven made up of praises? Is there no prayer there? Let us consider a little: What is prayer, but the desire of a created spirit in an humble manner made known to its Creator? Does not every saint above desire to know God, to love and serve him, to be employed for his honour, and to enjoy the eternal continuance of his love and its own felicity? May not each happy spirit in heaven exert these desires in a way of solemn address to the divine Majesty? May not the happy soul acknowledge its dependance in this manner upon its Father and its God? Is there no place in the heart of a glorified saint for such humble addresses as these? Does not every separate spirit there look and long for the resurrection, when it is certain that embodied spirits on earth who have *received the first fruits of grace and glory groan within themselves, waiting for the redemption of the body?* Rom. viii. 23. And may we not suppose each holy soul sending a sacred and fervent wish after this glorious day, and lifting up a desire to its God about it, though without the uneasiness of a sigh or a groan? May it not under the influence of divine love breathe out the requests of its heart, and the expressions of its zeal for the glory and kingdom of Christ? May not the church above join with the churches below in this language, Father, *thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven?* Are not the souls of the martyrs that were slain, represented to us as under the altar, crying with a loud voice, *how long, O Lord, holy and true?* Rev. vi. 9, 10. This looks like the voice of prayer in heaven.

Perhaps you will suppose there is no such service as hearing sermons, that there is no attendance upon the word of God there. But are we sure there are no such entertainments? Are there no lectures of divine wisdom and grace given to the younger spirits there, by spirits of a more exalted station? Or may not our Lord Jesus Christ himself be the everlasting teacher of his church? May he not at solemn seasons summon all heaven to hear him publish some new and surprizing discoveries, which have never yet been made known to the ages of nature, or of grace, and are reserved to entertain the attention, and exalt the pleasure of spirits advanced to glory? Must we learn all by the mere contemplation of Christ's person? Does he never make use of speech to the instruction and joy of saints above? Moses and Elijah came down once from heaven to make a visit to Christ on mount Tabor, and the subject of their converse with him was his death and departure from this world; Luke ix. 31. Now since our Lord is ascended to heaven, are these holy souls out

from this divine pleasure? Is Jesus for ever silent? Does he converse with his glorified saints no more? And surely if he speak, the saints will hear and attend.

Or it may be that our blessed Lord, even as he is man, has some noble and unknown way of communicating a long discourse, or a long train of ideas and discoveries to millions of blessed spirits at once, without the formalities of voice and language; and at some peculiar seasons he may thus instruct and delight his saints in heaven. Thus it appears there may be something among the spirits of the just above that is analogous to prayer and reaching, as well as praise. O how gustful are the pleasures of celestial worship! What unknown varieties of performance, what sublime ministrations there are, and glorious services, one can tell. And in all this variety, which may be performed a sweet succession, there is no wandering thought, no cold affection, no divided heart, no listless or indifferent worshipper. What we call rapture and extasy here on earth, is perhaps the constant and uninterrupted pleasure of the church on high in all their adorations.

But let the worship of the glorified spirits be never so various, yet I cannot persuade myself that mere direct acts or exercises of what we properly call worship, are their only and everlasting work. The scripture tells us, there are certain seasons when the angels, those sons of God, come to present themselves before the Lord; Job i. 6. and ii. 1. It is evident then, that the intervals of these seasons are spent in other employments: And when they present themselves before God, it does not sufficiently appear that mere adoration and praise is their only business at his throne. In the very place which I have cited, it seems more natural to suppose that these angelic spirits came thither rather to render an account of their several employments, and the success of their messages to other worlds. And why may we not suppose such a blessed variety of employment among the spirits of men too?

This supposition has some countenance in the holy scripture. The angel or messenger who appeared to St. John, and shewed him various visions, by the order of Christ, forbids the apostle to worship him, *for I am thy fellow-servant*, said he, *and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book*; Rev. xxii. 8, 9. These words naturally lead one to think, that though he appeared as a messenger from Christ, and in the form of an angel, yet he was really a departed saint, a brother, fellow-prophet, perhaps the soul of David, or Isaiah, or Moses, who would count it an honour even in their state of glory to be employed by their exalted Lord; and they also keep or observe and wait for the accomplishment of the sayings of that book.

of the Revelations, as well as the churches of their brethren, the saints on earth.

I freely allow immediate divine worship to take up a good part of their everlasting day, their sabbath; and therefore I suppose them to be often engaged, millions at once, in social worship; and sometimes acting apart, and raised in sublime meditation of God, or in a fixed vision of his blissful face, with an act of secret adoration, while their intellectual powers are almost lost in sweet amazement: Sometimes they are entertaining themselves and their fellow-spirits with the graces and glories of the man Christ Jesus, *the Lamb that was slain in the midst of the throne*: But at other times they may be making a report to him of their faithful execution of some divine commission they received from him, to be fulfilled either in heaven or on earth, or in unknown and distant worlds.

There may be other seasons also when they are not immediately addressing the throne, but are most delightfully engaged in recounting to each other the wondrous steps of providence, wisdom and mercy, that seized them from the very borders of hell and despair, and brought them through a thousand dangers and difficulties to the possession of that fair inheritance. When the great God shall unravel the scheme of his own counsels, shall unfold every part of his mysterious conduct, and set before them the reason of every temptation they grappled with, and of every sorrow they felt here on earth, and with what divine and successful influence they all wrought together to train them up for heaven, what matter of surprising delight and charming conversation shall this furnish the saints with in that blessed world? And now and then in the midst of their sacred dialogues, by a sympathy of soul they shall shout together in sweet harmony, and join their exalted songs to *him that sits upon the throne and to the Lamb*. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy power, to thy wisdom, and to thine abounding mercy, be renown and honour to everlasting ages."

Nor is it improper or unpleasant to suppose that among the rest of their celestial conferences, they shall shew each other the fair and easy solution of those difficulties and deep problems in divinity, which had exercised and perplexed them here on earth, and divided them into little angry parties. They shall look back with holy shame on some of their learned and senseless distinctions, and be ready to wonder sometimes what trifles and impertinences had engaged them in dark and furious disputes. Darkness and entanglement shall vanish at once from many of those knotty points of controversy, when they behold them in the light of heaven: And the rest of them shall be matter of delightful instruction for superior spirits to bestow upon those of lower rank, or on souls lately arrived at the regions of light. In short,

there is nothing written in the books of nature, the records of providence, or the sacred volumes of grace, but may minister materials at special seasons for the holy conference of the saints on high. No history nor prophecy, no doctrine nor duty, no command nor promise, nor threatening in the bible, but may recal the thoughts of the heavenly inhabitants, and engage them in sweet conversation. All things that relate to the affairs of past ages and past worlds, as well as the present regions of light and happiness where they dwell, may give them new themes of dialogue and mutual intercourse.

And though we are very little acquainted whilst we are on earth, with any of the planetary worlds besides that which we inhabit, yet who knows how our acquaintance may be extended hereafter, amongst the inhabitants of the various and distant globes? And what frequent and swift journeys we may take thither, when we are disencumbered of this load of flesh and blood, or when our bodies are raised again, active and swift as sun-beams? Sometimes we may entertain our holy curiosity here, and find millions of new discoveries of divine power and divine contrivance in those unknown regions; and bring back from thence new lectures of divine wisdom, or tidings of the affairs of those provinces, to entertain our fellow-spirits, and to give new honours to God the Creator and the Sovereign. So a curious traveller in our lower world visits Africa or both the Indies: At his return he sits in a circle of attentive admirers, and recounts to them the wondrous products of those climates, and the customs and manners of those distant countries: He gratifies their curiosity with some foreign varieties, and feasts their eyes and their ears at once: Then at the end of every story he breaks out into holy language, and adores the various riches and wisdom of God the Creator.

To proceed yet one step farther. Since there are different degrees of glory, we may infer a variety of honours as well as delights prepared for the spirits of the just made perfect. Some sort of the happiness of heaven is described in scripture by crowns and thrones, by royalty and kingly honours: Why may we not then suppose that such souls, whose sublimer graces have prepared them for such dignity and office, may *rule the nations*, even in a literal sense? Why may not those spirits that have past their trials in flesh and blood, and come off conquerors, why may they not sometimes be appointed visitors and superintendants over whole provinces of intelligent beings in lower regions, who are yet labouring in their state of probation? or perhaps they may be exalted to a presidency over inferior ranks of happy spirits, may shine bright amongst them as the morning-star, and lead on their holy armies to celestial work or worship. The scripture itself gives us a hint of such employments in the angelic

world, and such presidencies over some parts of our world, of their own. Do we not read of Gabriel and Michael, and their management of the affairs of Persia, and Greece, and Judah, in the book of Daniel? And it is an intimation of the same hierarchy, when some superior angel led on a multitude of the heavenly host to sing an hymn of praise at Bethlehem, when the Son of God was born there; Luke ii. 9, 13. Now if angels are thus dignified, may not human spirits unbodied have the same office? Our Saviour, when he rewards the faithful servant that had gained ten pounds, bids him take authority over ten cities; and he that had gained five, had five cities under his government; Luke xix. 17, &c. So that this is not a mere random thought, or a wild invention of fancy, but patronised by the word of God.

Among the pleasures and engagements of the upper world, there shall be always something new and entertaining; for the works and the dominions of God are vast beyond all our comprehension. And what a perpetual change, what a glorious but improving rotation of businesses and joys shall succeed one another through the ages of eternity, we shall never know till we come among them. This thought leads me to the last particular, viz.

IV. The perfection which the blessed spirits enjoy, gives room for large additions and continual improvement. Their knowledge and their joy may be called perfect, because there is no mixture of error or sorrow with it; and because it is sufficient every moment for the satisfaction of present desires, without an uneasiness of mind. But it may be doubted whether any creature ever was, or ever will be so perfect, that it is not capable of addition or growth in any excellency or enjoyment.

The man Christ Jesus, in his present glorified state, has not such a perfection as this. He waits daily to see his Father's promises fulfilled to him; he waits till all things are put under him, and his enemies be made his actual footstool: But we know that all things are not yet put under him; Heb. ii. 8. that is, all the nations are not yet subject to his spiritual kingdom, nor become obedient to his gospel. As fast as his kingdom grows on earth, so fast his honours and his joys arise; and he waits still for the complete union of all his members to himself the sacred head: He waits for the morning of the resurrection, when he shall be glorified in the bright and general assembly of his saints, and admired in all them that believe; 2 Thess. i. 10.

O that illustrious and magnificent appearance! That shining hour of jubilee, when the bodies of millions of saints shall awake out of the dust, and be released from their long dark prison! When they shall encompass and adore Jesus their Saviour and their God, and acknowledge their new life and immortal state to

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 be owing to his painful and shameful death : When Noah, Abraham, and David, and all his pious progenitors shall bow and worship Jesus their Son and their Lord : When the holy army of martyrs, springing from the dust with palms of victory in their hands, shall ascribe their conquest and their triumph to the Lamb that was slain : When he shall present his whole church before the presence of his own and his Father's glory, without spot, and faultless, with exceeding joy ! Can we imagine that Christ himself, even the man Jesus, in the midst of all this magnificence and these honours, shall feel no new satisfaction, and have no reliish of all this joy, above what he possessed while his church lay bleeding on earth, and this illustrious company were buried under ground in the chains of death ? And yet you will say Christ in heaven is made perfect in knowledge and in joy, but his perfection admits of improvement. Now if the head be not above the capacity of all growth and addition, surely the members cannot pretend to it. But I shall propose several more arguments for this truth in the following section.

Sect. IV.—*Of the increase of the saints above in knowledge, holiness, and joy.*—That there is, and hath been, and will be continual progress and improvement in the knowledge and joy of separate souls, may be easily proved many ways, viz. from the very nature of human reason itself : From the narrowness, the weakness and limitation even of our intellectual faculties in their best estate ; from the immense variety of objects that we shall converse about ; from our peculiar concern in some future providences, which it is not likely we should know before they occur : and from the glorious new scenes of the resurrection.

1. We may prove the increase of knowledge amongst the blessed above, from the very nature of human reason itself, which is a faculty of drawing inferences, or some new propositions and conclusions, from propositions or principles which we knew before. Now surely we shall not be dispossessed of this power when we come to heaven. What we learn of God there, and the glories of his nature, or his works, will assist and incline us to draw inferences for his honour, and for our worship of him. And if we could be supposed to have never so many propositions or new principles of knowledge crowded into our minds at the first entrance into heaven, yet surely our reasoning faculty would still be capable of making some advance by way of inference, or building some superstructure upon so noble a foundation. And who knows the intense pleasure that will arise perpetually to a contemplative mind, by a progressive and infinite pursuit of truth in this manner, where we are secure against the danger of all error and mistake, and every step we take is all light and demonstration.

Shall it be objected here, that our reason shall be as it were

lost and dissolved in intuition and immediate sight, and therefore it shall have no room or place in that happy world ?

To this I would reply, that we shall have indeed much more acquaintance with spiritual objects by immediate intuition than we ever had here on earth ; but it does not follow thence, that we shall lose our reason. Angels have immediate vision of God and divine things ; but can we suppose they are utterly incapable of drawing an inference, either for the improvement of their knowledge, or the direction of their practice ? When they behold any special and more curious piece of divine workmanship, can they not further infer the exquisite skill or wisdom of the Creator ? And are they not capable of concluding, that this peculiar instance of divine wisdom demands an adoring thought ? Thus intuition or immediate sight in a creature, does not utterly exclude and forbid the use of reason.

I reply again, can it ever be imagined, that being released from the body, we shall possess in one moment, and retain through every moment of eternity, all the innumerable ranks, and orders, and numbers of propositions, truths and duties, that may be derived in a long succession of ages by the use of our reasoning powers ? But this leads me to the second argument, viz.

The weakness and narrowness of human understandings in their best estate, seems to make it necessary that knowledge should be progressive.

Continual improvement in knowledge and delight among the spirits of the just made perfect, is necessary for the same reason, that proved their variety of entertainments and pleasures, viz. because creatures cannot take in all the vast, the infinite variety of conceptions, in the full brightness and perfection of them at once, of which they are capable in a sweet succession. Can we ever persuade ourselves, that all the endless train of thoughts and ideas, and scenes of joy, that shall ever pass through the mind of a saint through the long ages of eternity, should be crowded into every single mind, the first moment of its entrance into those happy regions ? And is a human mind capacious enough to receive and strong enough to retain such an infinite multitude of ideas for ever ? Or, *is this the manner of God's working among his intellectual creatures ? Surely God knows our frame, and pours in light and glory as we are able to bear it.* Such a bright confusion of notions, images and transports would probably overwhelm the most exalted spirit, and drown all the noble faculties of the mind at once. As if a man who was born blind, should be healed in an instant, and should open his eyes first against the full blaze of the noon-day sun ; this would so tumultuate the spirits, and confound the organs of sight, as to reduce the man back again to his first blindness, and perhaps might render him incurable for ever.

3. This argument will be much strengthened, if we do but take a short view of the vast and incomprehensible variety of objects that may be proposed to our minds in the future state, and may feast our contemplation, and improve our joy.

The blessed God himself is an infinite being : His perfections and glories are unbounded : His wisdom, his holiness, his goodness, his faithfulness, his power and justice, his all sufficiency, his self-origination, and his unfathomable eternity, have such a number of rich ideas belonging to each of them, that no creature shall ever fully understand. Yet it is but reasonable to believe, that he will communicate so much of himself to us by degrees, as he sees necessary for our business and blessedness in that upper world. Can it be supposed that we should know every thing that belongs to God all at once, which he may discover to us gradually as our capacities improve ? Can we think that an infant-soul that had no time for improvement here, when it enters into heaven shall know every thing concerning God, that it can ever attain to through all the ages of its immortality ? When a blessed spirit has dwelt in heaven a thousand years, and conversed with God and Christ, angels and fellow-spirits during all that season, shall it know nothing more of the nature and wondrous properties of God than it knew the first moment of its arrival there ?*

But I add further, the works of God shall doubtless be the matter of our search and delightful survey, as well as the nature and properties of God himself. *His works are honourable and glorious, and sought out of all that have pleasure in them ; Ps. cxi. 2, 3.* In his works we shall read his name, his properties, and his glories, whether we fix our thoughts on creation or providence.

The works of God and his wonders of creation in the known and unknown worlds, both as to the number, the variety, and vastness of them, are almost infinite ; that is, they transcend all the limits of our ideas, and all our present capacities to conceive, Now there is none of these works of wonder, but may administer some entertainment to the mind of man, and may richly furnish him with new matter for the praise of God in the long successions of eternity.

There is scarce an animal of the more complete kind, but would entertain an angel with rich curiosities, and feed his contemplation for an age. What a rich and artful structure of flesh upon the solid and well compacted foundation of bones ! What curious joints and hinges, on which the limbs are moved to and fro ! What an inconceivable variety of nerves, veins, arteries,

* God himself hath infinite goodness in him, which the creature cannot take in at once ; they are taking of it eternally. The saints see in God still things fresh, which they saw not in the beginning of their blessedness. Dr. T. Goodwin

fibres, and little invisible parts are found in every member ! What various fluids, blood and juices, run through and agitate the innumerable slender tubes, the hollow strings and strainers of the body ! What millions of folding doors are fixed within, to stop those red and transparent rivulets in their course, either to prevent their return backwards, or else as a means to swell the muscles and move the limbs ! What endless contrivances to secure life, to nourish nature, and to propagate the same to future animals ! What amazing lengths of holy meditations would an angel run upon these subjects ! And what sublime strains of praise would a heavenly philosopher raise hourly to the Almighty and All-wise Creator ! And all this from the mere brutal world !

But if we survey the nature of man, he is a creature made up of mind and animal united, and would furnish still more numerous and exalted materials for contemplation and praise ; for he has all the richest wonders of animal nature in him, besides the unknown mysteries of mind or spirit. Surely it will create a sacred pleasure in happy souls above, to learn the wonders of divine skill exerted and shining in their own formation, and in the curious workmanship of those bodily engines in which they once dwelt and acted.

Then let them descend to herbs and plants. How numerous are all the products of earth upon her green surface, and all within her dark bowels ! All the vegetable and the mineral kingdoms ! How many centuries would all these entertain a heavenly enquirer !

The worlds of air, and the worlds of water, the planetary and the starry worlds, are still new objects rich with curiosities ; these are all monuments of divine wisdom, and fit subjects for the contemplation of the blessed. Nor can we be supposed to have for ever done with them all when we leave this body ; and that for two reasons : One is, because God has never yet received the honour due to his wisdom and power, displayed in the material creation, from the hands or tongues of men. And the other is, because *the spirits of the just* shall be joined to bodies again, and then they shall certainly have necessary converse with God's material works and worlds ; though perhaps they have more acquaintance with them now in their separate state, than we are apprised of.

And besides all these material works of God, what an unknown variety of other wonders belong to the world of pure spirits, which lie hid from us, and are utterly concealed behind the veil of flesh and blood ! What are their natures and the reach of their powers ! What ranks and orders they are distributed into ! What are their governments, their several employments, the different customs and manners of life in the various and most extensive regions of that intellectual world ! What are their messages

to our earth or other habitable globes, and what capacities they are endowed with to move or influence, animate or inanimate bodies? All these, and a thousand more of the like nature, are made known doubtless to the inhabitants of heaven. These are things that belong to the provinces of light and immortality, but many of them are mysteries to us who dwell in these tabernacles; they lie far beyond our ken, and are wrapt up in sacred darkness, that we can hardly do so much as shoot a guess at them.

Now can we suppose that the meanest spirit in heaven has a full and entire survey of all these innumerable works of God, from the first moment of its entrance thither, throughout all the ages of immortality, without the change of one idea, or the possibility of any improvement? This would be to give a sort of omniscience to every happy spirit, which is more than is generally allowed to the man Christ Jesus. And if there be such a thing as degrees of glory among the saints above, we may be well assured that the lowest rank of blessed spirits is not advanced to this amazing degree.

Is there *no new thing*, neither *under* nor above the *sun*, that God can entertain any of his children with in the upper world, throughout the infinite extent of all future ages? Are they all made at once so much like God, as to know all things? Of if each of them have their stinted size of knowledge, or their limited number of ideas at their first release from their body, then they are everlastingly cut off from all the surprizes of pleasure that arise from new thoughts, and new scenes, and new discoveries. Does every saint in heaven read God's great volume of nature through and through the first hour it arrives there? Or each spirit confined to a certain number of leaves, and bound eternally to learn nothing new, but to review perpetually his own limited lesson? Dares he not, or can he not turn over another leaf, and read his Creator's name in it, and adore his wisdom in new wonders of contrivance? These things are improbable to such a degree, that I dare almost pronounce them untrue.

The book of providence is another volume wherein God writes his name too. Has every single saint such a vast and infinite length of foreknowledge given him at his first admission into glory; that he knows beforehand all the future scenes of providence and the wonders which God shall work in the upper and lower worlds? I thought *the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root and offspring of David*, had been the only person in heaven or earth that was worthy to take the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof; Rev. v. 5. Surely the meanest saints does not foreknow all those great and important counsels of God, which our Lord Jesus Christ is intrusted with. And yet we may venture to say, that the spirits of the just in heaven shall know those great and important events that relate to the church on earth, as they arise

in successive seasons, that they may give to God, and to his Son Jesus Christ, revenues of due honour upon this account, as I shall prove immediately.

And indeed if the limits of their knowledge in heaven were so fixed at their first entrance there, that they could never be acquainted with any of these successive providences of God afterwards, we here on earth have a great advantage above them, who see daily the accomplishment of his divine counsels, and adore the wonders of his wisdom and his love, and from this daily increase of knowledge, we take our share in the growing joys and blessings of Zion. But this thought leads me to the fourth argument for the increase of knowledge in heaven.

4. There have been, and there are many future providences on earth, and transactions in heaven, in which the spirits of the just have a very great and dear concernment, and therefore they must know them when they come to pass; and yet it is by no means probable, that they are known in all their glorious circumstances before-hand by every spirit in heaven.

Let us descend a little to some particular instances, and see whether we cannot make it appear from scripture, with most convincing evidence, that the saints in heaven obtain some additions to their knowledge, by the various new transactions in heaven and in earth.

When our blessed Lord had fulfilled his state of sorrows and sufferings on earth, and ascended into heaven in his glorified human nature, with all the scars of honour, and the ensigns of victory about him; when the Lamb appeared in the midst of the throne with the marks of slaughter and death upon him, and presented himself before God in the midst of angels and ancient patriarchs, with the accomplishment of all the types and promises about him written in letters of blood; did not those blessed angels, did not the spirits of those patriarchs, learn something more of the mysteries of our redemption, and the wondrous glories of the Redeemer, than what they were acquainted with before? And did not this new glorious scene spread new ideas, new joys and wonders through all the heavenly world? Can the principalities and powers in heavenly places gain by the church on earth any farther discoveries of *the manifold wisdom of God*? Eph. iii. 10. And can we believe that when Christ, the head of the church, entered into heaven in so illustrious a manner, that these powers, principalities, and blessed spirits, got no brighter discoveries of divine wisdom? To what purpose do *they look and pry into these things*; 1 Pet. i. 12. if after all their searches they make no advances in knowledge? And must angels be the only proficient in these sublime sciences, while human spirits make no improvement? Can it be supposed that those ancient fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom the promises were made,

that all the nations shall be blessed in their seed, had no transporting pleasures when they first beheld that promised seed crowned with all his glory; When they saw their Son Jesus ascending on high, and leading captivity captive, and the chariots of God that attended him were twenty thousand, even an innumerable company of angels; Ps. lxxviii. 17, 18.

If upon this occasion we may talk in the language of mortals, may we not suppose those ancient fathers raising themselves on high, and overlooking the walls of paradise, to gaze downward upon this ascending triumph? May we not imagine them speaking thus to each other in the holy transport? "And is this our great descendant? Is this our long-expected offspring? How divine his aspect? How god-like his air? How glorious and adorable all the graces of his countenance? Is this, saith holy David, my Son and my Lord? the king of glory, for whose admission I called the gates of heaven to be lifted up, and opened the everlasting doors for him in an ancient song? Is this the man, whose hands and whose feet they pierced on earth, as I once foretold by the spirit of prophecy? I see those blessed scars of honour; how they adorn his glorified limbs! I acknowledge and adore my God and my Saviour. I begun his triumph once on my harp in a lower strain, and I behold him now ascending on high: *Awake my glory*, he comes he comes, with the sound of a trumpet, and with the pomp of shouting angels; *sing praises, all ye saints, unto our God, sing praises, unto our king, sing praises.* Is this, saith Isaiah, the *child born*, of whom I spoke? Is this the *Son given*, of whom I prophesied? I adore him as the *mighty God, the Father of ages, and the Prince of Peace.* I see the righteous branch, adds the prophet Jeremy, the righteous branch from the stem of David, from the root of Jesse. This is the king whom I foretold *should reign in righteousness*: The Lord my righteousness is his name, I rejoice at his appearance, the throne of heaven is made ready for him. This, saith Daniel, is the *Messiah, the Prince*, who was *cut off, but not for himself*: The *seventy weeks*, are all fulfilled, and the work is done. *He hath finished transgression, and made an end of sin, and hath brought in everlasting righteousness for all his people.* But was this the person, saith Zachary the prophet, whom they sold for *thirty pieces of silver*? Vile indignity and impious madness! Behold he now appears like the man who is *fellow*, or companion to the *Lord of hosts*. It is he, saith Malachi, it is he, the *messenger of the covenant*, who came suddenly to his own temple. There I held him in my withered arms, saith aged Simeon, and rapture and prophecy came upon me at once, and I expired in joy and praises."

And we hope our mother Eve stood up among the rest of them, and beheld and confessed the promised seed of the woman.

“ O blessed Saviour, that didst break *the head of the serpent*, though thy *heel was bruised*, and hast abolished the mischief that my folly and his temptation had brought into thy new created world !”

Now could we ever suppose all this to be done in the upper regions, with no new smiles upon the countenances of the saints, no special increase of joy among *the spirits of the just made perfect*? God himself stands in no need of the magnificence of these transactions: Christ Jesus receives the new honours, and all the old inhabitants of heaven taste new and unknown satisfaction in the honours they pay to their exalted Saviour. Some of the ancients were of opinion, that the souls of the fathers before the ascension of Christ were not admitted into the holy of holies, or the blissful vision of God; but that it was our Lord Jesus, our great High-priest at his ascent to the throne, led the way thither: He rent the veil of the lower heaven, and carried with him the armies of the patriarchal souls into some upper and brighter, and more joyful regions, whereas before they were only admitted into a state of peace and rest. Whether this be so or no, the scripture does not sufficiently declare: But whatsoever region of heaven they were placed in, we may be well assured from the very nature of things, that such transactions as the triumphant ascent of Christ, could never pass through any of the upper worlds, without enlarging the knowledge and the joy of the blessed inhabitants.

When our Lord Jesus Christ sat down at the right-hand of God, he *prevailed to open the book of divine counsels and decrees*: Rev. v. 5. and *to acquaint himself with all the contents*: And this was necessary that he might manage and govern the affairs of the church and the world in the several successive ages according to the counsels of the Father. He therefore, and he alone among creatures, *knows the end from the beginning*, as I hinted before. But as the seals of this book are opened by decrees, and the counsels of God are executed in the lower world, doubtless the angels that are ministers of the providence of Christ, carry tidings to heaven of all the greater changes that relate to the church; and Jesus the Son of God, the King of saints and of nations, receives the shouts and honours of the heavenly world, as fast as the joyful tidings arrive thither.

Nor is this spoken by mere conjecture, for the scripture informs us of the certainty of it. We have frequent accounts in the book of Revelations, of new special honours that were paid to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb at certain special periods of time.

When he first took upon him the execution of his Father's decrees, the living creatures and elders fell down before the Lamb, and they sung a new song, saying, *thou art worthy to take the*

ok, and to open the seals thereof; and ten thousand times ten thousand angels echoed to the song with a loud voice, *worthy is the Lamb that was slain, &c.* Rev. v. 8, 9, 11. So when the servants of God were sealed in their foreheads, the innumerable multitude of saints shouted *salvation to our God which sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb*; Rev. vii. 8, 9, 10. So when the seventh angel sounded, there were great voices in heaven, *saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever; and the four and twenty elders fell upon their faces, and worshipped and gave thanks*; Rev. xi. 15, 16. Again, when the old dragon and his angels were cast out of heaven, there was a loud voice, *saying, now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our Lord, and the kingdom of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down*: Rev. xii. 9, 10. So upon the fall of Babylon, ap. xiv. and the victory of the saints, chap. xv. and the final destruction of antichrist, chap. xix. there are new honours done by the saints to God the Father, and his Son Jesus. There are new songs addressed to them at these surprizing revolutions on earth, these prodigious turns of judgment on the world, and mercy to the church; all which supposes that the heavenly inhabitants are acquainted with them, and thus their knowledge and their joys increase.

Objection. But does not the prophet Isaiah say in the name of the church of Israel, Abraham is ignorant of us, and Israel knowledges us not? Is. lxiii. 16. *Answ. 1.* The words knowledge and acknowledgment often signify a friendly and beneficial respect manifested in special acts of kindness and benefits conferred. Therefore the tribe of Levi is said neither to have seen his father, his mother, nor to acknowledge his brethren, nor to know his own children; Deut. xxxiii. 9. because the sons of Levi, slew every man his brother, and every man his neighbour, to execute the vengeance of the Lord upon them; Ex. xxxii. 26—29. So Abraham and Israel, in heaven, in the same sense know not their posterity on earth, when they approve of the anger of God let out upon them, and afford them no defence. This interpretation perfectly agrees with the context. But it does not follow that Abraham and Israel were utterly unacquainted with all the greater events of providence towards the Jewish nation, though perhaps they might not know the lesser and more minute circumstances of their afflictions or their deliverances.

Answer 2. If we could suppose that the souls of the ancient patriarchs were ignorant of the affairs of their posterity before the coming of the Messiah, yet since Christ in our nature dwells in the midst of them, and has taken the book of divine counsels into his own hands, since the great God-man rules all things in the upper and the lower worlds, it is not probable that

Abraham and Israel are so ignorant of the affairs of the church, as they were in the days of Isaiah.

And not only the greater and more extensive dispensations that attend the church on earth, are made known to *the spirits of the just made perfect*; but even some lesser and particular concerns are very probably revealed to them also.

Is it not said, that when *one sinner* on earth, *repents*, there is joy among the angels in heaven? Luke xv. 7, 10. For every such convert is a new trophy of divine grace. And when the spirits of the just in heaven shall in successive seasons behold one and another of their old relatives and acquaintance on earth entering in at the gates, and received in heaven, can we imagine there is no new joy amongst them? Do the pleasures of angels increase when they see a man brought into the state of grace, and shall not the souls of men testify their exultation and delight, when they see one of their fellow-souls, perhaps a dear and intimate friend, translated to the state of glory! Surely every increase of that happy world shall diffuse increasing joy through the holy ones that dwell in it; and those shall have the sweetest taste of this joy, that had the dearest concern in it. O the transporting and celestial gratulations that pass between two souls of intimate endearment at their first meeting there!

The last argument that I shall use, and it is also the last instance I shall mention, wherein the knowledge and the pleasure of glorified saints must receive addition and improvement, is, the great resurrection-day.

The spirits of men are formed on purpose for union with bodies, and if they could attain complete happiness in the highest degree without them, what need would there be of new-creating their bodies from the dust? Upon this supposition the resurrection itself must seem to be almost in vain. But it is evident from the word of God, that *the spirits of the just*, with all the perfections that belong to a separate state, wait yet for greater perfection when their bodies shall be restored to them; for as they suffered pain and agony in the body, they shall have a recompence of pleasure too. *All the days of their appointed time they wait, till this blessed change shall come*; Job xiv. 14. *God shall call and the dust of the saints shall answer*; God the creator will *have a desire again to the work of his hands*, verse 15. and the happy souls will have a desire to be rejoined to their old companions.

O glorious hour! O blessed meeting-time! A magnificent and divine spectacle, worthy to attract the eyes of all the creation! When the long-divided parts of human nature shall be united with unknown powers and glories! When these bodies shall be called out of their long dark dungeon, all fashioned a-new, and all new dressed in immortality and sun-beams! When these

spirits shall assume and animate their limbs again, exulting in new life and everlasting vigour ! Now can we suppose it possible that all this vast and amazing change shall be made by the conflagration of the earth and the lower heavens, by the awful and illustrious splendors and solemnities of the last judgment, by the bodies of millions of saints and sinners rising into a painful or joyful immortality, and yet no new ideas hereby communicated to the happy spirits ; no increase of their knowledge, or improvement of their joys ?

Shall the apostles and the prophets, the confessors and the martyrs stand at the right-hand of Christ, and be owned and acknowledged by him with divine applause in the sight of the whole creation, and yet have no new transports of pleasure running through their souls ? Shall they be absolved and approved by the voice of God, with thousands of applauding angels, in the presence of heaven, earth and hell, and all this without any advancement of their knowledge, or their blessedness ? Shall St. Paul meet the Thessalonian converts *in the presence of his Lord Jesus*, whose souls who were once his labour and his hope, and shall they at that day appear to be *his glory and his joy* ? Does not he himself tell them so in his first epistle ; chap. ii. ver. 19, 20. And do we believe that he or they shall be disappointed ? Shall the great apostle see the immense fruits of his labours, the large harvest of souls which he gathered from many provinces of Europe and Asia, all appearing at once in their robes of light and victory, and shall he feel no new inward exultations of spirit at such a sight ? And doubtless many thousand souls whom he never knew on earth, shall be made known to him at that day, and when their conversion to his sacred writings. And shall all this make no addition to his pleasures ? The very mention of so absurd a doctrine refutes and condemns itself.

The saints at that day shall, as it were, be brought into a new world, and he that sits upon the throne shall make all things new ; and as he crowns his happy followers with new and unknown blessings, so shall he receive the homage of new and unknown praises. This is a *new heaven* and a *new earth* indeed, beyond our present apprehensions ; and the magnificent language of prophecy shall be fulfilled in its utmost force and brightness.

Doubtless there are pleasures to be enjoyed by complete human nature, by embodied souls, which a mere separate spirit is not capable of. Is it not part of the blessedness of human spirits to enjoy mutual society, and hold a pleasing correspondence with each other ? But whatsoever be the means and methods of that correspondence in a separate state, surely it wants something of that complete pleasure and sensible intimacy, which they shall be made partakers of, when they shall hold noble communion in their bodies raised from the dust, and refined from every weak-

ness. Is it not the happiness of the saints in heaven to see their glorified Saviour? But even this sight is and must be incomplete, till they are endued with bodily organs again. What converse soever the spirits of the just have with the glorified ~~not~~ Jesus, while they are absent from the body, yet I am persuaded it is not, nor can it be so full and perfect in all respects, as it shall be at the general resurrection. They cannot now see him face to face in the literal sense, and they wait for this exalted pleasure, this immediate beatific sight. Job himself yet waits, *though the worms have destroyed his body*, till that glorious hour, when in his flesh, he shall see God; Job xix. 26. even God, his Redeemer, who shall stand at the last day on the earth, ver. 25.

Not only all the saints on earth, *who have received the first fruits of the spirit, wait for the adoption, that is, the redemption of the body*, Rom. viii. 23. but the saints in heaven also live there, waiting till the body be redeemed from the grave, and their adoption shall appear with illustrious evidence: Then they shall all look like the sons of God, like Jesus, the first beloved and the first-born. The spirits above, how perfect soever they are in the joys of the separate state, yet wait for those endless scenes of unknown delight that shall succeed the resurrection.

And there is abundant reason for it, to be drawn from the word of God; for the scripture speaks but very little concerning the blessedness of separate souls, in comparison of the frequent and large accounts of the glory and triumph that shall attend the sound of the last trumpet, and the great rising-day. It is to this blessed hour that the apostles in their writings are always directing the hope of the saints. They are ever pointing to this glorious morning, as the season when they shall receive their reward and their prize, their promised joy and their crown; as though all that they had received before in their state of separation, were hardly to be named in comparison of that *more exceeding and eternal weight of additional glory*.

What new kinds of sensations shall entertain us in that day, what a rich variety of senses we shall enjoy, what well appointed and immortal organs we shall be furnished with, instead of our present feeble eyes and ears, and what glorious and transporting objects shall surround us in those unknown worlds, and fill the enlarged powers of the soul with sensible as well as intellectual delights: These are wonders too sublime even for our present conjecture, and are all reserved in the counsels of God, to complete the final felicity of the saints. Thus we have made it appear, that the knowledge and joy that belongs to the spirits of the just made perfect, may admit of large increase.*

* There is a little treatise, called, *The Future State, Displaying the Progressive Knowledge of the Blessed in Heaven*, written by a country gentleman, published in 1685, wherein are many ingenious thoughts on this subject.

can their holiness be increased too ? Can perfect holiness have any improvement ?

I will not assert any thing in this matter, lest the manner of expression should offend weaker minds : But I desire, leave to others to determine whether those who know most of God, do not believe him to be most transformed into his image and made most nearly like him ? Now if the separate spirits in heaven are advanced to different degrees of divine knowledge, may they not in this respect have different degrees of holiness too ? Is it not possible that the highest saint should love God more intensely than another who is less impressed with his likeness, as he beholds more of his

Is it not possible that a soul should grow in the strength of its love and zeal for God, and be more exactly assimilated to him, as it gets nearer to God, and grows up into higher acquaintance with him ? Has not the angel Gabriel, the apostle Paul, and the glorified human nature of Christ in any respect more of holiness or love, or likeness to God, than the meanest saint or angel in heaven ? Is not their sublime knowledge nearer to God, attended with proportionable rays of divinity and glory ? Is not the divine image in these exalted spirits more complete than in the very lowest ? And yet we commonly assert, that the meanest saint or angel there is so perfect as to be free from all sin : There is nothing to be found in any of them that is contrary to the nature or the will of God. So the soul, when freed from the body may perhaps grow in likeness and in holiness perpetually, and yet it may have no sinful defects in its love or conformity to God, from the first moment of its entrance into heaven.

I will first illustrate this by two similitudes, and then propose a conditional and clear account of it in a way of argument.

When the distant morning-sun shines on a piece of polished metal, the reflection of the sun in perfection, when it first rises on it. But the same instrument coming directly under the meridian sun-beams, shall reflect the same image brighter : And yet every moment of this reflection from the rising to the highest noon, shall be perfect, that is, without blemish, and without defect. Such perhaps is the case of all the saints in heaven.

shall I rather borrow a similitude from scripture, and say, that the holiness of the spirits in heaven is compared to fine linen ?

1. 8. *The fine linen clean and white is the righteousness of the saints, τα δικαιώματα των αγίων* Now though a garment may be clean without the least spot or stain, yet fine linen may be soiled hourly, as it is bleached by the constant influence of the sun. So though every spirit be perfectly cleansed and freed from all sin and defilement, yet it is not impossible that

that the degree of its grace and holiness, or conformity to God, may grow brighter and much improve by nearer approaches to God, longer acquaintance with him, and the continued influence of his majesty and love.

Now let me propose a rational account of this matter to the consideration of those whose minds are raised above common prejudices.

The holiness of an innocent creature, consists in attaining the knowledge of the nature and will of God, according to the utmost of its own present capacity, and the means of discovery which it enjoys, and in the various exercises of love to God in an exact proportion to its knowledge : or to express it briefly thus, an innocent creature is perfectly holy, when it knows and loves God to the utmost reach of its present powers. If this be done, there is no sinful defect, no guilty imperfection ; and yet there may be almost an infinite difference in the various degrees of power and capacity, of knowledge and love, amongst innocent spirits : One spirit may be formed capable of knowing much more of his Maker than another, and may be favoured with rich discoveries. Now if every new divine discovery raise an equal proportion of love in the soul, then it is possible that any soul might be perfectly holy at its first entrance into heaven, and yet may make sublime advances in holiness hourly.

Can we suppose that innocent Adam, at his very formation in paradise, knew all the wonders of divine wisdom and goodness, that ever he was designed to attain, had he lived sinless and immortal ? And then can we believe since his knowledge of his Maker's goodness and wisdom was to receive continual advances that he should admire him no more, and love him no better after a thousand years converse with him, than he did at his first creation ? Now the case of the saints in heaven is much the same. The rule and measure of their duty is their knowledge, and the rule and measure of their knowledge is their own capacity, and their means of discovery. They never fall short of their duty, and therefore they have no sin : And thus their holiness may be every moment perfect, and yet perhaps every moment increasing, as their capacities are enlarged, and receive new discoveries, through all the ages of their immortality.

Happy souls, whose aspiring knowledge, and love, and zeal, move onward hourly, and get still higher to their God ! Surely while they *behold his face* in the unveiled beauties of his holiness, they shall love him with warmer zeal, and be more abundantly *satisfied with his likeness* ; Psal. xvii. 15.

After all that I have said on this subject, some will insist on this objection, viz. Can there be any such thing as imperfection in heaven ? Is it not said to be a perfect state ? Now if the spirits above be always growing in excellency and

liness, then they are always defective and eternally imperfect ; which is very hard to suppose concerning the saints in glory, and contrary to the very expression and letter of my text.

The answer to this is very easy to all that will give their reason a leave to exercise itself upon just ideas, and to think and argue beyond the chime of words.

Perfection, as I told you before, is not to be taken here in an absolute, but in a comparative sense : Nothing is absolutely perfect but God ; and in comparison of God, the highest and most exalted of all creatures is, and will be eternally imperfect and defective : *The heavens are not pure in his sight, and he charges angels with folly ; Job iv. 18.* Even the man Christ Jesus still for ever fall short of the perfection of the divine nature to which he is united, and in this sense will be imperfect for ever. It where any creature has attained to such exalted degrees of excellency as are far superior to what others have attained, it is the custom of the scripture to call them perfect, and that with a design to do honour to their character : So Noah *was a just man, and perfect in his generation ; Gen. vi. 9.* Job also has this honour to him, he was *perfect and upright ; Job i. 1.* And the saints on earth are called perfect in many parts of the word of God, even while they are here on earth, and have many defects and imperfections. So though it be literally true, that the spirits in heaven are continually imperfect in comparison of God and Christ, and of what they themselves shall further attain ; yet the scripture, which delights to do honour to them, chooses rather to call them perfect, because of the sublime degree of excellencies they possess above their fellow-saints on earth : And it is not fit for us to degrade them in our common language by the finishing and abasing names of defect and imperfection, though their present perfection and excellency admits of everlasting increase.

If any man has read this treatise thus far, and has duly weighed all the former arguments, can see force enough in this objection to baffle or destroy them all, or can find terror enough in the mere sound of the word imperfect, to forbid his ascent ; I desire he may not be disturbed in the possession of his present sentiments, till the sweet and surprising sensations of everlasting felicity convince him, that heaven is a place of glorification and improvement.

This shall suffice for the third general head of my discourse, wherein I have shewn, that the perfection of the spirits of the just admits of a rich variety of employments and pleasures, according to the various taste and inclination of the blessed ; it allows of their different degrees of felicity, according to their different capacities and preparations : It furnishes each bless-

ed spirit with a frequent change of pleasures, and gives room for perpetual increase.

Sect. V.—*Of the means of attaining this perfection.*—The fourth and last enquiry is this, how do these good spirits and men arrive at this perfection. I answer, by the death of the body and their departure from flesh and blood. You will ask, what reasons are there, why their departure from the body brings them into this perfect state? I will content myself to mention these four :

I. Because at death their state of trial is ended, and the state of recompence begins by divine appointment : Now all the perfections must end with their state of trial.

This is the account of things in the scripture ; Heb. i. *It is appointed for all men once to die, and after death the judgment.* At the hour of death those words are spoken aloud in the most dreadful or most delightful language ; Rev. xxii. 11. *He that is unjust or filthy let him be so still : He that is righteous and just let him be so still.* And then upon the determination of the reward or recompence follows, ver. 12. *My reward I will give to every man according as his works shall be.* The inconveniences and imperfections, and difficulties, are proper to a state of trial, and by these methods we are trained up for Christ himself was ignorant of many things in the day of his death ; his knowledge on earth was imperfect, and his joys were so for he grew in wisdom and knowledge, *he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.* Though he were a Son, yet he learned obedience by the things that he suffered, and the Captain of Salvation was made perfect through sufferings ; Heb. v. 8. 10. But when the time of probation and suffering ceases, perfection is come, and glory appears.

Hail, blessed spirits above, who have passed your state of trial well ! You have run the laborious race under many burdens and you have received the prize. You have fought with many enemies, you have overcome a thousand difficulties, and you enjoy the crown. No more shall you complain of the mixt error with your knowledge, no more shall you groan under perplexities of thought, the tumults of passion, the burden of indwelling iniquity, nor cry out because of oppressing enemies and sorrows. The hour of your trial is finished. You have been sincere and faithful in your imperfect services, and you are now arrived at the world of perfection.

II. At the hour of death the spirits of the just leave behind them their natural and the sinful infirmities of flesh and blood behind them, which are the causes and springs of a thousand imperfections.

The very natural circumstances and necessities of the body and the inconveniences that attend it in this frail state, do

embarrass and clog the spirit in its pursuit of knowledge, or
ess, or divine joy.

The flesh is a dark covering to the soul; it beclouds our
y, confuses our conceptions, and prevents a clear and distinct
ledge of a thousand objects. It is a dull dark tabernacle for
rit's residence. It has windows indeed to let in light, but
e very windows, like painted or curled glass, too often dis-
ir the objects, or distort the shape of them. These very
es of ours frequently impose upon us in the searches after
y, and represent things not as they are in themselves, and
eir own nature, but as they are useful and hurtful to us; and
e we pass a false judgment on the nature of things by their
ence, and are led into many mistakes in our enquiries after
ledge.

Our fancy or imagination raises up false images of things,
we forsake the solid and real truth, to follow the shapes,
colours, and appearances of it painted upon fancy. From
very infancy, our souls are imposed upon by the animal;
law in early many false judgments, and establish them daily.
are nursed up in prejudice against a hundred truths both
ie philosophical, the moral, and the religious life; and it is
labour of an age even for a wise and good man to wear off a
of them and to judge with any tolerable freedom, evidence
certainty.

A great part of our life is spent in sleep, wherein the soul is
id up from exerting any regular thoughts, confined every
t to a periodical delirium, subjected to all the fluttering
ny of the animal spirits, and dragged away into all the
wanderings of dreaming nature; and indeed the thoughts
any of us always, and of all of us sometimes, even when
re awake, are but little better, because we perpetually dance
the motions of passion and fancy, and our reason seldom
ges without them. Alas! how imperfect is the best of us
nowledge here! But knowledge is not the only good, of
h the body deprives the spirit. The necessities of the body
ger and thirst, weakness and weariness, and drowsy spi-
sit very heavy upon the soul, and hinder it in the pursuit of
and heavenly thoughts, break off many a divine meditation,
interrupt and spoil many a delightful piece of worship. In
ness or in old age, what long and weighty troubles, what
ome infirmities clog the soul, and what restless pains of
re overwhelm the spirit, and forbid the lively exercises of
otion!

And then also the sinful appetites and perverse affections of
re are very much seated in flesh and blood: So much, that
apostle in many places calls the principles of sin by the
real name of flesh. Read the latter end of the seventh chap-

ter of his Epistle to the Romans. How doth he complain of the flesh and members of the body, which are fatal instruments of sin and Satan! Read the black catalogue of iniquities; Gal. v. 19, 26, 21. and hear them called *the works of the flesh*. Pride and malice, and envy, and lust, and covetousness, and wrath, and revenge, are found secretly working in flesh and blood. O how much are the springs of these sinful evils seated in the very composition of depraved animal nature! And how is the poor labouring spirit of a saint dreadfully betrayed thereby into frequent actual guilt, even notwithstanding all its care and watchfulness! *O wretched men that we are! who shall deliver us?* Blessed be God, there is a time of release.

And as our knowledge and our holiness are rendered very imperfect, by reason of these sensible and corrupt engines of flesh and blood, so are the joys and satisfactions of the soul perpetually impaired and diminished hereby. The heart of the saint is in pain to feel sin working in it, and the conscience complains under the anguish of guilt. Blessed be God for the balm that is found in the blood of Christ to ease the anguish of conscience! Besides, what spirit can enjoy perfect peace, while it is tied to so many thousand nerves, each of which may become an instrument of intense pain and torture? And the body itself has sharp humours enough in it to corrode those nerves, and fill the indwelling spirit with agonies. What millions of seeds of painful disease lurk in animal nature, that render this body a most uncomfortable dwelling! And how many thousand strokes and accidents are we liable to from abroad, whence new pains and sorrows are derived to the soul! The wind and the weather, the rain and the hail, and the scorching sun, the air, the water, and fire, and every element, may afflict the animal, and pain the unhappy spirit.

But O happy souls, that are free from all the cumbersome and mischievous influences of flesh and blood! from these instruments of iniquity, and springs of deadly guilt and torment! Happy souls, that are released from sick and languishing bodies, from feeble and burdensome limbs, and all the tiresome and painful disorders of dying nature! that are raised beyond the reach and injury of all these lower elements, these mediums of disease and pain! Rejoice and triumph, ye prisoners newly discharged; ye feel the pleasurable truths that we guess at, but ye feel and enjoy them with a relish of sublime pleasure beyond all our conjectures. Rejoice and exult in your new liberty, like a bird released from the imprisoning cage, and sing with sweetest notes to the praise of your Redeemer. O worship and serve him in the full freedom of all your active powers; attend at his feet with intense delight, and love him *with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.*

III. By the death of the body, and their release from it, these *spirits of the just* are free from all the tempting powers and the sinful influences of earth and hell.

This world of sensible allurements, and this world of sinful men, hath a mighty influence on the spirits of the saints while they dwell in flesh and blood. How often are we deceived into practices of iniquity by the enticing vanities of this life? How often tempted by evil companions, by flattering mischiefs and ensnaring circumstances? And many times too the fear of men, and the terror of their threatenings, fright us to neglect duty, or hurry us into the commission of some active iniquity. Sometimes the pleasing enjoyments of life tie our hearts to the creature by the bands of excessive love; and sometimes the injuries and reproaches we receive from them, kindle our fiery passions, and rouse up our sinful wrath and revenge.

This world also is much under the evil influences of the prince of darkness; he is called *the God of this world*: It is greatly given up to the ravages of the roaring lion, and he worries the spirits of the saints while they dwell within his territories, though he is not suffered to destroy and devour them. But at the moment of death the happy spirit is released from the senses, and thereby from the impressions of all sensible things. All the flattering vanities of this lower world have no more power to entice the soul, than the grossest sensualities could entice a pure angel. Sinful companions can no more invite, and threatening tyrants have no more power to terrify.

The spirit is then got out of the territories of Satan; he is *prince of the power of the air*, but his dominion reaches no farther. The heaven where Christ is, never admits him. Michael with his angels hath cast out the old dragon and his angels, and there is no more place found for them there. Happy spirits, delivered and secured from the devil and the world at once, and from all their tempting and destructive influences!

Now when a sanctified soul is thus released both from its union to sinful flesh and blood, and from all possible assaults of the powers of earth and hell, it may be worth our enquiry, whether this release be not sufficient of itself to render the work of sanctification complete, and bring it to a state of perfection, supposing still the ordinary concurrence or influence of the sanctifying spirit? Or whether there must be any immediate, almighty and present change wrought in the soul by a new and extraordinary influence of the blessed Spirit at the very moment of death, by which sanctification is at once completed. Which of these is true I know not. I confess this last has generally been the opinion of our protestant writers; and perhaps it may be the truth: But the scripture is silent.

Who can tell therefore whether a holy soul, that hath received the divine seed of grace, which is called the divine nature.

and is regenerated, and renewed, and sanctified by the holy spirit, hath not all its remaining sins and imperfections owing to its bonds of sinful flesh and blood? And whether its compliance with so many temptations, is not to be attributed to its close attachments to corrupt animal nature and sensible things? And therefore whether this sanctified nature would not become completely free from sin, when it is freed from all the influence of a tempting body and a tempting world? Whether the divine bent and bias that is given it by the Spirit of God at first conversion, and by which it maintains continual opposition to sinful flesh, would not make its own way toward perfection without new and extraordinary operations? Whether this would not be sufficient to cause the soul for ever to ascend naturally toward God in desire, and love, and delight, when all clogs and embarrassments are removed? So a vessel filled with upper air, and dragged down by some heavy weight to the bottom of the sea, labours and wrestles with the uneasy burden, and hath a perpetual tendency toward this upper region: But if the weight be once taken off, it immediately of itself rises through the water, and never ceases its motion till it come to the surface.

I confess this is a nicer speculation, and of doubtful evidence, though when St. Paul lays his sinful compliances and captivity so much to the charge of his flesh and members in the viith chap. to the Romans, and in other places of his writings, one would be ready to think St. Paul was of this opinion. However, this we are sure of, that a sanctified soul released from the body, shall be made free from every sin, and its absence from flesh and the world have a large, if not a sufficient influence, to effect this freedom. And if we should grant it, that a soul just dismissed from this world is not perfectly sanctified by the mere influence of this release; yet this perfection is sufficiently secured by its dismissal from flesh; for *when absent from the body, it is present with the Lord*: And this leads me to the next particular, viz.

IV. At death *the spirits of the just* released from bodies, enter into another state, a different world, where they have a thousand advantages for improvement in knowledge, and advances in holiness and joy, vastly beyond what any thing in this world could furnish them with.

They see God, and are for ever with him. They behold him face and face, as I have before explained it, in a more immediate and intuitive manner; and doubtless such a sight fills the spirit with a clearer and brighter idea of the nature and attributes of God, than all the former lessons it had learned in the books of nature and of scripture could ever give it.

They see our Lord Jesus Christ, our glorified Saviour, in such a way and manner as glorified separate spirits can converse with spirits embodied; and one such view as this will perhaps lead

is into more intimate acquaintance with his human nature and his united godhead, than many years of converse with him by all the mediums of ordinances, those divine glasses wherein *we see him darkly*, as the apostle speaks, and whereby God and Christ present and manifest themselves to saints on earth.

And as our knowledge shall receive immense and surprizing improvements by these new methods of discovery, so I think it shall in due proportion advance our holiness or conformity to God the Father, and his brightest image Christ Jesus: for we cannot behold them in such a manner without a glorious transformation into their likeness, as I have hinted already.

When a soul, that hath a new nature given it by sanctifying grace, is placed in the immediate view and presence of God the most holy, it will ever be growing into a greater degree of nearness and love, and it will be powerfully changed more and more into the likeness of God himself, as a needle when placed within the reach of a loadstone's attractive power, ceases not its motion till it be joined in perfect union, and itself acquires the virtues of that wonderful mineral.

Nor is it possible in heaven that we should advance in knowledge and holiness without an equal improvement in felicity and joy. On earth indeed we are told, *he that will live godly, shall suffer persecution*; and *he that increases knowledge, increases sorrow*; 2 Tim. iii. 12. and Eccles. i. 18. *But as heaven is high above the earth*, so are the customs and the blessings of that state superior to this; for there are no present sorrows to be known, nor any future to be feared. And holiness has no enemy there. All things round the saint, shall have a tendency to promote his blessedness.

The spirit of a good man released from the body, and ascending to heaven, is surrounded with thousands and ten thousands of blessed spirits of the human and angelic order: When it gets within the confines of the heavenly country, it sweetly and insensibly acquires the genius and temper of the inhabitants; it breathes, as it were, a new air, and lives, and thinks, and acts just as they do. It shines and burns with new degrees of knowledge, zeal and love, and exults in the transporting communications of the same joy. How vastly shall our understandings be improved by the kind narratives and instructions of the saints that arrived at heaven before us, and by converse with the ministering angels.

You will say perhaps, that we shall have no need of their teaching when we get to heaven, for we shall be near to God himself, and receive all immediately from him.

But hath the scripture any where excluded the assistance of *our fellow-spirits*? God can teach us here on earth immediately by *his own Spirit*, without the use of books and letters, without

the help of prophets and ministers, men of like passions with ourselves; and yet he chuses rather to do it in an instrumental way, and makes his creatures in the lower world the means of our instruction under the superior influence of his own Spirit; and why may he not use the same methods to communicate knowledge to the spirits that newly arrive at that upper world?

There we shall see the patriarchs of the old world, and prophets of the old dispensation, as well as the apostles and evangelists of Christ and his gospel. There we shall be conversant with those blessed angels whom he has used as ministers of his vengeance, or his mercy, to persons and churches, families and nations: and they will not be unwilling to inform us of those great and surprizing transactions of God with men. There we shall find a multitude of other eminent saints before and after Christ. Adam doubtless will take a peculiar pleasure in acquainting all his happy posterity with the special form and terms of the covenant of innocency; he shall tell us the nature of the trees of knowledge and of life, and how fatally he fell, to the ruin of his unborn offspring. Unhappy father, deriving iniquity and death down to his children! But with what immense satisfaction and everlasting surprize he views the second Adam, his Son and his Saviour, and stands in adoration and transport, while he beholds millions of his seed that he once ruined, now raised to superior glories above the promises of the law of works, by the intervening influence of a Mediator? Enoch, the man that *walked with God*, and Elijah, the great reformer, shall instruct us how they were translated to heaven, and passed into a blessed immortality without calling at the gates of death. Noah will relate to his sons among the blessed, what was the wickedness of the old world before the flood, that provoked God their Maker to drown them all; he shall entertain us with the wonders of the ark, and the covenant of the rainbow in all its glorious colours. Abraham, *the father of the faithful*, and *the friend of God*, shall talk over again with us his familiar converse with God and angels in their frequent apparitions to him, and shall tell us how much the *promised seed* transcends all the poor low ideas he had of him in his obscure age of prophecy. For we cannot suppose that all intimate converse with our father Abraham shall be forbidden us, by any of the laws or manners of that heavenly country, since heaven itself is described by our sitting down as at one table with Abraham, and dwelling *in his bosom*; Mat. viii. 11. and Luke xiv. 15. and xvi. 23.

There Paul and Moses shall join together to give us an account of the Jewish law, and read wondrous and entertaining lectures on the types and figures of that œconomy, and still lead our thoughts to the glorious antitype with surprizing encomiums of the blessed Jesus. Paul shall unfold to us the dark places of

his own writings, better than he himself once understood them; and Moses shall become an interpreter of his own law, who knew so little of the mystery and beauty of it on earth himself.

There we shall acquaint ourselves with some of the ancient fathers of the christian church, and the martyrs, those dying champions of the faith and honours of the christian name. These will recount the various providences of God to the church in their several ages, and shew the visions of St. John in the book of the Revelation, not in the morning twilight of prophecy, but as in the light of noon, as a public history, or as an evening rehearsal of the transactions of the day. The *witnesses* themselves shall tell us how they *prophesied in sackcloth*, and were slain by the man of sin; how they *rose from the dead in three days and a half*, and how the church was at last reformed from the popish mysteries of iniquity and superstition. Cranmer and Ridley, Calvin and Luther, and the rest of the pious reformers, shall make known to us the labours and sufferings of their age, and the wonders of pure christianity rising as it were out of the grave, and throwing off the chains, the darkness and defilements of Antichrist: And those holy souls who laboured in the reformation of Great-Britain, while they relate the transactions of their day, shall perhaps enquire and wonder why their successors put a stop to that blessed work, and have made no further progress in a hundred and fifty years.

Did one of the elders near the throne give notice to the apostle John concerning the martyrs; Rev. vii. 14. *These are they which came out of great tribulations, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*; and shall we not suppose that the happy spirits above tell one another their victories over sin and temptation, and the powers of this world? Shall not the martyrs who triumphed in their own blood, and overcame Satan and Antichrist *by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony*, shall they not make it known to the inhabitants of the upper world, and tell it to the honour of Christ, their Captain and their King; how they fought, and died, and conquered? Methinks I hear these noble historians rehearsing their sacred tragedy; how they entertain a bright circle of listening angels and fellow-spirits with their own glorious and dreadful story, dreadful to suffer, and glorious to relate!

Shall it be objected here, that all the glorified saints cannot be supposed to maintain immediate discourse with those blessed ancients? Can those ancients be imagined to repeat the same stories perpetually afresh, to entertain every stranger that is newly arrived at heaven?

I answer, that since one single spirit dwelling in flesh can communicate his thoughts immediately to five or six thousand bearers at once by his voice, and to millions more successively by

books and writings, it is very unreasonable to suppose, that spirits made perfect and glorified have not a power of communicating their thoughts to many more thousands by immediate converse: and it is past our reach to conceive what unknown methods may be in use amongst them, to transmit their ideas and narratives in a much swifter succession, than by books and writings, through all the courts of heaven, and to inform all the new comers, without putting each happy spirit to the everlasting labour of a tiresome repetition. Though every saint in heaven should not be admitted to immediate and speedy converse with these spirits of renown in past ages, yet doubtless these glorious minds have communicated their narratives, and the memoirs of their age, to thousands of that blessed world already, and from them we may receive a repetition of the same wonders with faithfulness and exact truth. History and chronology are no precarious and uncertain sciences in that country.

It is very probable indeed, that we shall have more intimate nearness to and more familiar communion with those spirits that were of the same age and place with ourselves, and of the same church or family; for we can more delightfully expatiate in our converse with them about the same providences and the same methods of grace, and agreeably entertain and improve each other with notices of the affairs of the upper and lower worlds. Nor must we suppose such sort of historical converse among the blessed spirits is merely designed to fill the mind with new and strange ideas. This pleasure considered by itself, is not sacred enough for the spirits of the just made perfect. There is not a narrative in the world, but shall disclose some wondrous instances of divine wisdom or mercy, power or faithfulness, patience and forgiveness, or wrath and justice: The speaker shall feel the workings of all proper reverence, zeal and love; and every hearer shall be impressed with correspondent affections, and join in adoration and holy wonder.

And while we speak of the means and advantages that glorified spirits enjoy for their improvement in all the parts of their felicity, surely we may expect the greatest and the best assistances, even those of the Holy Spirit, to render all these means more effectual. Is he not promised to *abide with us, to be in us, and dwell with us for ever*; John. xiv. 16, 17. Is he not represented as dwelling in the spirits of the just made perfect, when it is said, *the Spirit that dwelleth in them shall raise their mortal bodies* from the dead? Rom. viii. 11. May we not then reasonably infer, that that glorious Spirit, who hath been our enlightener, our comforter, and our sanctifier on earth, will be our perpetual enlightener, our eternal sanctifier, and our everlasting comforter; *He that hath so wonderfully begun the divine work in us, and laid foundations of joy in knowledge and holiness, will he not finish*

and perfect his own work, and add *the top-stone* to crown the heavenly building ?

O blessed state of spirits discharged from the prison of flesh and this world ! this wicked world, where *Satan* the evil spirit has so wide a range, and so poisonous an influence, and where sinful men swarm on every side, and bear the largest sway ! What divine advantages are you possessed of, for the improvement of all your sacred excellencies and joys ! When we can raise our thoughts a little, and survey your privileges, we feel somewhat of an inward wish to dwell among you, and send a breathing meditation, or a glance of warm desire towards your world and your society. We poor prisoner-spirits, when we hear such tidings from the country at which you are arrived, we stretch our wings a little, and are ready to wish for the flight. But God our sovereign must appoint the hour ; he sees that we are not yet refined enough. Keep our souls, O Father, in this erect posture, looking, reaching and longing for the celestial world, till thou hast completely prepared us for the promised glory, and then give us the joyful word of dismissal.

Thus I have endeavoured to make it appear on what accounts a dismissal from the body is both the season when, and the means whereby the *spirits of the just* arrive at this perfection. Their state of trial is ended at death, and therefore all inconveniencies and imperfections must cease by divine appointment : By death the soul is released from all the troublesome and tempting influences of flesh and blood ; it is delivered from this sinful world, it is got beyond the reach of *Satan* the tempter and the tormentor ; and it is surrounded with a thousand advantages for improvement in knowledge, holiness and joy.

Sect. VI.—*Remarks on the foregoing discourse.*—I. Are the *spirits of the just made perfect* at the death of the body ? Then we may be assured that they neither die nor sleep ; for sleep and death are both inconsistent with this state of perfection which I have described. The dead saints are not lost nor extinct. They are not perished out of God's world, though they are gone from ours. They are no more in the world that is enlightened by the sun and moon, and the glimmering stars ; but they themselves shine gloriously, like stars of different magnitude, in the world where *there is no sun, nor is there any need of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God enlightens it, and the Lamb is the everlasting light thereof* ; Rev. xxi. 23. They are lost from earth, but they are found in heaven. They are dead to us at present, but they are alive to God their Father, and to Jesus their Saviour ; they are alive to the holy angels, and all their fellow-saints in that upper world.

If there had been any such thing as a soul sleeping or dying, our Saviour would never have argued thus with the Sadducees,

Luke xx. 37, 38. nor have proved the doctrine of the resurrection from the doctrine of the separate state of souls: It is as he had said, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are dead long ago; but God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob still. Now *God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living*; therefore the souls of those patriarchs are yet alive, for they *all lie to God* in the separate state, and they shall appear in their complete human nature, soul and body, at the resurrection. This is the language and the force of our Saviour's argument, and therefore I must believe the soul of Abraham is alive now.

When Jesus promises the penitent thief upon the cross **Luke xxiii. 43.** *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise*; can we persuade ourselves that he intended no more than that the thief should be with him in the grave, or in a state of indolence and insensibility? Does he not assure him in these words, that there is a state of happiness for spirits dismissed from the body whither the soul of our Lord Jesus was going, and where the dying penitent should find him? So when the infidel Jews stoned Stephen the first martyr, **Acts vii. 59.** while he expressed his faith and hope in these words, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*: was this spirit of his to be laid asleep till the resurrection? Can we suppose the dying saint would have made such a request upon so lethargic a principle, and in the view of such a stupid state? No, surely; for he expected, and desired, and prayed to be received to dwell where Christ is, and to behold that glory which he had a glimpse of in the agonies of death.

Would the apostle Paul have been so willing *to be absent from the body*, where he did much service for his Saviour, if he had not a joyful view of being *present with the Lord*? As he expresses it, **2 Cor. v. 8.** What doth he mean by this blessed language of presence with the Lord, if his soul was to lie asleep in a senseless and inactive state till the second coming of Jesus? Or would he have told the *Philippians*, chap. i. verse 23. *that he had a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better*, if he had hoped for no advantage for his spirit by it, but a mere stupid indolence and rest in the silent grave?

Besides, we are told of rebellious *spirits* that are *in prison*; **1 Pet. iii. 19, 20.** and of *Sodom and Gomorrah suffering the vengeance of eternal fire*; **Jude, verse 7.** Whether this be material fire, or merely a metaphor to express torment, is not necessary to enquire here: But surely we can never imagine that the justice of God has provided the prison of hell and fiery torments for the souls of the wicked, separate from bodies, and yet that the mercy and goodness of God has provided no heaven of happiness for the spirits of those that have loved, honoured and obeyed him all the days they dwelt in the flesh. There is then, there is certainly a state of happiness prepared for holy souls immediately after death.

When we think of our pious friends departed, our foolish imagination is too ready to indulge and improve our sorrow. We solitary in the parlour and the chamber, we miss them there, and we cry, "They are lost." We retire melancholy to the closet, and bewail a lost father, or lost mother, or perhaps a nearer and dearer relative. We miss them in our daily conversation, we miss them in all their friendly offices, and their endearing sensible characters, and we are ready to say again, "Alas, they are lost." This is the language of flesh and blood, of sense and sensibility. Come let our faith teach us to think and speak of them under a more cheerful and a juster representation: They are not really lost, for they are present with Christ and with God. They have departed our world, where all things are imperfect, to those higher regions where light and perfection dwell. They have left their offices and stations here among us, but they are employed in a far diviner manner, and have new stations and nobler offices assigned them. Their places on earth indeed know them no more, but their places in heaven knew them well, even those glorious mansions that were prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Their place is empty in the earthly sanctuary, and in the days of solemn assembly, but they appear above in the heavenly Jerusalem as fair pillars and ornaments in the temple of God on high, and shall for ever dwell with him there.

It is a very natural enquiry now, but where are these places of blessed spirits? What part of the creation is it, in which they have their residence? Is it above or below the sun? Is their habitation in any of the planetary or starry worlds? Or are they fled beyond them all? Where is the proper place of their residence?

Let me propose a brief answer to these curious questions in a few propositions.

1. The chief properties of spirits are knowledge and activity; and they are said to be present there, where they have an immediate perception of any thing, and where they lay out their immediate activity or influence. So our souls are said to be present with our bodies, because they have immediate consciousness and knowledge of what relates to the body, and they move it, and act upon it, or influence it, in an immediate manner.

2. God, the infinite Spirit, has an immediate and universal presence; that is, he is immediately conscious of, and acquainted with every thing that passes in all the known and unknown parts of the creation, and by his preserving and governing power manages all things. Wheresoever he displays his glory to separate spirits, that is heaven: and where he exerts his vengeance, that is hell.

3. Finite spirits have not such an immediate and universal presence. Their knowledge and their activity are confined to

certain parts of the creation : And wheresoever they are, if they are under the immediate influences of divine glory, they are in heaven ; if of his vengeance, they are in hell.

4. They are usually represented as having some relation to particular place or places ; because while we dwell in flesh and blood, we know not how to conceive of their presence so well any other way : and therefore they may be described in scripture or in common discourse, as being in heaven, and above the heavens, and *in the third heaven*, and as coming down to earth, &c. according as they are supposed to put forth any actions there, or to have an immediate cognizance of things that are done in those places : for the chief notion we have of the presence of spirits is their immediate consciousness, and their immediate agency.

5. But if they are provided with any subtile or ethereal bodies, which are called vehicles, in and by which they act as soon as they leave flesh and blood, then they may properly be said to reside in those places where their vehicles are, even as our souls at present are said to be in a room or a closet, or a field, because our bodies are there, in and by which they act.

6. There must be some place where the glorified body of Christ is, and the souls of departed saints are, in some sense, with him. There Enoch and Elijah are in their immortal bodies, and other saints who rose at the resurrection of Christ. They may be, for ought we know, in or among some of the planets, or amongst the stars, though the distance of the stars is so prodigious and amazing, according to the exactest calculations of the new philosophy, that if the motion of a spirit or glorified body were no swifter than that of a cannon bullet, they would not get so far as the stars in a thousand ages ; nor would the journey of so swift a traveller to any of the planets, except the moon, cost less than the labour of several years.

7. These things are so puzzling to our reason, so confound our imagination, and so far transcend the reach of our present faculties to enquire and determine, that it is sufficient for us to know and believe, that *the spirits of the just made perfect* have an existence under the blissful influences of the grace and glory of God. And though we freely speak of them, and the scripture leads us to conceive of them, as dwelling in a world of light, and in some special place of magnificence and apartments of glory, or as moving from one place to another ; yet perhaps it is to be understood chiefly in condescension to the weakness of our present capacities, or in relation to vehicles to which they may be united. But our ignorance in these matters shall be no hindrance to our arrival at heaven, if we tread the paths of faith and holiness, though we know not in what part of the creation it lies. I proceed to the second remark.

II. If all the spirits of the just that depart from this world are

made perfect, then there is much better company above than there is below. The society in heaven is much more agreeable than the best society on earth. Here we meet with a multitude of sinners ; they are ready to mingle in all the affairs of life, and sometimes hypocrites join with us in the sacred ordinances of the sanctuary. The apostle himself hath told us, that in the civil concerns of this life we cannot avoid them ; for if we will keep no company with sinners, we must have nothing to do in this world, *we must needs go out of it* ; 1 Cor. v. 10. But in the world above there are nothing but saints ; no inhabitant there but what is holy. There are no persons there that will tempt or defile us, or lead us astray from the paths of purity or peace. *Holiness to the Lord* is inscribed on every soul there ; nor is there one *Canaanite in that upper house of the Lord* of hosts ; Zech. xiv. 21.

But this is not all. For there are many of the saints themselves here on earth that make but very indifferent companions. Some of them are shamefully ignorant, imprudent and foolish ; and we have much ado to bear with their folly. Some of them are morose and contentious, captious and peevish, envious and censorious, and ready to take offence on the slightest occasions ; a look or a smile placed wrong shall disoblige them, a mistaken word shall affront them for a month, and it is very hard work to humour and please them : Or we ourselves perhaps are foolish and imprudent, we are peevish and resenting, and our fellow-christians have as much to do to bear with us or to please us. There are some persons, concerning whom we have reason to hope, that their hearts in the main are right with God, but either by the iniquity of their animal natures, or the power of their temptations, they look so like the men of this world, that it is hard to distinguish them, and their society is dangerous, or at least very unprofitable and undesirable. Some of us fall into gross mistakes, and lead our friends into error, and hand in hand we forsake the truth. Some of us are melancholy, and sit in darkness ; then we spread a gloom and heaviness over all our conversation, and banish all the joys of earth and heaven : or at best, it may be, and in our sprightly days, we fill up the visiting hour with trifles and impertinencies, and there is little of heavenly and divine conversation among us. Poor low groveling subjects furnish our tongues, and entertain our ears, because we are so very imperfect here on earth in knowledge, in holiness, or in divine joy.

But what a glorious difference is there in the society above, where we may be secure from all mistake and falsehood, from all impertinence and folly in the longest discourse or conference ! for every spirit there is so perfect in knowledge, as to be free from error, and has so divine a turn of mind, that nothing resembles but what is holy and heavenly. No quarrels, no con-

plaints are found there to imbetter our converse, to diminish the pleasure of society, or to draw the heart away from God.

If we would know what the society of heaven is, let us renew the memory of the wisest and holiest, the kindest and the best companions that we were ever acquainted with here on earth; let us recollect the most pleasing hours that we ever enjoyed in their society; let us divest them of all their mistakes and weaknesses, of all their sins and imperfections; and then by faith and hope let us divest ourselves of all our own guilt and follies too; let us fancy ourselves engaged with them in delightful discourse on the most divine and most affecting subjects, and our hearts mutually raising each other near to God, and communicating mutual joys: This is the state of the blessed, this the conversation of heaven, this and more than this shall be our entertainment when we arrive at those happy regions.

This thought would very naturally lead me to the mention of our honoured and departed friend, but I withhold myself a little, and must detain your expectation till I have made a remark or two more.

III. Are the spirits of the just, who are departed from earth, *made perfect* in heaven; then they are not the proper subjects for our perpetual sorrows and endless complaints. Let us moderate our grief therefore, for that very providence that has fixed them in perfect holiness and joy.

We lament their absence, and our loss indeed is great; but the spirit of christian friendship should teach us to rejoice in their exaltation. Is it no pleasure to think of them as released from all the bonds of infirm nature, from pains of mortality, and the disquietudes of a sinful world? Is it not better to lift our eyes upward, and view a parent or a beloved friend adorned with perfect grace and complete in glory, exulting in the fulness of joy near the throne of God, than to behold him labouring under the tiresome disorders of old age, groaning under the anguish and torment of acute distempers, and striving with the troublesome attendants of this sinful and painful state? Do we profess fondness and affection for those that are gone, and shall we not please ourselves a little in their happiness, or at least abate our mourning? Doth not St. Paul tell the Corinthians, *this is what we wish, even your perfection?* 2 Cor. xiii. 9. and should not saints, in the lower world, take some satisfaction, when a fellow-saint is arrived at the sum of his own wishes, even perfect holiness and joy on high?

But I correct myself here; nature must have its way and be indulged a little; let it express its sensible pain at the loss of such endearments. A long separation from those who are so near a-kin to us in flesh and blood, will touch the heart in a painful place, and awaken the tenderest springs of sorrow. The

nices must be allowed to be held open a little; nature seems to demand it as a debt to love, and grace does not utterly forbid it: when Lazarus died, Jesus *groaned and wept*: John xi. 33, 35. Let not sorrow triumph and reign, and like a flood break over all its bounds; rather give the stream of it a little diversion to a better channel. Come, let us take the advice which our blessed Saviour gives to the daughters of Jerusalem, who attended him to his cross with tears; Luke xxiii. 28. *Weep not for me, but if you must weep, do it for yourselves, and your children*; because you are still left in the valley of sin and sorrow, while the saints departed are arrived at the land of peace, and their feet stand upon the mountains of paradise.

Could the voice of those blessed spirits made perfect reach our ears, we should hear them speak in the language of their joy, "Weep not for us, but for yourselves; you are still encompassed with temptations and difficulties, we have surmounted them all: You are wrestling with many errors, and entangled in dark and noisy controversies; we are perfect in knowledge, and see divine mysteries in a divine light: You are labouring in the race; we are crowned, and have received the prize: You are striving in the field of battle, and we well remember the toil and painful conflict: we pity you, and call you rather to weep for yourselves than for us; we have finished all the warfare by divine grace, and are secure in the city of triumph: you are yet travelling through the valley of tears, we are refreshing ourselves in the gardens of pleasure, and on hills of everlasting gladness. Hold on with courage, and faith, and patience? there are mansions of joy prepared for you also, and we wait your happy arrival."

IV. *Are the spirits of just men in heaven made perfect, in the same excellencies and privileges which they possessed on earth?* Then if our curiosity, or our love, has a mind to know what are the circumstances of our pious friends departed, or how they are employed above, let us review what they were here below, and how they employed themselves when they were with us; for, as I told you, in this life, we are trained up for the life of glory: We shall then be advanced to a glorious and transcendent degree of the same graces; and there will be something in the future state of rewards answerable and correspondent to the present state of labour and trial.

This thought necessarily calls our meditations backward a little to take a short survey of some peculiar characters of our excellent friend departed, that we may learn to rejoice in the present perfection of his graces and glories.

Sect. VII.—*The character of the deceased.*—When I name John Hartopp, all that knew him will agree that I name a gentleman, a scholar, and a christian; and neither of these cha-

racters, in the best and most valuable sense of them could forsake him at his entrance into heaven.

He shone with eminence among persons of birth and title* on earth ; while his obliging deportment and affable temper rendered him easy of access to all his inferiors, and made him the delight of all his friends. Though he knew what was due to his quality in this world, yet he affected none of the grandeurs of life, but daily practised condescension and love, and secured the respect of all, without assuming a superior air. Then surely he carried this temper with him to the upper world, where gentleness and goodness reign in the highest perfection ; and doubtless he practises now all the same graces of conversation among the blessed spirits there, but in a far superior manner, according to the unknown laws and customs of that region of light and love.

He had a taste for universal learning ; and ingenious arts were his delight from his youth. He pursued knowledge in various forms, and was acquainted with many parts of human science. Mathematical speculations and practices were a favourite study with him in his younger years ; and even to his old age, he maintained his acquaintance with the motions of the heavenly bodies, and light and shade whereby time is measured. And may we not suppose that there are entertainments amongst the works of God on high to feast the spirits of such a genius ? May they not in that upper region look down and survey the various contrivances of divine wisdom, which created all things in these lower worlds in number, weight and measure ? May not our exalted friend give glory there to his Maker, in the contemplation of the same heavenly bodies, though he dwells in the region where night and shadows are never known, and above the need or use of sun-beams.

But the book of God, was his chief study and his divinest delight. His bible lay before him night and day ; and he was well acquainted with the writers that explained it best. He was desirous of seeing what the Spirit of God said to men in the original languages. For this end, he commenced some acquaintance with Hebrew when he was more than fifty years old : And that he might be capable of judging of the true sense of any text in the new testament, he kept his youthful knowledge of the Greek language in some measure even to the period of his life.

But earthly languages are of little use in heaven. There are too many defects and ambiguities in them to express the bright, the complete, and the distinct ideas of the separate spirits. We may allow our learned friend therefore to be divested of these

* His grandfather, Sir Edward Hartopp, was created a baronet by King James I. 1619, which was but a few years after the first institution of that order.

dropt mortality. Now he is out of the body, and *caught up* in Paradise where Saint Paul, made heretofore a visit, 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4. he hears and he speaks those *unble words*, it is not possible for a mortal tongue to utter. Things of heaven are not to be expressed in any foreign lan-

Among the various themes of christian contemplation, he took peculiar pleasure in the doctrines of grace, in the display of the mysteries of the person of Christ, God in our nature, and the glorious work of redemption by his cross. He adored him as our Lord and his God: And while he trusted in his righteousness great Mediator, and beheld him as his crucified Saviour, he was ever zealous to maintain the honours due to his divine nature and majesty. And we may be sure this is a study in which he was till engaged, and he spends the days of his eternity in the noble contemplations of his glorified Redeemer, and the mysteries of his cross, and his throne, *which things the angels desire to pry into.*

His practice in life was agreeable to his christian principles, he knew that *the grace of God, that brings salvation to men, is not to deny all ungodliness, and to live sober, righteous and religious lives, that in all things they may adorn the doctrine of their Saviour.* Now that this part of his character is glorified and exalted in the region of the blessed spirits, is too good to need any amplification or proof; for holiness in every part of it is made perfect there, and all under the sweet constraint of the Spirit. His conversation was pious and learned, ingenious and active: He was inquisitive into the affairs of the learned world, the progress of arts and sciences, the concerns of the nation and the interest of the church of Christ: And upon all occasions was as ready to communicate as he was to enquire. He knew of the things of God or man, he resolved not to keep them only for himself, but for the benefit of all that had the opportunity of his acquaintance. There are many of his friends that join with me to confess, how often we have departed from his company refreshed and advanced in some useful knowledge. We cannot but reckon it among the blessings of heaven, when we review those five years of pleasure and improvement; which I enjoyed in his family in my younger part of life; and I found the benefit of instruction myself, where I was called to be an instructor.

Nor can I think such enquiries and such communications as are suitable to the affairs of the upper world, are unpractised by the spirits of the just men made perfect there; for man is a rational creature, and enjoys communion with his fellow-saints; as well as with his Maker and his Saviour. Nor can the soul of our honoured and departed friend, be a stranger to the

pleasures of society amongst his fellow-spirits in those blessed mansions.

His zeal for the welfare of his country, and of the church of Christ in it, carried him out to the most expensive and toilsome services in his younger and his middle age. He employed his time, his spirits, his interest and his riches for the defence of this poor nation, when forty years ago it was in the utmost danger of popery and ruin.* And doubtless the spirits of the just in heaven are not utterly unacquainted with the affairs of the kingdom of Christ on earth. He rejoices and will rejoice among his fellow-saints, when happy tidings of the militant church, or of the religious interests of Great Britain, are brought to the upper world by ministering angels. He waits there for the full accomplishment of all the promises of Christ to his church, when it shall be freed from sins and sorrows, from persecution and all mixtures of superstition, and shall be presented to the Father, *a glorious church without spot or wrinkle, in perfect beauty and joy.*

His doors were ever open, and his carriage always friendly and courteous to the ministers of the gospel, though they were distinguished among themselves by names of different parties; for he loved all that loved our Lord Jesus Christ *in sincerity*. He chose indeed to bear a part in constant public worship with the Protestant Dissenters, for he thought their practice more agreeable to the rules of the gospel: He joined himself in communion with one of their churches, which was under the pastoral care of the reverend Dr. John Owen, where he continued an honourable member under successive pastors till the day of his death. Nor was he ashamed to own and support that despised interest, nor to frequent those assemblies, when the spirit of persecution raged highest in the days of king Charles and king James the Second. He was a present refuge for the oppressed, and the special providence of God secured him and his friends from the *jury of the oppressor*. He was always a devout and diligent attendant on public ordinances till these last years of his life, when the infirmities of age growing upon him, confined him to his private retirements.

But if age confined him, death gave him a release. He is exalted now to the church in heaven, and has taken his place in that glorious assembly, where he worships among them before the throne: There he has no need to relieve his memory by the swiftness of his pen, which was his perpetual practice in the church on earth, and by which means he often entertained his family in

* He was three times chosen representative in parliament for his county of Leicestershire, in those years when a sacred zeal for liberty and religion strove hard to bring in the bill of exclusion, to prevent the Duke of York, afterwards King James II. from inheriting the crown of England.

the evening worship on the Lord's-day with excellent discourses ; some of which he copied from the lips of some of the greatest preachers of the last age : There his unbodied spirit is able to sustain the sublimest raptures of devotion, which run through the worshippers in that heavenly state ; though here on earth I have sometimes seen the pious pleasure too strong for him : and while he has been reading the things of God to his household, the devotion of his heart has broken through his eyes, and interrupted his voice, and commanded a sacred pause and silence.

He enjoyed an intimate friendship with that great and venerable man Dr. Owen, and this was mutually cultivated with zeal and delight on both sides till death divided them. The world has already been acquainted, that it is to the pious industry of Sir John Hartopp, that we are indebted for many of those sermons and discourses of the Doctor's, which have been lately published in folio. A long and familiar acquaintance enabled him also to furnish many memoirs or matters of fact, towards that brief account of the Doctor's life, which is prefixed to that volume, though it was drawn up in the present form, with various enlargements by another hand. Now can we suppose two such souls to have been so happily intimate on earth, and may we not imagine they found each other among the brighter spirits on high ? May we not indulge ourselves to believe, that our late honoured friend hath been congratulated upon his arrival by that holy man that assisted to direct and lead him thither ? Nor is it improbable that he has found other happy souls there who were numbered among his pious acquaintance on earth. Shall I mention that excellent man Sir Thomas Abney, who was his late forerunner to heaven, and had not finished two months there before Sir John Hartopp's arrival ? Happy spirits ! May I congratulate your meeting in the celestial regions ? But the world and the churches mourn your absence ; and the Protestant Dissenters lament the loss of two of their fairest ornaments and honours.

And is there not the same reason to believe, that our departed friend hath by this time renewed his sacred endearments with those kindred spirits, that were once related to him in some of the nearest bonds of flesh and blood ? There they rejoice together in unknown satisfaction, they wait and long for the arrival of those whom they left behind, and for whose immortal welfare they had a solicitous concern in the state of their mortality.

This thought opens my way to address the posterity, the kindred, and the friends of the deceased, in the fifth remark.

Sect. VIII.—*An address to the friends and relatives of the deceased.*—V. If the perfections of blessed spirits above consists in a glorious increase of those virtues and graces which were begun below, let us see to it then, that those graces and those virtues are begun in us here, or they will never be perfected

in us hereafter. If our spirits have nothing of that divine righteousness wrought in them on earth, we can never be admitted into the company of the spirits of the righteous made perfect in heaven. It is an old saying among divines, but it is a most rational and a certain truth, that grace is glory begun, and glory is but grace perfected. The saints above have the same divine nature, the same sanctified inclinations, and are engaged in many of the same sacred employments with the saints below, but all in a superior degree, and in a more transcendent manner.

As for you, my friends, who have the happiness and honour to be descended from such parents, or to be nearly related to such saints, you have seen the virtues and graces, the exemplary character and piety of them who are gone before: you have had many bright and shining examples in your family; you are *the children of the blessed of the Lord*, and may you for ever be blessed with them! and in order to it, see that you are made like them now, that ye may be *followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises*. This is a proper season to examine yourselves, and call your souls to account in such language as this: My father, my mother, my honoured and superior kindred are gone to glory: Their graces are perfected; and are not mine begun? What, have I no evidences for heaven yet ready? no exercises of faith, of love, of repentance, of true holiness? Are they arrived at heaven, and am I not yet travelling in the same road?

They were convinced of sin, and the danger of eternal death, so as to give themselves no rest till they found salvation. Have I ever been convinced of the sin of my nature, and the guilt of my life? Have I beheld myself exposed to the anger of God, and in danger of everlasting misery, so as to cry out with myself, *What shall I do to be saved?*

They have seen Jesus the Son of God, the all-sufficient Saviour, and have committed their souls by humble faith into his hands, to obtain pardon for the sake of his atonement, to be justified through his righteousness, to be renewed and made holy by the grace of his Spirit, and to be preserved to eternal glory. Now what have I seen of the excellency, or all-sufficiency, or necessity of Christ as a Mediator? Have I been persuaded to trust in him for my acceptance with God, to give my soul up to him as my guide, guard and ruler, to be formed after his image, and to venture all my immortal concerns with him to be brought safe to heaven? Have I ever received him as my Lord and my Saviour, under those condescending characters and offices which he sustains for a sinner's salvation? They have believed in him while he was unseen, and they loved him, *though they saw him not; they rejoiced in him as their all*, and they knew not how to live

without him. How is it with my soul in this respect? Do I love Jesus the Lord? Is he the desire of my heart, and the delight of my life?

Though they were kept by the grace of God from the pollutions of the world, and upheld their unblemished character to the last, yet they found sin to be their most dangerous enemy; they have felt it bitter and painful to their souls, and they long groaned under it as their daily burden. What is my grief? what my chief sorrow? *Do I groan in this tabernacle being burdened*, because of this inward enemy? And do I long to be rid of it? Are my sinful affections like a pain at my heart, and do the workings of sin within me awaken my continual repentance? They maintained a sacred tenderness of conscience, and were afraid to indulge themselves in that company, in that practice, and in those liberties of life which have often proved a dangerous snare to souls. Now can I appeal to God, who sees my heart, that I am cautious and watchful against every snare, that I stand afar off from every temptation, and *abstain from all appearance of evil*?

They took sweet pleasure in retirement, in prayer, and other holy exercises: This was the refreshment of their hearts, and the throne of grace was their refuge under every distress and difficulty. Let me ask my heart, what is my pleasure, my inward delight? Do I find a sweet relish in devotion? And when outward troubles perplex me, do I make the mercy-seat my speedy and constant refuge? They lived upon their bible, they counted the gospel their treasure, and the promises and the words of God written there, were more valuable to them than all their outward riches. But what is my life? What is my treasure? What is my hope? Do I count heaven and the gospel my chief inheritance? Do I converse much with my bible, and find food and support there? Do I *look at things unseen and eternal*, and feed and rest upon the promised glories of another world, when I meet with disappointments here?

They had a large share of christian experience, a rich stock of divine and spiritual observations by much converse with God and with their own souls. What have I got of this kind for the support of my soul? or are all these strange things to me? Believe me, my dear and honoured friends, these are matters of infinite importance; I am sure you will think so one day: And I trust and persuade myself, you think them so now. I cannot give myself leave to imagine that you put these thoughts far from you. Some of you have made it appear that they lie next your heart, and that your souls are deeply engaged in the ways of God and goodness. O that every one of you would give the same comfort and joy to your friends! Be not satisfied with a mere *negative holiness*, an unspotted character in the eyes of the

world ; but let the world know that you dare be religious, and profess universal piety in a degenerate age. Let those that honour the memory of your parents, and love your souls, rejoice in your public christianity. Let them know, that there are the foundations of heavenly glory laid within you all, and the blessed work begun on earth, that shall surely be made perfect among *the spirits of the just* in heaven.

And methinks I would not have you contented with the lowest seat there ; but stir up yourselves to a most unwearied pursuit of holiness in the sublimer degrees of it. And thus labouring in the christian race, contend for some of the brighter prizes, some of the richer crowns of glory. Be not satisfied to sit at a great distance below your parents departed, even in the heavenly country : But strive with a holy ambition that you may come near them, that the whole family together may arrive at some superior degrees of blessedness. And O may divine grace grant me the pleasure to be a witness to your exalted stations, and to worship and rejoice amongst you there ! *Amen.*

THE DOCTRINE
OF
THE PASSIONS,
&c. &c.



PREFACE

To the Doctrine of the Passions.

THE motions of the heart of man are infinitely various: The different forms and shapes, in which our passions appear, the sudden and secret turns and windings of them through the heart, with the strange mixtures and complications of them, in their continual exercise, are innumerable and nameless. It is as hard, almost, to reduce them to a perfect scheme, and to range all their excursions into exact order of science, as it is to bring them under complete government in practice.

Yet, since it is of such vast importance in human life, to regulate their motions, that they may not become utterly exorbitant and mischievous, I thought it proper, for this end, to make a diligent enquiry into the nature of these mingled powers of flesh and spirit, to take a survey of them in a comprehensive view, and draw them into a little system. With no small care, I have attempted, to range them in some tolerable order and method under general names, to trace out and observe their causes, their effects, their influences on human affairs, and the various purposes which they serve in the life of man. This is not only desirable, as it is a part of the science of human nature, or the knowledge of ourselves, without which, we can never pretend to be philosophers; but this may also give us some assistance toward forming proper rules for their better management, and the bringing these active and restless promoters, or disturbers of our happiness, under a moral and religious discipline; and without this, we can neither be men of wisdom nor piety.

The natural affections of man, are designed for valuable ends in life, when put under due government: They will render difficult duties easy, and relieve many of the troubles and fatigues of the present state. But if they are let run loose without controul, or, if they are abused, and employed to wrong purposes, they become the springs and occasions of much mischief and misery.

The interests of virtue and vice are greatly concerned in this matter. The regulation of the passions, is a thing of unspeakable moment to us, considered either as men, or as christians. Ungoverned passions break all the bonds of human society and peace, and would change the tribes of mankind into brutal herds, or make the world a mere wilderness of savages. Passion unbridled, would violate all the sacred ties of religion, and raise the sons of men in arms against their Creator. Where passion runs riot, there are none of the rights of God or man secure from its insolences.

But when these vehement powers of nature are reduced to the obedience of reason, it renders our conduct amiable and useful to our fellow-creatures and makes virtue shine in the world in its proper ornaments; this will go a great way to procure our own ease and happiness, so far as it is attainable in this life, and it will tend to make our neighbours happy as ourselves. What is the true use or abuse of the passions in religious affairs, is very little mentioned in this treatise, because it is the whole professed subject and design of those discourses of the love of God, &c. which were joined with this treatise

in the first edition in it, and I intend shall be shortly published again*: But these two books now stand separate, that readers of a different genius may please themselves. Thus much I may be permitted to say here, that the soul which governs its affections by the sacred dictates of reason and religion, and keeps itself at a proper loose from every creature, stands much less exposed to the injuries and sorrows of life, and is better prepared to part with all earthly comforts at the call of providence. Such a happy temper of mind will enable us chearfully to resign life itself, with all its mortal interests, at the appointed hour, and to enter gloriously upon the nobler employments, and the diviner joys that await us in the upper world.

* This, "Doctrine of the Passions," in the first edition of it, stood merely as an introduction to the "Discourses of the Love of God, and the Use and Abuse of the Passions in Religion:" But being corrected and enlarged, it is now published alone as a distinct treatise. "The Discourses of the Love of God," &c. are also printed by themselves.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE PASSIONS,

&c. &c.

SECTION I.—*The various Senses of the Word.*

THE word passion, in the abstracted and logical sense of it, denotes the receiving of the action of some agent: As if an archer bend his bow, the archer is the agent; the bow is the part; the bending, as it comes from the archer, is the action; as it terminates in the bow, it is called the passion. But this is entirely a philosophical sense of the word, and never used in common life; therefore I dismiss it. Yet we may just take notice, that the term passion sometimes signifies any painful suffering of soul and body: For, it is in this sense we use it, when we speak of the passion of Christ, whereby we mean his agony in the garden, and especially his death on the cross; and so it is used in our translation of the bible; Acts i. 3. *He shewed himself alive after his passion.*

Passions, in this discourse, signify the same with natural affections in general, such as love, hatred, joy, hope, anger, sorrow, &c. Here we may observe, that the term passion is often used in conversation in a more limited sense, to denote one of these particular affections, viz. anger or sudden resentment; the word affection is used sometimes also in a limited sense, and signifies love. So we say, Moses was once in a passion, whereby we mean he was angry; or Jonah was a passionate man, that is, he was given to sudden and violent resentments: And, in the same manner, we say, David had an affection for Bathsheba, that is, he loved her: Or St. John was a very affectionate man, that is, he was of a loving and kind disposition. But in this discourse we take passion and affection to mean the same thing, and to extend to any of these powers or principles of human nature, which we just mentioned; such as love, &c.

The name of passion seems to have been given originally to these affections of human nature, either from the impressions or emotions which the animal powers receive by the soul's perception of that object which raises the passion, or from the impression or sensation which the soul receives by this commotion of the animal powers, or perhaps from both these, as this subject will be hereafter explained.

in an undistinguished mixture, that it is exceeding hard to give such an accurate and distinct account of all of them as one would wish or desire.

IX. There is another thing, also, that makes a just and accurate scheme of the passions very difficult, if not impossible; and that is, that the language of men has sometimes made one word to signify very different passions or appetites; as for instance the word love signifies gluttony, which is the love of eating good victuals: and friendship, which is the love of an equal intelligent being; and ambition, which is the love of honour; and concupiscence or lust; all these are called love. So modesty, which is the spring of innocent blushes, and the guard of virtue; and that blush of confusion and disdonour, which is the just effect of guilt, are both called shame. These are different ideas, but the same name still. Again, the language of men hath sometimes combined and associated several ideas of different passions into one word, or name; such as jealousy, suspicion, envy: And sometimes where the passions themselves have scarce any difference, yet there are different names for them, as anger, and wrath, and fury: And there are many other combined passions that have no name. A perfect scheme therefore is not to be expected.

X. Finally, I would give my readers notice, that several of these principles, qualities, or tempers in men, which I have ranked among the passions, may be called virtues and vices; as pride, envy, good-will, compassion, &c. and are so described by the writers of morality: But since they are often attended with particular forments or commotions of animal nature, and distinct sensations of the mind, I have given them a place amongst the passions. These things being premised, I proceed now to give some account of each general or original passion, with the particulars contained under it.

SECT. IV.—Of *Admiration or Wonder.*

The most primitive and original passions, or those of the first rank, are admiration, love, and hatred.

First, Admiration. When we perceive any object that is rare and uncommon, that is new and strange, either for its kinds or for its qualities; or when we meet with such an occurrence or event as is unusual or unexpected; or such as is at least unusual at such a particular time and place, we are struck with admiration or wonder: And that without any consideration whether the object be valuable or worthless, whether it be good or evil. We wonder at a very great or a very little man, a dwarf or a giant; at a very little horse, at a huge snake or toad, at an elephant, or a whale or a comet, or at any rare performance of art, as moving machines, such as clocks, watches, with a variety of uncommon motions and operations; we wonder at a piece of extraordinary wit, skill or

It appears pleasing, and fit to do us good, it raises the love of complacency, or delight; if it be displeasing, and unfit to do us good, it excites a displicence or dislike.

From love and hatred in their different kinds, but chiefly complacency and displicence, arise several more chief passions, which may be called the third rank, and which are also distinguished by their objects. Note, In this pair of passions, complacency and displicence, and in all the third rank, which is derived from them, the pleasing object is more properly evil, than in the passions before-mentioned.

If the good be absent or unpossessed, and possible to be obtained, the passion of love grows up to desire; if the evil may possibly befall upon us, the hatred expresses itself in aversion, or avoidance: Though there may be also an aversion to some evil from which we are sufficiently secure. If there be any prospect of obtaining the absent good, there is a passion excited which is called hope; but if the absent evil be likely to come upon us, it raises a passion of fear.

Fear also arises from a present or expected good in danger of being lost: And there is a hope of security from some absent menacing evil, or of deliverance from some evil that is present. If the good be actually obtained, or the evil prevented, it excites joy and gladness; if the good be actually lost, or the evil befall upon us, it causes sorrow and grief. Whoever helps us to obtain this good, or prevents the evil, excites in us gratitude: Whoever hinders our attainment of good, or promotes the evil, excites our anger.

There are very few, if any, of the passions for which we have distinct names, and which are usually taken notice of in the heart of man; but they may be reduced to some or other of those general names, as I shall explain them. I do not pretend to lay down a distinct distinction and arrangement of the passions of man, as an uncontroverted or certain thing: But upon the best survey I can make of the various workings of the heart of man, as well as of the several authors who have written on this subject, I do not find that any of them lead me into an easier or better scheme than this. The most logical scheme and arrangement of things has some advantages in it; it shews us the relations of various things to each other, their correspondencies, their similitude and differences; it greatly assists the memory: But it is still of more importance to describe the several passions with justice and truth as they are in nature, than to range them in logical classes and just

III.—*A Further Account of the Nature of the Passions, in some Remarks concerning them.*

It appears by what I have already said, that the passions are certain principles or powers in man of a mixed nature, be-

longing partly to the soul or mind, and partly to the animal body, that is, the flesh and blood : For it is evident, that when we perceive any object with such properties as before mentioned, we find usually some ferments of the blood, or natural spirits,* or some alterations which affect the body, as well as we feel special impressions on our minds. What these special ferments are, or what the distinct commotions of the nerves, or inward parts of animal nature of the several distinct passions, is not easy to determine with exactness : It requires a good skill in anatomy, and long and watchful observation of the workings of the several passions, to write on this subject with success. The ingenious Descartes has aimed at it in his treatise on this subject, and perhaps hath as happily performed it as could be expected, considering how much less acquaintance with animal nature the learned world had arrived at in his age. I proceed now to give some further account of these pathetic powers of human nature by the following remarks :

I. It is not necessary that the object which excites our passions should be something actually present with us ; for if there be but the idea of it found in the mind or imagination, it is sufficient to raise intense passions ; sometimes horror and fear may be unruly and violent when the objects or occasions of them are far distant ; but they are supposed to be approaching : And sometimes the very absence of pleasing or displeasing objects may be the occasion of grief or joy ; but it is then the perception of this absence that is the immediate cause of them.

II. The passions are wont to be described as mere inward sensations†. But since there are some few of the passions that include acts of volition in them, or some propensities or outgoings of the will, as well as perceptions of the mind, such as the passions of desire, aversion, and their species, I chuse rather in this place to describe the passions in general, as some sensible commotions of our whole nature, both soul and body, which description may perhaps more fully comprehend all the passions.

III. Though most of the passions are confessed to be sensations, yet I have frequently in my "discourses of the love of God, &c." called them active and sprightly powers, because some of them include the act of the will in them, and very few of them

* What I call here natural spirits, are sometimes called animal or vital spirits which are supposed to be the springs or mediums of animal motions, both inward and outward : But whether these be some refined spirituous liquids, or vapours drawn off from the blood, or whether they be nothing else but the elastic or springy parts of the air drawn in by respiration, and mingled with the blood and other animal juices, is not yet agreed by philosophers.

† I have sometimes described the passions, as the soul's sensations of some commotions in animal nature, arising from the perception of peculiar objects. And I think it is not of much importance whether they be called the soul's sensations of commotions in the body, or sensible commotions of soul and body. I am sure both are included in every passion.

are so entirely passive, but they have a tendency to excite the person to lively and vigorous actions of some kind or other: and indeed this is the chief design of them in the nature of man.

IV. Because several of the passions, or these commotions of animal nature, do particularly affect the heart, therefore the heart, in the common sense of mankind, is reckoned the seat of the passions, and they are sometimes called the passions of the heart. It was probably from this observation, that some ancient philosophers and writers among other nations, as well as the Jews, supposed the heart to be the special seat and residence of the soul or intellectual spirit, and on this account the heart in scripture, as well as in heathen writings, is used to signify the soul itself.

V. The ferment of the animal juices, and the motion of the blood, are not the only things which are affected while passion is excited; for most of the passions have some effects on the colour and features of the countenance, and especially on the eyes, and discover themselves by gestures or voices, or other outward signs: So sorrow is discovered by tears and groans, mirth by laughter, joy by a smiling countenance, and anger by frowning, &c. Whence it comes to pass that many of them are so happily imitated by painters.

VI. It is true, that the passions are generally, if not always excited or occasioned by the perception of some object, according to the special properties that belong to it: yet there are several things in the nature and the life of man which greatly dispose the heart to particular passions, and render it much more susceptible of them; such as age, constitution, health or sickness, weather, &c. which I shall hereafter enumerate more particularly.

VII. Though the complexion of some persons make them more susceptible of these pathetic commotions in general than others are, and though the natural or accidental state or circumstances of some persons, and at certain seasons, dispose them more to particular passions, such as fear, anger, joy, hope, &c. yet there is scarce any person, whatsoever be his complexion, his age, or his circumstances, who makes a strict and narrow reservation of what passes within him, but will find almost all the passions of nature, at one time or other, rising in him in greater or less degrees.

VIII. Though the chief, and the original passions are these which were before named, *viz.* wonder, love, hatred, esteem, contempt, &c. yet they include a great variety of particular affections under them. In many of the passions the ferments of flesh and blood, and the sensations and motions of the mind, are so exceedingly swift and momentaneous, they are so joined and commingled with each other, and they run so often into one another

If this sense of our weakness spring not from a just judgment and estimation of things, but merely from a certain frailty and infirmity of the mind, and arise to a greater degree than it ought, and especially if it sink the spirits, and overwhelm us with an unreasonable confusion, it is called abjectness of spirit, which often appears in a sort of awkwardness in behaviour, in perpetual and unreasonable bashfulness, in sheepish and downcast looks, and unmanly carriage and conduct.

From this abjectness of spirit, rises cowardice and meanness of soul, and an inability to attempt any thing great and glorious, as well as an inclination to practice mean and low flatteries, and base submissions without reason. But, on the other hand, if a man has too high an esteem of his own good qualities, and his own merit, this excites the vicious affections of pride and self-sufficiency, conceit and vanity. This is sometimes called arrogance, because it assumes and attributes to self more than is due: Sometimes it is termed self-admiration; but then the word admiration here does not signify wonder, but esteem.

From this pride and self-conceit, many times spring an undue courage, or boldness to attempt what is too high and hard for us; which is properly called temerity, or rashness, and is not true fortitude, or greatness of soul. Hence also arise haughtiness and insolence in our carriage toward our fellow-creatures, and scorn and disdain toward those whom we think much beneath us.

We have so much of pride, vanity, and self-love in us by nature, that we take all occasions to borrow from every thing that has any relation to us, some fine plumes to dress ourselves in, and to advance our self-esteem. We value ourselves for our country or nation, for our native town, for our ancestors or family, if any thing excellent or honourable have been ever reported concerning them. We are so senseless, as to pride ourselves in being first in trifles, or chief even in worthless or vicious qualities.

This evil principle of pride is discovered oftentimes by an affected mein and air, by a toss of the head, by a lofty look, by a stately and strutting gait and gesture, by dwelling at a looking-glass, by talking much of one's self or family, by speaking to equals in a scornful tone, as though they were much our inferiors, and by speaking to inferiors and treating them as though they were cattle.

Though the terms of scorn and disdain are generally applied to the character of pride and arrogance, yet they may be sometimes used in a good sense; as when a man of honour, a man of virtue, a person of a generous and great soul disdains and scorns to stoop to any mean and base practice, even under the strongest temptations.

Here, let it be observed, according as I have before hinted in general, that generosity and humility may be called virtues rather than passions; because the ferments which are raised by them in the blood and natural spirits, are very small, and not often sensible: But pride and abjection of mind, may be justly counted passions, as well as infirmities or vices of nature, for both of them betray themselves very sensibly in animal nature, in the outward behaviour, in the countenance and the gestures.

Though these two passions, viz. abjection and pride, seem to be contrary to each other, yet they very commonly meet in the same persons: For those who in prosperous circumstances are puffed up with pride, and carry it with a haughty disdain and insolence towards their neighbours, are oftentimes found to be of a mean and cowardly soul, and sink into the greatest meanness and abjectness of spirit, when adverse providence and calamity attend them.

The mind that is generous and humble, that has a just and becoming apprehension of its own worth, and a lowly sense of its frailties, maintains generally a more equal temper in different circumstances of life, and possesses the pleasing virtue which we call equanimity.

SECT. VII.—*Benevolence and Malevolence.*

The second sort of love is called benevolence or good-will. But before I divide it into several kinds, I would distinguish it from the love of complacence or delight; and indeed, if words or names were now to be coined and appropriated to these two sorts of love, as they are called, I should scarce use the word love to signify both of them, since their objects are so very distinct, as will appear by what follows:

The object of benevolence, is a thing or person fit to receive good from me: The object of complacence, is a thing or person fit to do me good, or to give me pleasure.

Benevolence is an inclination or propensity to seek the happiness or welfare of any being: Complacence is the derivation of some degree of happiness to one's self from any being.* Complacence is a passion, that terminates always finally in one's self, to make one's self easy and pleased, though another thing or person may be the object of it: Benevolence always terminates in that which is the object of it, in order to make that object easy and happy, whether it be ourselves or our neighbours.

Benevolence or good-will therefore chiefly and most pro-

* I desire it may be observed here, and throughout this discourse of the passions, that I describe them all as they are found in men, and not as they may be, by way of analogy, transferred to pure spirits, or to God himself: For when these human passions are ascribed to God in scripture, or in theological writings, we must a little alter our idea of them, and remove every thing from the divine idea that is frail or imperfect.

perly has some sensible being for the object of it, as man or some other animal: But we take complacency or delight in garments, flowers, houses, herbs, meats, drinks, books, conversation, or any thing that pleases us, as well as in our animal or intellectual fellow-creatures, or in God our Creator.

Complacency always supposes some present good in the object suited to our desires or delights; benevolence sometimes is laid out upon an object that has no such present good in it, as we can desire or delight in, but only some foundation of future good, or some capacity to be made good or agreeable. A pious man can never love wicked men with the love of complacency or delight; but he may exercise the love of benevolence towards them to pity them, and to wish their recovery. So our Saviour could not love the bloody city of Jerusalem with complacency, because it killed the prophets, and blasphemed God and his Son; but he loved it with benevolence, and wept over it some tears of compassion.

There may be, and there are a thousand objects of benevolence or good-will, in which we have no complacency or present delight. God, and angels and good men exercise benevolence towards sinners, in whom they have no complacency: But there can hardly be any person, or any sensible being, in which we take delight, but we have a good-will to it, and wish its welfare.

Thus, though benevolence and complacency greatly differ in their nature, yet often meeting and centering in the same object, the word love is applied to signify both, and too often without a just distinction.

Having premised all these things, let us proceed to discourse of the love of benevolence or good-will, and its contrary, malevolence or ill-will, and to distinguish them into their several kinds.

Benevolence consists in a hearty concern for the welfare of any sensible being, or a propensity to do good to it. In a large sense indeed the word may be applied to that respect which we sometimes shew to inanimate beings, which are not supposed to be sensible. If we see the fine garden at Kensington, or the noble paintings of Raphael at Hampton-Court, we wish them a long continuance in their beauty, and that no rude hand may ever destroy them. But this benevolence or love of good-will, is more properly exercised toward intelligent or sensible creatures only.

Though every man in reality bears good-will or benevolence toward himself, yet the word benevolence, generally means the good-will or love we bear to another. If the being which is beloved, be accounted inferior to the lover, it is called the love of simple benevolence, or good-will, without any other name; so a master may love his servant. If the beloved object may be

steemed equal to the lover, there is generally some mutual complacency or delight mingled with it, and it gains the name of friendship; so one friend loves another. If the object be superior, then this love of good-will is joined with esteem, and it is termed honour and respect; so a servant loves his master. But if God himself be the object of it, there ought to be the highest esteem, as well as the greatest degree of complacency joined with it; and thus love grows up into devotion. Though it must be confessed, the word devotion has been sometimes used also with regard to one's country, one's religion, or one's prince, as well as to one's God.

This love of benevolence or good-will, while it wishes well to the objects of it, does oftentimes dispose us to think well of them too, which is called charity, or a charitable opinion. It inclines us to benevolence, or speaking well of them; to civility, or speaking kindly to them; to humanity or beneficence, that is, treating them well, or doing good to them, according to the wants of the one, and the prudence and capacity of the other. This good-will generally discovers itself in a pleasing countenance, a soft and smiling air, affability of speech, gentleness of behaviour, and a hand extended to invite or relieve the oppressed and the miserable.

The love of friendship does, as it were, unite itself to the object; it produces a communion of benefits, and causes a mutual communication of good offices between the lover and the person beloved. The love to superiors, which is called honour, respect, and veneration, generally carries with it subjection to the object beloved, and makes us use our utmost endeavours to observe, and please the person beloved, by submission, and by obedience.

Devotion to God, which is the highest love, obliges us to perform all proper acts of adoration or worship towards himself, as well as to obey him in all other things which relate to ourselves, or to our fellow-creatures. This endeavour to please and serve our superiors, whom we love, when it rises high, is called zeal, whether it regard God or a creature. We shew our zeal for our king or our country, as well as for our God.

Yet we may observe also, that zeal is sometimes manifested, for some particular notions or practices; not only where God or our superiors are interested, but wherein our own opinions or humours, or inclinations, are chiefly concerned, or the opinion of some sect, or party, to which we are attached.

If the object of the love of benevolence be in miserable or mournful circumstances, it is then usually styled pity and compassion: And this is one of the tenderest affections which belong to human nature. If the miserable object be inferior, our inclination to help and relieve it, is called mercy and charity; and if the object be poor, it is called bounty and liberality.

If the object of the love of friendship be in misery, it gains the name of sympathy, whereby the lover expresses an inward sense and fellow-feeling of the pains and sorrows which his friends sustain: Though perhaps, this might as well be brought in under the passion of sorrow, unless we extend the word sympathy to signify our communion in all the joys and sorrows, and all the concerns of our friends.

Now let us consider how malevolence or ill-will manifests itself. It implies in it a desire of some evil to fall upon the hated object: It discovers itself in frowns and lowering countenance, in uncharitableness, in evil sentiments, hard speeches to or of its object, in cursing and reviling, and doing mischief, either with open violence or secret spite, as far as there is power. Whether the hated object be superior, inferior, or equal, it may keep the same name, and be called ill-will: If it extend to parents, masters and good magistrates, it becomes a spirit of rebellion: If it arise against God, it grows up to horrid impiety.

If our ill-will or hatred express itself particularly toward an object, considered merely in mournful and miserable circumstances, it is then called cruelty and inhumanity, or hard-heartedness. This evil temper inclines persons to insult their fellow-creatures under their miseries, instead of pitying and relieving them.

If our hatred arise to a high degree, and more especially, if it be without a cause, it is called malignity and malice, which is a most hateful temper in the sight of God and men, and is one of the chief parts of the image of the devil.

SECT. VIII.—*Complucence and Displucence.*

The third sort of love and hatred are complucence and displucence. If the object be agreeable to me, and suited to give me pleasure, the love which I express to it, is called the love of complucence and delight; and this extends, as I have hinted before, to trees and fields, to meats and drinks, to business and studies, and to every inanimate thing that is capable of giving me pleasure, as well as to animal or intelligent beings.

The love of complucency and delight, has almost an infinite variety of ways to express itself, according to the various objects of it. We gaze upon a pleasing figure, or gay landscape, or beautiful picture, we listen to music or agreeable discourse, we walk long in a fine garden, we smell to flowers, we eat and drink the food that we love, we are intent on delightful studies, we dwell in the company of our friends, and prolong the enjoyment of the thing that pleases us.

If this complucency rise exceeding high towards objects that are inferior, and especially, if it exceed the bounds of strict reason, it is called fondness: So children are fond of birds, and of

their painted toys. Yet, here I would take notice once for all, that there is something of this complacency or fondness, which is very innocent and agreeable in the love which God our Creator has ordained, between kindred or the nearest relations, and which, in general, is usually called natural affection; but being superadded to the various names of love or benevolence to inferiors, superiors, or equals, renders each of them a sort of distinct species for which there are scarce any names in our language. Parents love their children with a fondness and tenderness, added to simple benevolence: Children love their parents with fondness and veneration; husbands and wives love each other with a fond and tender friendship; brothers and sisters find also a mutual fondness superadded to the mere love of equals.

This fondness for near relations is manifested by the eyes, by the lips and voice, by the countenance and behaviour, and by a thousand nameless airs of kindness and tenderness, which nature teaches and understands: Nor do we know how to give distinct names to these different sorts of love, unless we borrow them from the latin name of those relations, and call them parental and filial, conjugal and fraternal love, all which imply benevolence joined with a special kind of complacency.

Perhaps, some readers might think it a strange unpardonable omission, if in a treatise of the passions, I should be quite silent of that passion, which is known to be one of the strongest, that is, the love which a man bears to the woman whom he seeks for a wife: But this has such complications and peculiarities in it, that I leave it to the description of other writers. And as for the lewd and vicious passions, which unjustly assume the same name, they are not fit to be mentioned in this place.

As an agreeable object gives complacency or delight; so where the object is disagreeable, it raises displicence, dislike, or disgust. The word disgust is borrowed from the disagreeableness of food to our palate, and it is most frequently used in such a case, where the object has been once agreeable, but now ceases to be so.

If this displicency rise to a very high degree, we call it abhorrence; and sometimes by a metaphor borrowed from disagreeable food, it is called loathing. This is manifested by some distortions of the countenance, and by shutting the eyes, stopping the ears, turning away the face, or leaving the room.

Where this disagreeableness between the person and the object is something very peculiar in nature, or is wrought into the very constitution of persons by some early accident in life, or by some long and indulged habit, it obtains the name of antipathy: So some persons have a natural antipathy to a cat or a spider, or to some particular sort of food; and the effects of it are ostentive

very sudden and strong ; it occasions sweating, paleness, tremor, fainting, &c.

Most, or all of these general passions, may be exercised toward ourselves or toward others. As the love of esteem may have self for the object of it, so may the love of benevolence or good-will, as was hinted before, and so may the love of complacency or delight. We desire the welfare of ourselves, we may be pleased with ourselves, and delight in self. When self is the object, all these are properly called self-love, and all the various kinds and branches of it are called selfish passions*.

The most of these selfish passions are innocent, when kept within proper bounds, and were designed for the service of man, to guard him from evil, and to promote his welfare ; yet there is something more generous and honourable when the passions of esteem, benevolence, and complacency, are exercised towards others. An universal love and benevolence desiring the good of all sensible beings is a noble character ; but still it must be limited by a submission to the will and wisdom of God, who governs all things well, and has not seen fit effectually to secure certain happiness to all his creatures.

SECT. IX.—*Desire and Aversion.*

We proceed now to the third rank of passions, which I call derivative, because they spring chiefly from the love of benevolence and complacency, and their contraries. In this rank the first pair that occur are desire and aversion. When we look upon an object as good, and suppose it possible to be attained, our desire goes out toward it, which is a tendency or propensity to obtain some absent or unpossessed good. When we look upon an object as evil, which may possibly come upon us, it awakens an active passion, which we may call aversion or avoidance, and it implies a tendency to escape this evil.

Though these inward principles of desire and aversion seem to have more of the will in them than the other passions ; yet if we examine our own hearts, we shall find some strong sensations of the workings of animal nature, attending these acts of the will, and therefore they may be properly called passions.

Here I would have it observed, that in our animal nature there are some propensities or desires that arise without any ex-

* The ingenious author of "The Nature and Conduct of the Passions," calls those affections which relate to the happiness or unhappiness of other persons' public passions or affections, and makes several agreeable and just remarks upon them. Most of the particular and derivative passions may also be public as well as selfish ; for they are but the effects of the love of benevolence, or the love of complacency, or their contraries, according to the variety of their objects. We desire good for ourselves or for others : We hope for the happiness of ourselves or our neighbours : We fear, and are solicitous for the welfare of our country, as well as for our own : We rejoice in public prosperity, and mourn over public distress.

ess ideas of the goodness or agreeableness of their object to the mind before-hand, such as hunger, thirst, &c. These we generally call natural appetites. But those desires which arise from our perception or opinion of an object, as good or agreeable, are most properly called passions. Sometimes both these are united.

In the same manner there may be some aversions which arise in nature before our mind expressly conceives the object to be evil or disagreeable: such are some natural antipathies, which seem to be seated or fixed in the very flesh, or blood, or mere animal: So the sudden disorders of body which some persons feel at the sight or scent of a cat, or cheese, or at the approach of a toad or spider, &c. to which I may add the swift efforts of nature to avoid sudden and frightful occurrences, as thunder, lightning, &c. upon the very first sight or sound of them. I know not any single name we have for these sudden natural aversions; they are usually mingled with the passions, and not distinguished from them. But those aversions only are, in the most proper sense, called passions, which arise first from the mind, considering the object as evil.

If our desire to do or receive good be not violent, it is called simple inclination or propensity: When it rises high, it is termed longing. When any object raises our aversion to a great degree, it is usually named loathing or abhorrence, which is a species of displicency, as before. If we are constrained by superior force or excessive persuasion, to do or suffer evil of any kind contrary to our inclinations, this awakens such a sort of aversion we call reluctance or regret; though regret sometimes includes sorrow and repentance.

It may be just worth mentioning here, that when our desire sets our active powers at work to obtain the very same good, or the same sort of good, which another desires and seeks, it is called emulation. This is oftentimes a noble principle of virtue, and is far from that base, and mischievous passion of envy, which has been too often confounded with it, or not sufficiently distinguished.

As our will to obtain some absent good joined with certain animal commotions, is called desire; so this desire reacheth also to things which appear necessary, as means to obtain this absent good: And in the same manner our aversion, hope, fear, joy, and sorrow, reach to all those things which appear necessary, as means to obtain the good, or to avoid the evil, as well as to the good or evil themselves. If a man knowingly and sincerely desires to obtain heaven, and avoid hell, he will consequently desire and delight in proper instructions, divine helps, religious duties, Christian conversation, &c. and he will have an aversion to sin, temptation, folly and vanity.

There are several objects of desire in this world, especially if the desire be immoderate, which give a distinct name to the passion itself. Desire of the pleasures of sense is called sensuality: Desire of honour, power and authority among men, is called ambition: Desire of riches has been called covetousness: Desire of knowledge, truth, peace, holiness, and heaven, have no proper names made for them, or affixed to them, that I know of.

The desire of honour, power and riches, are usually counted vices, when they rise high, and especially when they are only confined to selfish ends and designs: But when they have a design of public good, they may be virtuous and unblameable; for one may desire riches, honour, or power, with a sincere design to do more service to God and man.

SECT. X.—*Hope and Fear.*

The second set of passions which arise from love and hatred are hope and fear. As the absent good which is proposed to us, when it is merely possible or attainable, raises our desire, so, as far as there is any prospect of its being obtained, it awakens our hope: But so far as the attainment of it is difficult or unlikely, it excites our fear. Here note, that the passions of fear and hope refer chiefly to such absent good as is not entirely in our own power, but depends in some measure on something without ourselves, for if it be entirely within our power, why do we not seize and possess it? why do we hope or fear about it? Note further, that fear and hope do mutually and reciprocally gain the ascendancy over each other, as the attainment of the good which we pursue, appears more or less probable.

As the acquisition of good, so the avoidance of evil awakens our fear and hope in the same manner: If we may possibly escape it, there is hope; but if we may possibly suffer it, there is fear. These also reciprocally rise and sink, according to the probability of the absent evil coming upon us. In this changeable state, fear and hope are not utterly excluded, when the good or evil is present with us; for even when we possess good, we may hope to preserve it, and fear to lose it: And when evil is come upon us, we may fear its continuance, or hope for its removal.

Our fears and hopes arise according to our prospects and dangers of the future.

When our hope rises to the highest degree, it is called confidence or security; we are as it were sure of possessing the good we desire: As on the other hand, when our fear rises highest, and there is little hope left, it turns into despondency; and when all hope is banished, it becomes despair.

When our fear is very active and busy in fore-thought about

evil feared, it is called anxiety and solicitude: When we are afraid lest some other person should prevent our possession or enjoyment of the good desired, it awakens in us suspicion and jealousy, which are very busy and troublesome passions, and cover themselves by a perpetual uneasy watchfulness, and a degree of displicence and ill-will toward the objects of them.

If the enjoyment of the good desired depends pretty much on ourselves, and on our own conduct, and we are at a loss what means to make use of to obtain it, then our hope is attended with suspense or fluctuation of the mind. When this is overcome, the mind feels itself in a state of resolution and courage. The first gives a perplexity of soul, the last gives freedom.

If fear be mingled with surprize, or arise on a sudden to a very violent degree, it gains the name of terror and consternation. The highest degree of aversion and fear united are called horror. When fear settles into a habit, it maintains a most dreadful and insupportable tyranny over the mind, and makes life itself a burden.

Desire and hope manifest themselves by an eager stretching out the arms to receive the good desired; by an intent fixation of the eye on the person from whom we expect it; by breathing and panting after the object of our desires; by a cheerful countenance, and the joys of hope intermingled with earnest wishes, and impatience of possession.

Fear shews itself by paleness of the cheek, sinking of the spirits, trembling of the limbs, hurry and confusion of the mind and thoughts, agonies of nature and fainting. Many a person has died with fear. Sometimes it rouses all nature to exert itself in speedy flight, or other methods, to avoid the approaching evil; sudden terror has performed some almost incredible of this kind. There is nothing, says a late writer, more quick and apprehensive than fear, nor any passion to which our powers pay a more ready obedience; for it is in pursuance of that great law of nature, self-preservation. As by lively hope we do in some measure rejoice in the good before we possess it: so by sinking fears we do, as it were, suffer the evil before it comes upon us: And by this means many times our hopes and fears cause and pain us more than the good or evil when they are present with us.

SECT. XI.—*Of Joy and Sorrow.*

Joy and sorrow are the third set of passions derived from love and hatred. When the good we desire is obtained and secured, our fear and hope cease, and are turned into joy: Or if the evil which we would avoid, be actually come upon us, all our former hopes and fears about it sink into present grief and sorrow.

Sorrow and joy do properly belong to the mind of man; sensual pain and pleasure to the animal nature united to it: Yet in a way of metaphor or resemblance, as grief is the pain of the mind, so joy may be called the pleasure of the mind. When our joy is moderate, it is gladness: Moderate grief is called trouble or uneasiness of mind.

When these passions are raised on a sudden, and to the highest degree, joy becomes exultation or transport, and grief is distress and anguish of mind: And especially if overwhelming fear of further evil attend it, it is horror and extreme misery.

Contentment has a sort of gladness of heart belonging to it, when we limit our desires by our possessions: But when our desires are raised high, and yet accomplished, this is called satisfaction.

When our joy is derived from some conical occasion or amusement, it is mirth; this is manifested by laughter: If it rise from some considerable opposition, that is vanquished in the pursuit of the good we desire, it gains the honourable name of triumph.

When joy has so often or so long possessed the mind, that it is settled into a temper, we call it cheerfulness or gaiety of heart: But if sorrow affect the constitution of the body, and the temper of the mind in this manner, it is generally joined with habitual fear, and it is named dejection, or heaviness of spirit, or melancholy. This is well described, a sinking sadness oppressing the whole man.

Good and evil, which are past or future, as well as what is present, will raise some degrees of joy and sorrow, but in a little different manner. Evil foreseen gives us sorrow joined with fear; good foreseen raises the joy of hope. And sometimes the joys and sorrows which arise from hope and fear of good or evil to come, are greater than those which we feel from the good or evil when it is come, as was intimated before.

In like manner, the recollection of former joy gives us some pleasure that we once possessed it, mingled with pain and grief that it is vanished and gone. So also the remembrance of former sorrows has some bitterness in it, while it revives them upon the mind; but it is matter of joy to think they are finished, and shall not return.

When we rejoice upon the account of any good, which others obtain, it may be called congratulation, or sympathy of joy; and when we grieve upon the account of evil, which others endure, it is pity and sympathy of sorrow: And this sometimes reaches even to objects where there is no hope o

Relief. Congratulation is benevolence and joy united; as benevolence and sorrow united, grow into pity or compassion.*

But there is a wicked passion called envy, which stands in direct opposition to pity and congratulation. Envy takes pleasure in seeing others made unhappy; and it grieves and is uneasy that others should enjoy prosperity and peace. It is founded on ill-will, and appears in joy or sorrow mixed with malice. It generally wears a sour and uneasy countenance, though sometimes it puts on a malignant joy. Sometimes it awakens a spiteful sneer, and disposes to biting jests. It is a most hateful passion or temper of mind; for it is not only odious to all others, but it wastes the very life, and destroys the comfort of him that carries it in his bosom.

Vexation and fretfulness is an active, busy, and galling sort of sorrow, that hangs about the spirit, teazes it, and makes it restless, and it is generally joined with anger against ourselves or others. But it is time now to enumerate some of the common and natural attendants of joy and sorrow.

The natural signs of joy are vivacity of the spirits, a sparkling eye, a florid and smiling countenance, a raised head, an erect posture of body, a pleasant freedom of speech, and sometimes it inclines the lips to harmony and a song; and sometimes also it raises the voice to shouting, and the person exults or leaps for great gladness of heart. Upon some tender occasions, love and joy join together, and produce tears.

The symptoms and effects of sorrow are closing and heavy eyelids, a dead paleness on the cheeks and lips, a languid and gloomy countenance, eyes flowing with tears, or dim and wasted with weeping, an affection of solitude, sitting in darkness and silence or lying on the ground in an abject posture, an aversion to business, a cold indifference to every pleasure, a neglect of food and dress, of ornaments and delights, and a wasting of life, and the tiresome hours of it in sighs, and groans, and bitter complaints. Heretofore, among the Jews, as well as some other nations, deep sorrow was manifested by plucking off the hair of the head and beard, by tearing the garments, by putting on sackcloth, and sitting in ashes.

From natural joy and sorrow I am led to other kinds of this pair of passions, which may be called moral joy and

* It has been observed by an ingenious writer, Dr. Butler, now bishop of Durham, in his sermons, that congratulation is rather an outward expression of the inward pleasure arising from another's happiness, than the inward sensation of that pleasure: And thus it rather answers to condolence than to compassion: But that, strictly speaking, there is in his opinion no one single word or name for this passion of rejoicing in the good of others. Yet since congratulation comes nearest to this idea, I venture to use that word.

sorrow.* Moral joy is a self-approbation, or a complacency in self on the account of good actions done by us. This is called peace and serenity of conscience; if the action be honourable, and the joy rise high, it may be called glory.

Moral sorrow is the inward disapprobation or reproof of our own consciences, on the account of some evil action we have been guilty of. It is a displicence with ourselves, and an inward remorse, repentance or trouble of mind for our own ill conduct; and when it rises high, it is a terrible passion indeed, and is called the anguish of conscience.

As moral joy or self-approbation is expressed by a serene and peaceful countenance, a calm pleasure on the face, and universal ease; so this moral sorrow or remorse rises so high sometimes as not only to vent itself in sighs and tears, but in tearing the hair, in beating the breast, in hollow haggard eyes, in hideous wailings, self-cursings, and gnawing one's flesh; especially when it is joined with despair of pardon or relief, and it sometimes ends in self-murder.

As inward sensations of glory frequently attend moral joy, so shame is a frequent concomitant of this moral sorrow, or it may be called one species of it; for as all moral sorrow arises from a consciousness of having done some evil action, so shame arises from a consciousness of having done an action which is dishonourable, contrary to the dignity of our nature, or to our good character in the esteem of God or men. It is manifested by avoiding company, by down-cast eyes, by hiding the face, or by blushing: When it arises high, it is called confusion of face and soul, for it puts all nature into a sort of tumult and confusion. Shame and sorrow should always join in true repentance for sin, whether against God, or against our neighbour.

Let it be noted also, that if any thing that is counted dishonourable among men be charged upon us, or imputed to us, though we are innocent, it excites shame: And one may feel the passion of shame also arising, if any thing dishonourable, be imputed to, or done by our parents, or kindred, or friends, or country, or sect, or party, as well as by ourselves.

There is another passion something a-kin to this, which is also called shame, or bashfulness, or modesty, and which appears in blushes. It is a very honourable and becoming passion, which arises upon the name or mention of any thing dishonourable, though not imputed to us, or to any that belong to us: It is raised also by the appearance or practice of any thing lewd or scandalous in company: It is a kind of sorrow mingled with displicence and aversion to the thing which is

* Other passions which have virtue and vice for their objects, may be called moral also; but I have omitted them, because they have not distinct names.

oken of, or practised : It is the natural guard of innocence and honour, especially in young people ; and the blush is called the flower of virtue.

There is also a sort of bashfulness or shamefacedness, which young people are often exposed to when they come to strange company, when they are in the presence of their superiors, or when they are called to appear or act in public, which arises from self-diffidence, and from want of courage. This appears in blushing, or sometimes in paleness, or trembling and confusion, and brings a stop on the voice or frequent hesitation of speech. When it arises to such a degree, it ought to be overcome, lest it prevent all public usefulness for want of a becoming assurance.

I may here take notice of one thing, wherein all the affections, which go under the appellation of shame, agree, and that that they are designed by nature in their moderate use to prevent shameful and dishonourable actions.

SECT. XII.—*Gratitude and Anger.*

I come now to the last set of passions, derived from love and hatred, and these are anger and gratitude. I confess, anger usually named without any opposite : But I think, gratitude stands in a proper opposition to it, as will appear immediately.

Both these have a reference to such objects as are supposed to act with some degree of free-will or voluntariness ; for we are not said to be angry with the stone or the sword that bruises or wounds us, nor can we properly be grateful to the ointment which heals our wound.

Anger is generally made up of displicency, and some degree of malevolence, or desire that the object of it should suffer some inconvenience : For if any person seeks to hinder or prevent us from obtaining the good we desire, if he seeks to dispossess us of the good we enjoy, or endeavours to bring upon us the evil we would avoid, we are displeas'd with him, and we would have the evil inflicted upon him ; this we call anger or resentment. And this is sometimes eminently called passion, as I have intimated in the beginning of this treatise.

When I describe anger, as including some degree of malevolence in it, this does not always mean the wishing or designing of real or lasting mischief to the offending party ; for parents are angry with their children whom they love fondly and wish them no other hurt but some present pain, to amend and cure their folly.

If anger rise to a very high degree, it is wrath, fury and rage : and it is called a short madness, because some persons, under the violent influence of this passion, fling about every

thing that comes in their way, and appear for a time, as though they were void of reason : And some persons, by an excessive indulgence of it, have grown distracted.

If anger arising on some particular occasion, continue so long, as to be fixed and rooted in the heart, and refuse all accommodation or reconciliation, it is sometimes called rancour, and the attendant or effect of it is spite. When anger or resentment are perpetually ready to arise on every little occasion, this is a settled temper rather than a passion, and it has the name of peevishness, or a froward humour.

If the object of our anger be beneath us, so that we count it an indignity to suffer any thing from such a person, it gains the name of indignation. We are also fired with indignation against flagrant impiety toward God, or vile oppression and cruelty toward men, because these objects are highly unworthy of such impious, or such cruel treatment.

All anger is by no means sinful ; it was made for self-defence, and it has many times a design to reclaim and recover the offender from sin and danger : But when it grows so violent against any person, as plainly exceeds all the rules of private self-defence, and evidently seeks and contrives to bring evil upon another, without any design of benefit to the offender, it is properly termed revenge or vengeance. This is always criminal in a private person : The laws of christianity forbid it utterly. And even when a public ruler puts the vengeance of the law in execution, and takes away the life of a malefactor, for the good of the rest of the world, it should be done without the passion of private anger ; he should rather exercise his own pity to the offender, even when he condemns him to die, and makes him a sacrifice to the public vengeance.

Anger, when rising, is prevented by a spirit of meekness and forbearance ; and when raised, it is subdued by a spirit of forgiveness. Gratitude seems to stand in direct opposition to anger ; for it is made up of complacence and benevolence upon the occasion of good received from another.

When a person has conferred any benefit upon us, and we have an inclination upon that account to confer some benefit upon him, we call this gratitude. The reverse of this is ingratitude ; which is no passion, but a temper which inclines persons to neglect former benefits received, and make no acknowledgments or due returns of kindness. When it rises very high, it returns evil for good, which is a most hateful and criminal temper and conduct : Yet this has no distinct name, for the languages of men have not yet found a harder name than ungrateful.

Gratitude is a gentle principle, and makes little commotion in nature, besides a sensible pleasure when our benefactor is happy ; and it excites our desires, contrivances, and active en-

comes to make him so. Anger is a more tumultuous passion, renders itself generally visible by many outward symptoms. Sometimes it looks red and fiery, sometimes pale and wan: It rises or scowls in the eyes; it wrinkles the brow into thick frowns; it enlarges the nostrils and makes them heave; it fills the tongue with short spiteful words, or noisy threatenings; and the hand with weapons of violence to assault the offender; and sometimes it causes a tremor through all the limbs.

But here it may be proper to take notice of two sorts of anger and resentment, which are wont to arise in persons of different tempers and complexions, and which have some different symptoms and effects.

The first is sudden and vehement; it discovers itself in a moment; it flushes in the face; it sparkles in the eyes; it awakens the tongue to sharp reproaches, and the hand to sudden violence. This may be found in persons that have much love and goodness in their temper; and this violent resentment is the sooner appeased, the angry person is more easily reconciled to the offender and ashamed of his own passion.

The second sort of anger is not so violent in its rise. Sometimes it spreads a paleness over the countenance; it is silent and sullen, and the angry person goes on from day to day with a morose aspect, and a sour and uneasy carriage, averse to speak to the offender, unless it be now and then a word or two of a bitter and spiteful meaning: The vicious passion dwells upon the offender, and frets and preys upon the spirits: It inclines the tongue to reproach the offender with a repetition of his crime in a sly manner upon certain seasons and occurrences, and that for weeks and months after the offence, and sometimes for years. This kind of wrath sometimes grows up into a settled malice and rancour, and is ever contriving revenge and mischief. May divine grace reform my heart in a better mould, and deliver me from this temper and conduct!

Thus I have briefly run through the passions, describing in a few words their nature and combinations, their usual appearances and effects. There are many other combined passions besides those which I have mentioned; for the motions of the mind, and the ferments of the blood and juices in man are extending swift, and capable of almost infinite varieties. The short notice which I have given, may enable some readers to form a better judgment of human nature, and its various powers and infirmities: And by a wise inspection into their own hearts, and observation of what passes there, as well as by converse with the world, they may much further improve themselves in the knowledge of mankind, and learn their own interest and their duty.

SECT. XIII.—Several things that dispose us to different Passions.

I have intimated in the third section, that there are several things, that belong to the nature and the life of man, which dispose the heart in general to more of these pathetic commotions of nature, or incline it to particular passions; I come now to give a more particular detail what those things are.

The natural constitution or complexion, whether sanguine or melancholy, choleric or phlegmatic, whether moist or dry, sprightly or dull, hot or cold, gives a greater or less disposition to passion in general, as well as to some particular passions of the heart. Those of a sanguine complexion are most easily susceptible of most of these commotions of nature; and especially the gayer and bolder passions, the sprightly, the pleasing and benevolent, such as love and joy: Whereas the melancholy temper disposes to grief, and fear, and consternation; the choleric to wrath and revenge.

The different ages of men have their different passions suited to them. Gaiety and gladness of heart, love, and hope and courage belong to youth, because of the firmness of their nerves, and vigour of their spirits, which are easily raised but not soon depressed. Youth also is more subject to wonder, because they have not seen so much of the world, and there are more things appear new to them. Old age is much more liable to fears and despondencies, and long and obstinate sorrow; childhood to sudden changes of grief and joy.

The seasons of the year, the different times of the day, morning, noon and night, the diversity of weather, whether cloudy, rainy, windy or shining, have great power upon these animal bodies of ours to dispose us to different passions. Long dark nights and cloudy days in the winter season, give us a tendency to gloominess of thought, fear and sorrow; rainy weather hangs heavy on the head and heart: Whereas the returning spring and sun-shine dispose the brutal creation as well as man to all the gayer passions, or at least to an imitation of them.

The different state of the body, as to sickness or health, ease or pain, strength or weakness, and especially in disorders of the nervous kind, have great influence on the several affections of the mind. The indispositions of this flesh of ours subject us too often to the fearful, the sorrowful and the peevish passions. Courage, and patience, and benevolence are impaired by long illness, but the very same persons throw off these evil dispositions, and revive into the more pleasing humours and airs, when health returns.

Different employments, and different conditions of life, beget in us a tendency to our different passions. Those who are exalted above others in their daily stations, and especially if they have to do with many persons under them, and in many affairs,

so often tempted to the haughty, the morose, the surly, and more unfriendly ruffles and disturbances of nature, unless watch against them with daily care. The commanders in arms and navies, the governors of work-houses, the masters of schools, or those who have a great number of servants about them, and a multitude of cares and concerns in human life, should continually set a guard upon themselves, lest they get it of affected superiority, pride and vanity of mind, of fretfulness, impatience and criminal anger.

There are many other things which might be mentioned as acting on the soul and body to special passions; as company or solitude, plentifulness of circumstances or poverty, hard labour or ease, and more particularly music of the various strains; all have power to raise or depress the various passions of the soul. There is also a contagion in some of the passions, whereby one person infects his neighbour with them: Fear, sorrow, joy, anger, jealousy, are often thus propagated.

Different places and habitations, city or country, thicker or thinner air, a colder or a warmer climate, hunger or fulness, different diet, &c. dispose the nature of man to different affections. Various nations, the Scots, the Welsh, the English, the French, the Spaniards and Germans, have their particular characters and tempers assigned to them by various writers, and are differently more or less susceptible of different passions. A man is more easy when at leisure in the fields, who is perhaps more fretful in the midst of the businesses and cares of the city. Peevishness, and the surly humour is too often ready to break out upon some persons, when they are hungry and empty; good dinner allays the displeasing commotions of the heart, and they are all benevolence and joy.

Among these things, it is remarkable, that diseases of the body of this kind will give so strong a disposition to particular passions in the animal part of our nature, that they have sometimes been able to raise them, or at least the various symptoms of them, at any particular object or thought. Persons under the influence of these disorders have been sometimes carried, almost unconsciously, into a fit of excessive laughter, and sometimes into a flood of grief and tears, and both without any apparent occasion.

ART. XIV.—*The general design and use of the Passions.*

While we inhabit this sensible world, and are united to the passions were given us to assist the feeble influences of reason in the practice of duty, for our own and our neighbour's good. Reason is too often called away from a due attention to a present necessary idea by many sensible objects: But it serves to fix the attention. Reason is too slow, and too

weak, to excite a sudden and vigorous activity in many cases; but passion is sudden and strong for this purpose. The general uses of the passions may be comprehended in these five notes or remarks :

I. Since the passions are certain principles or powers in human nature, which include in them some commotions of flesh and blood, as well as some operations of the mind, we may reasonably suppose, that the design of our Creator in working them into our original constitution, was for the service both of our minds and our bodies : Though, it must be confessed, in our fallen and degenerate state, they often prove our snares and our torments.

1. They were designed for the service of the body, because they awaken not only all the animal powers, but the thoughts and contrivances of the mind, to prevent or escape whatsoever is hurtful to the body, and to procure what is pleasant and useful for its support or safety, that is, in more compendious language, to obtain good or avoid evil.

While our body is in such a feeble state, surrounded with dangers, and liable to so many troublesome accidents, disorders, and death, God has not only furnished us with the sensations of pleasure and pain, to give us speedy notice of what hurts or relieves the body, and with appetites for the supply of our natural wants, but he has also given us the passions of joy and sorrow, of desire and aversion, &c. to assist in this work, that the body may be better provided, with what is necessary to its health and life, and may be better guarded against the danger of wounds and bruises, distempers and death. Mere reason would not awaken us to avoid danger so speedily as the passion of fear, nor would it rouse us to self-defence with such sudden and vigorous efforts as anger does. I shall say no more of their use relating to the body.

2. The passions may be made also of considerable service to the mind, while it dwells in this embodied state : For though they do not inform us what is good for the soul, and what is evil ; yet when reason has judged what is evil and what is good, the passions are ready to lend their vigorous assistance to avoid or pursue. They have been represented as the wings of the soul to pursue our true happiness, and to escape misery ; and it is of vast importance to have these wings directed aright. The passions keep all the natural spirits and the thoughts of the mind strongly intent upon those objects which excite them, and with a sudden call they awaken and excite all the powers of nature to act agreeably to them.

If the object be uncommon, and has any thing in it rare and wonderful, the passion of admiration fixes the mind to consider it with strong attention, and hereby sometimes we may be let further into the knowledge of it.

If the object appear to be good, the passion of love deter-

the mind to pursue it with vigour ; and if it be evil, the passion of hatred excites us to use our utmost skill and force to avoid it, and this it does not only in the things of flesh and sense which relate to this bodily life, but in things of a spiritual nature, of future and eternal concern.

II. The painful passions have their use in human life, as well as the pleasant ones. It is granted indeed, that there are some passions, which taken together with their special objects and degrees, have obtained peculiar names, and may be properly called vicious and immoral* ; and these are of no use, but ought to be banished and rooted out ; such are pride, malice, envy, revenge : these could never belong to a man in a state of innocence. There are other passions, such as fear, shame, sorrow, and anger, which are uneasy and painful : And how far these might be found amongst virtuous men, I will not now stand to enquire. Yet while we are in this fallen and mortal state, beset with so many evils, dangers, enemies, and temptations on every side, these painful passions will be found necessary to our welfare in this life, and to our preparation for a better.

While we live amongst numerous dangers, fear is a very necessary principle to keep us always upon our guard : While we are in a world where there are so many of our fellow-creatures ready to oppress and injure us, the great Author of our beings has it proper to mix up anger and resentment with our constitution, that we might be awakened to defend ourselves against injury, and make oppressors fear to assault us. While we are ready to expose ourselves to many grievances and distresses by our folly, God has ordained sorrow to attend all those distresses, and shame to attend some of them ; partly that we might be awakened to renounce those follies by a shameful and painful sense of the effects of them, and partly that under every affliction we might be excited with more earnestness to seek to God and man for relief. Sorrow abases our pride and vanity, it tames the fierceness of our spirits, brings us to think and reflect a little, it softens the heart, and makes it impressible, and ready to receive instruction.

I add yet further, while we are in a state of probation for heaven, and heaven and hell are set before us, fear is necessary as well as hope, to keep us from sinful practices. While we have a knowledge of sin dwelling in us, and are so often guilty of the com-

* There is no passion properly so called, and considered in itself as belonging to man, which is absolutely sinful in the abstracted nature of it ; all the works of the passions are good ; but if passion be let loose on an improper object, or in an improper time or degree, or for too long a continuance, then it becomes criminal, and is sometimes a distinct name. Esteem placed upon ourselves as the object, and in a reasonable degree, becomes pride. Anger prolonged into a settled temper, turns into malice, &c. or if it be mingled with violence of the will, it becomes sinful also.

mission of it, sorrow, shame, and repentance, are very properly appointed means towards our recovery to divine favour, renewed holiness : And it is very reasonable that we should be displeas'd and angry with ourselves, when we have yield'd to sin, as well as angry with others who have tempted us to it, that so our trespasses may be made bitter and grievous to all sides, and to those who seduced us ; and that there might be better secured from the repetition of sinful passions and the influence of new temptations.

III. Let it be observed also, that as fear, and anger, sorrow, and other troublesome passions, are designed to secure us from evil ; so the more pleasing affections of nature, such as love, and joy, may be usefully indulg'd ; for they do not only make us active and vigorous in the pursuit of what appears good, but they render our life more comfortable, and make the trial of it more tolerable by their agreeable mixture ; they cheer drooping spirits, and support nature from sinking. Without them would be a listless dullness or a heavy melancholy. They have also a happy tendency to make many of the duties of the civil life and religion easy and delightful, and thereby to promote the practice of them. Both the pleasant and the useful passions may be happily engag'd in the interests of God and his kingdom, as will appear in "The Discourses of the Love of God and the Use and Abuse of the Passions in Religion."

IV. The passions are designed not only to subserve the welfare both of soul and body, but the great Author of our nature intended them also for the benefit of our fellow-creatures. Man must not be considered merely as a single creature fitted by nature to seek his own safety and happiness ; but he is design'd by his Maker for a sociable creature, and must do good to his fellows.

With this view there are some affections wrought in the nature of man, which plainly refer to the welfare of his neighbour, as there are others that refer to his own. These may be call'd social passions, as the others are call'd selfish. There is a natural principle of benevolence in man, to man, where it is not counteracted or obstructed by vicious principles or habits, or by the present superior influence of self-love : There is such a principle in us as compassion or piety to those that are miserable, or sympathy with those that suffer : There are the natural domestic affections, as well as names of a husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, brother and sister, &c. Now the very design of these affections is to do good to our fellow-creatures : And most or all these natural and social principles in mankind have their proper desires and aversions, hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, and sentiments attending them, as well as the selfish passions seek only our own good.

And indeed as mankind are brought into the world, according to the order of nature, they become social creatures as it were from their very birth. They are born and grow up into numerous families, relations and bonds of society, both natural, civil and religious, and they have perpetual need of each other's assistance, and naturally seek it. It was therefore wisely ordered by the God of the liberal kind, in order to make our mutual services to each other easy and delightful, and to awaken us to the vigorous and varied practice of those duties towards our fellow-creatures, which perhaps reason and conscience might have too feeble influence in our present state.

V. Though the affections have much to do in the active parts of human life, yet they have very little to do in matters of relation and judgment, as will appear immediately by what follows.

Since it is the very nature of our passions to fix all our natural powers with the strongest attention to the object of them; particularly to those properties that raised them, they do generally increase the first apprehension we had of the object, whether true or false, and confirm the first judgment we passed on it, whether we apprehend the object to be good or evil. It is evident that fear, anger, hatred, sorrow, all tend to impress our minds more powerfully with a sense of the evil contained in the object, and to represent it in its worst colours: And in the same manner, hope, love, desire, delight, and joy, persuade us more powerfully that the object of them is good, and rather add new excellencies to it. Even the passion of admiration sometimes makes us think the object of it, to be more strange and more considerable than really it is: And all the passions derived from love or desire tend to represent the good or evil of the object to be greater and more important than really it is; I mean chiefly in temporal things.

Hence it follows, with great evidence, that the passions are not to be our guides in determining truth and falsehood; they never given us to search out the true nature of things, or to enquire concerning their qualities, or the degree of them. For in order to consider aright, we must consider, with an impartial view of the properties and circumstances of any object, and attend to all the reasonings that belong to it, both on one side and on the other; whereas every passion confines our thoughts only to one part of the question. It is the nature of passion to fix our minds on those properties, qualities, and circumstances that first struck it, and to make them appear more considerable: and in this it suffers us not to attend with impartiality to any thing else. Reason generally tends to make us blind and deaf to all circumstances and reasoning, but those which confirm itself.

Let us ask ourselves, when we have been angry on a sudden have we not during the reign of that passion, supposed the offence to be much more heinous, than our calm reason has judged after the fit of passion was over? When our fears have been raised high, has not the danger appeared more formidable than really it was? When Jonah the prophet was under the power of passion, he said, *he did well to be angry*, even with God himself; Jonah iv. 9. A false and shameful saying! When David was in a continual fright and fear of death, under the persecutions of Saul, he said, *all men are liars*, even Samuel, who promised him the kingdom by inspiration: But his faith afterwards confuted his fears; Ps. cxvi. 11. Fear makes a mole-hill look like a mountain; but courage and hope turn a mountain into a mole-hill. Joy shortens the time so that a day seems but a hour or two. Sorrow makes every hour seem as tedious as a day. But all these are false ideas, or rather false judgments.

Here we find then how it comes to pass, that those who follow the dictates of their passions, scarce ever judge right or reason well; for they put themselves under the bias of these powerful commotions of nature, which lean all to one side, and thereby they fall into perpetual prejudices and mistakes.

Conclusion. Upon the whole survey of things, the passions are of admirable and most important use in the life of man, and a christian: For though they were not given to tell us what is good, and what is evil, yet when our reason, upon a calm survey, has passed a just judgment concerning things, whether they are good or evil, the passions, as I before mentioned, are those lively, warm, and vigorous principles and powers in our nature, which animate us to pursue the good, and avoid the evil; and that with vastly greater speed and diligence than the mere calm and indolent dictates of reason would ever do. By this means when the passions are once set right, they become exceeding serviceable to us, in things that relate to God, and to our neighbour, as well as to ourselves: It is on this account they are so useful to us in affairs of the utmost importance that concern this life and the life to come.

Hence it follows, that the Stoics were much in the wrong, to persuade us to root out and destroy all passions in general, and to nullify, if possible, those active and useful powers which the God of nature has planted in us, for excellent purposes, in human life. Stoical apathy is not christian virtue. Reason and religion teach us to regulate and govern our passions wisely, but not to erase and abolish them.

SECT. XV.—*Of the Regulation and Government of the Passions, wherein it consists.*

The whole art of regulating the passions, consists in their

four things, viz. 1. A power to prevent and subdue all those, which taken together with their objects, can be called unlawful. 2. To excite those, which are innocent and useful to a just degree on proper occasions. 3. To withhold or suppress them, when they go out towards improper objects. And 4. To moderate them when they rise to an irregular degree, or exceed a proper duration, even when the object is lawful.

But it must be confessed, that with regard to things of this life, and the objects of flesh and sense, our passions, for the most part, want to be suppressed and moderated, rather than to be incited or indulged. Thence it comes to pass that the government of the passions, is much more frequently described by the power to moderate and subdue them, than by the art of raising them.

Since the passions are made up of the ferments of the blood, and the commotions of animal nature, as well as the operations of the mind, they do not lie entirely under the command of the will; we cannot stir up and suppress these ferments of animal nature by a sovereign act of volition when we please. But it may be done by the consideration of truth: For as the passions are raised by perceptions of the mind, so we may by degrees raise or suppress the passions, by applying our minds to the perception of those objects, or those truths, which are suited to these purposes.

If a soldier is assaulted by an enemy, he cannot suppress his fears, nor raise his courage by a mere act of his will; but when he considers what is his character, and his post, how weak the enemy is, and how much nobler it is to defend himself than to fly, and what honour is gained by victory, and what shame attends cowardice and submission, these truths represented to the mind, disperse his fears, raise his courage, and he resolves upon the fight.

But since there are many ways of regulating these active powers of nature, I shall propose some of the chief of them in this order:

I. I will mention a general rule or two for the regulation of the three primitive passions.—II. Propose some particular truths and rules with which the mind should be ever furnished, as preservatives against the rise, the excess, or irregularity of some particular passions.—III. Lay down some universal directions, which relate to the passions, and the regulations of them.

SECT. XVI.—General Rules about the Three Primitive Passions

I. Let me mention a general rule or two for the regulation of the three primitive passions.

We have seen in the foregoing pages, that the most general

primitive passions are admiration, love, and hatred ; and the objects that raise them must appear to us to be either uncommon, or good, or evil.

The way to guard us against excessive admiration, or a foolish gazing and wondering at every thing, is to get a large acquaintance with things, viz. to learn the various works of nature, the appearances of providence, the occurrences of human life, and the affairs of mankind both by observation and diligent reading, and by free and public conversation. When we have attained such a general knowledge, fewer things will appear new, rare, and uncommon ; and we shall not be so ready to stare and wonder at every thing, nor be surprized so often as we were when our knowledge was less.

Yet, since admiration or wonder, when well regulated, is a very pleasing passion, we may always find something sufficient and worthy to raise this agreeable sensation, if we will proceed still, and make further searches into the works of God, and continually dive deeper into the philosophy of nature, into the natural history of things, in the heavens, and on the earth ; and especially, if we contemplate the nature and perfections of God, the amazing instances of his providence and grace, which he has manifested in his word. Some of these objects will afford matter of eternal wonder and pleasure to men and angels in a future world.

Love and hatred are the next primitive passions ; good or evil are their objects : Now the way to secure us from irregular exercises of love or hatred, and all the infinite train of affections that depend upon them, is to form a right judgment of good and evil : The true reason why the multitudes of mankind become so sinful and so miserable, by fixing their passions on improper objects, or by raising them to an excessive degree, is because they are guilty of such perpetual mistakes in their judgment of what is evil, and what is good, as well as about the several degrees of good and evil. We are ever deceiving ourselves by vain shadows and appearances of good : And while trifles and vanities, or sin and mischief, and misery appear in the shape and disguise of good, we awaken our warmest passion in the pursuit of it.

If we see one man with his hopes and his fears, his desires, his joys and solitudes all engaged about a gaming-table, a mistress, or a place of honour at court, we may be sure these things stand high in his esteem among the ranks of good ; while at the same time, he neglects virtue and religion, his closet and his bible, and all the blessings of the heavenly world. He has none of his passions employed about these things, because among his ideas of good they have but a low rank, or perhaps they are despised, as having no good in them, that is, nothing agreeable to him.

A fluttering beau is ever solicitous about dress and public appearances; an antiquary spends his days among medals and ancient parchments, tombs and inscriptions; a critic wastes his time in correcting letters and syllables, in placing and displacing 's and B's; a virtuoso perhaps, is too much employed among shells and his fossils, his worms and his butterflies; and an idle adieu dwells in coffee-houses, feeds upon news-papers, and wanders away his time among the wars, and the treaties of princes, the counsels and the campaigns of Europe, and the ceremonies of ambassadors. All of them have their passions engaged to their several chosen objects, which they call good: Most of these, if moderately pursued according to their just value, or real use, in science or in human life, and according to the different situations and conditions of men, have something of good in them, and the pursuit of them would not be culpable: But these men commit a gross mistake when they call them good in so high a degree as to let the affairs of their family run at random in the pursuit of them, or neglect the more important interests of their souls and eternity. You see how strangely some men judge what good for them.

Again, among persons that profess religion and mean to be Christians, we find some who lay out their thoughts and wishes, their hopes, and fears and joys, who employ their love, their wrath and hatred, and every passion about some little rites and customs, feasts and fastings, about the distinguishing phrases and opinions of some narrow sect or party, and make these the rules of their conduct toward their neighbours; while faith and honesty, love to God, and general benevolence to man, the devotion of the heart, and holiness of life, are too much forgotten. You may judge hereby what it is they call good in religion, and in what preposterous order they have ranged their ideas, and their value of things.

If we would cure ourselves of these follies, and wisely employ all our passions upon proper objects, and that in a due degree, let us take the utmost care to gain a just estimate of all the objects we converse with, that we may neither over-rate, nor undervalue them: We must prefer God above creatures, the soul above the body, eternal things above temporal. Let God and religion, Jesus Christ and the gospel, truth and virtue, divine grace and heavenly glory, stand uppermost, and hold the highest and best place among all our ideas of good: Let sin and folly, the devil and his temptations, anguish of conscience and hell, be ranked the greatest and worst of evils: And let every thing else be ranged in our esteem, according to their relation to, or influence upon these best and worst of objects. Suffer nothing that comes merely to this mortal and perishing life, to come in competition with things infinite and eternal.

Remember also, among the affairs of religion, to set the necessary truths and duties of it in your esteem, above all the unnecessary opinions, the modes, and forms, and appendices of it; and moral laws above positive institutions.

Again, among the things that belong to this world, and our present welfare, make a wise distinction between the necessities of life, and the conveniences of it, between the supports of life and the ornaments, between the real blessings of life, and the imaginary ones, between the business of life and the amusements of it, between the duties and the diversions: Form your judgment about all these things, at such seasons when you are calm and sedate, and free from the influence of any passion; and according to the rank of worth or goodness, in which your unbiassed reason has placed all these things in your esteem, let your actions of life be conducted, and all your passions be regulated thereby.

SECT. XVII.—*Preservatives against the Irregular Exercise of some Particular Passions.*

2. The second thing which I propose in order to regulate the passions, was to exhibit some special truths, and some particular rules, with which the mind should be ever furnished, against the excess or irregularity of particular and dangerous passions. But I shall not set all these truths and the rules in different ranks, since many of the rules are but a consideration of some proper truths.

The particular passions to which our natures are very prone, and which lead us often far astray from virtue, piety, and happiness, are chiefly these, viz. pride in ourselves, and scorn of others, malice and envy against our neighbour, excessive love and fondness of particular objects, fear and sorrow, anger and revenge. Some of these are to be prevented or suppressed entirely, viz. pride, malice, envy, revenge; others must be governed by the principles of reason and religion, viz. fear, anger, sorrow, &c. If we can regulate all these wisely, it will go a great way toward a pious and happy life. And if we would allow ourselves once a year to read over the following sections of this book, which contain rules for the exercise and due government of our passions, perhaps, we should not complain of lost labour, nor regret the hours spent in such a review of matters which ought to be kept in perpetual practice; and which relate to our peace and happiness through the whole course of this life, and our preparation for a better.

SECT. XVIII.—*Rules to subdue Pride and Scorn.*

1. Think often what you were, and what you shall be. Consider what you were. What was your original different from

others? Are you not formed of common earth? Made of one flesh and blood with other men? Shall a little finer house or finer clothes make a worm vain among his fellow-worms, and tempt him to scorn his kindred? Consider what you shall be. Your flesh returns to corruption and common earth again; nor shall your dust be distinguished from the meanest beggar or slave; no, nor from the dust of brutes and insects, or the most contemptible of creatures; and as for your soul, that must stand before God in the world of spirits, on a level with the rest of mankind, and divested of all your haughty and flattering circumstances. None of your vain distinctions in this life shall attend you to the judgment-seat. Keep this tribunal in view, and pride will wither and hang down its head.

2. If you have any fancied advantages above others, remember whence you derive them. *Who is it made you differ from the meanest and vilest of mortals? If you have received all from God. Why do ye boast, and look big, as though you had not received?* 1 Cor. iv. 7.

3. Set yourself often in the presence of the great God. Think how mean and contemptible you are in his sight. Learn humility this way as Job did, who *abhorred himself in dust and ashes*, when he saw God in his majesty and glory; Job xlii. 5, 6.

4. Think on the glorious condescension of Jesus the Son of God, *who was the express image of his Father, and the brightness of his Father's glory*; Heb. i. 3. and yet put on our feeble flesh and blood, to dwell with men, and to die for them. The man Jesus united to God, is the highest of creatures, and yet the humblest. Fix your thoughts on the amazing instances of his humility, and imitate so fair and divine a pattern.

5. Survey the things that raise your pride, consider how vain they are. Is it silver and gold? The dust of the earth? Perishing treasures! Poor comforters in a hour of inward distress, of sickness or death! Is it beauty, and youth and strength? What withering flowers are all these! What gay and dying vanities, that are wasting hourly, and may be blasted with an east wind!

Is it honour and fame among men? What an empty thing is the breath of mortals! How subject to change! How unjust and feeble a foundation for pride! It is sometimes given to the worst of men without due merit; and even when it is best merited, and most justly given, it is but a sound that vanishes into empty air. Is it high birth that makes you proud and scornful? This is the honour of your ancestors more than your own, and perhaps it was not raised at first upon virtue or true merit; then it is a worthless thing indeed. Is it your knowledge and wisdom that puffs you up with conceit? It is a sign you want

one large branch of it, that is, the knowledge of yourself, for that would make you humble.

6. When the thoughts of pride arise from any excellency you possess, turn your eye immediately upon some of your failings and follies. This would be a proper weight put into the balances, lest while one of them is lifted too high, you imagine the other too weighty.

7. Remember that pride keeps the mind ever uneasy, and fills it with everlasting vexation, while the meek and humble possess abundant peace. The proud man finds many more affronts than his neighbours, partly, because he is more unbelov'd, and partly, because he calls almost every thing an affront, which the man of meekness would take no notice of. He is ever fretting, because he never finds so much respect and submission as he desires and expects. Thus he becomes a perpetual torment to himself. *Learn of me, says the blessed Jesus; for I am meek and lowly,—and ye shall find rest to your souls;* Mat. xi. 29.

8. Think what mischiefs have arisen from pride through all ages of the world, and even before this world began. Angels were the first proud beings we hear of: Pride turned them into devils, and sent them to hell. It is only from pride come endless contentions, and resentments, murders, wars, and bloodshed, through the nations of mankind.

9. Remember that God himself abhors the proud, and dwells with the humble. A scorner of the poor, and a scoffer at the weak, are some of the most hateful objects in his sight.

10. Think, in the last place, what will be your end, where will be your dwelling, and who will be your company. If God abhors the proud, and beholds them with contempt afar off, he will appoint them a place far distant from his own dwelling, even the place of torment and shame, and immortal anguish, which he built for the eldest sons of pride. *But blessed are the humble and poor in spirit; for their's is the kingdom of heaven;* Mat. v. 3.

SECT. XIX.—*Rules to Prevent or Suppress Malice and Envy.*

1. Be not too fond of yourselves, and you will not take up easily an ill-will to others. This excessive selfishness is a great evil, therefore guard against it. It is this narrow and selfish spirit that lessens the general benevolence and good-will which is due to your neighbour, and makes you too soon conceive a dislike to him. Take heed of all little prejudices and unreasonable aversions to any person whatsoever; nor stamp a hateful character on him at once on account of an action or two which are not good. Too high an esteem of self will tempt you to scorn others without reason, perhaps upon the account of their aspect

their shape, their motion, their dress, their poverty, their want of breeding, their name, their family, &c. And this, in a little time, will settle into aversion, or antipathy, and grow up into malice and hatred, especially upon the least disgust. While you are too fond of yourself, and of your own possessions, your own honours, your own family, your own pleasures, you will be ever jealous and suspicious that others stand in your way, and you will too easily indulge malice and envy to rise against them. Whereas if you abated a little of your self-love, and increased and enlarged your generous benevolence and love to mankind, it would have a happy tendency to suppress your hatred and envy of particular persons.

2. Consider whether the persons you hate are good or not. If they are good and pious, your hatred has a double guilt in it, since you are bound to love them both as men and as christians. Will you hate those whom God loves? Will you hate those who have the image of Christ? And in whom the Spirit of God inhabits? If they have any blameable qualities in them, let your charity cover those faults and follies: Let your thoughts dwell rather upon their virtues, and their sacred relation to God. This will have a happy influence to turn your hatred into love. Think of them as members of Christ, and you cannot hate them, if you are of that blessed body.

If they are persons who neglect religion, and have not the fear of God, yet they may have some good qualities in them, some moral or social virtues, or some natural excellencies, which may merit your esteem, and invite your love: At least these agreeable qualities may diminish your aversion, and abate your hatred. I confess it is the nature of malice and envy, to overlook all that is good and amiable in a person, and to remark only what is evil and hateful: But this is not the spirit and temper of a christian, nor of Jesus Christ our master. There was a young man who loved his riches so well, that he refused to become a disciple; yet our blessed Lord saw some good qualities in him, *he looked upon him and loved him*; Mark. x. 21.

But if the persons whom you hate, have nothing good in them that you can find, then they ought to be pitied rather than to be hated*: They are not worthy of your envy, nor do they need the punishment of your malice in this world: who expose themselves to the wrath and vengeance of God in the world to come. Will you say, they are so impious before God, and so injurious to men, that they deserve to be hated? but consider, if you were but punished in every respect as you deserve, both for

* Miseries of the soul are worse than those of the body; but both of them should excite our compassionate regard. If we take all proper occasions to exercise pity and compassion towards the unhappy, it will have a very good influence to cure a malicious and envious temper.

your offences against God and man, what would become of you? Pity them therefore, as you hope for pity. Imitate the goodness of "your heavenly Father, who makes his sun to shine, and his rain to fall on the just and on the unjust." Mat. v. 45. This is the rule of Christ.

3. Know that a soul filled with envy and malice, is its own perpetual torment. All the good things that are spoken of to others, and all the blessings which others enjoy, become a matter of grievance and pain to an envious spirit. It frets and vexes the comforts of mankind, it pines away with rage to see others happy. What a dreadful and undesirable temper is this?

How much more pleasant is it to feel the gentle affections of benevolence and love always warm at the heart! To rejoice in the happiness of our neighbours, and to derive a degree of satisfaction and felicity from all the blessings of mankind which come within the reach of our notice!

4. Remember that a malicious and envious man is hateful in the eyes of all mankind, for his chief joy arises from the misery of his fellow-creatures. No body loves such a temper; even those that practise it themselves hate it in others. Are you willing to expose yourself to the ill-will of mankind? Is it any better to get the love of all men? It is the gentle and harmless, the peaceable the benevolent and compassionate man, who is the object of universal esteem and love.

And let it be well considered, that by indulging malice in your heart against others, you tempt those persons in a special manner to hate and envy you; and do you know how far that malice may fly into violent extravagancies, into wicked, and spiteful, and revengeful practices? Think with yourselves how far you share in the guilt of such madness, by your indulgence of malice and envy against them. Remember that the fire of wrath and the fire of love, kindle their own congenial fires. Kindness and love are the most effectual methods to reduce others to the practice of kindness and love.

5. Malice and envy are the special sins of the devil: They are his peculiar image on the soul of man; he was a murderer from the beginning, and is so to this day. He envied the happiness of our first parents in paradise, and contrived their ruin. He envies us the blessings of the gospel, and our christian hope, and would fain destroy it. Now will you imitate such a hateful character, even the adversary of God and man? Are you fond of bearing his image? Are you willing to become as it were a devil in flesh and blood, rather than imitate the loving and the lovely character of God manifest in the flesh, even the blessed Jesus?

6. Consider how near you are to death and judgment, as to the eternal state; and dare not venture into eternity with a malicious temper, or with an envious spirit. Spiteful and malignant

sions are wretched things to appear before the throne of God. And let it be awfully remembered too, that there is no cure provided for envy and malice in the other world. God has prepared remedy for these distempers in the gospel, but they can only be allayed in the present life. At the hour of death, "he that is filthy, must be filthy still;" Rev. xxii. 11. and he that is envious and malicious in a prevailing degree, must be envious and malicious still: And what a dreadful state will it be to lie under the everlasting torment of inward malice and envy, to fret and rage among fretting and raging spirits, without the least hope of change through all the ages of eternity?

cr. XX.—*Rules to moderate Excessive Love to Creatures.*

1. Call your love often to account at the bar of reason and scripture, to enquire whether the object of it be proper, and the degree of it reasonable; and then you will the sooner spy out irregularities, and excesses of every kind, and be more powerfully awakened to watch against them.
2. Think of the uncertainty of the highest mortal good, the vanity and insufficiency of any thing, of every thing beneath God make you happy; and bear not an immortal fondness to perish; and comforts.
3. If you are entangled with the excessive love or desire of any thing, whether it be a child or a friend, &c. or if you grow fond of any particular study, practice, or recreation, any company or enjoyment of any kind, call together and sum up all the inconveniences, the dangers, the unhappy consequences of this your love. Think much of the faults, follies, defects, imperfections, and blemishes of the creature so excessively beloved; survey all these at large, set them in a clear light, write them down for your frequent review, fix them in your memory, and dwell on them. Never indulge yourself in thinking of the agreeable or tempting qualities of it, at least without a due guard and balance on the other side. This will help to wean the heart by degrees.
4. Practise voluntary self-denial, and absent yourself both body and mind, from whatsoever you love to excess, as far as duty permits. Set a guard upon your eyes and ears, upon your senses and your thoughts, and avoid every thing that would bring your mind the object of your immoderate love. This discipline, if well practised, will by degrees introduce an indifference and moderation of affection, when you find that you can live without the tempting object.
5. Watch against too great a relish of delight in the things you love excessively whether they be meats, drinks, businesses, recreations, company, children, friends or kindred; an abatement of pleasure will abate the excesses of love.

6. Set up the love of God supreme in your heart, and keep it so. This principle of divine love will grow jealous, if any meaner love rise too high, and become its rival, or make too near approaches to its seat and throne. A sovereign love to God will limit and moderate all inferior love.

7. Consider that immoderate love to any creature fills the heart with endless anxieties and vexations, with restless jealousies and disquietudes about it, while the soul is perpetually tost, as it were, on an ocean of hopes and fears, rising and sinking with every blast of wind. And then the sorrow of parting with it is like tearing our flesh from the bones, or the rending asunder of the heart strings. What dreadful preparations hath excessive love made for killing heart-aches, and overwhelming agonies of sorrow?

8. Remember that excessive love to the creatures hath often provoked a jealous God to imbitter them to us terribly by remarkable providences, or to cut them off suddenly in his anger. *Our God is a jealous God*, and he will destroy his rivals. The way to keep our comforts, is to love them with moderation.

9. Consider that the fewer strong affections, and the less engagements of heart you have to mortal creatures, the easier will it be to leave this world, and enter into the world of spirits. Death is far more painful and terrible to such a soul which must not only leave the body behind it, but a multitude of other things, to which it is too fondly attached. We must all endure this parting stroke: Let us endeavour then to make it as easy as possible, by keeping our affections loose to all things beneath God and heaven.

SECT. XXI.—*Rules to overcome Unreasonable Fears.*

Fear is a powerful and useful passion, to guard us from mischief and misery, to hasten our avoidance of every danger, to drive us to our refuge, and to restrain us from every thing which has a tendency to bring the evil or mischief upon us.

The anger of God is the most proper object of our fear, as we are sinful creatures: Nor can sinners fear the anger of God too much, till they have complied with the appointed methods of his grace. There is also a reverence and holy fear due to the majesty of God, even when we have obtained the most solid hopes of his mercy: We must always fear to sin against God, and keep up a holy jealousy of all temptations to sin. All this is called religious fear.

There are several things also, in the natural life, that we have just reason to fear in some degree, such as lions, bears, and other hurtful animals, men of violence, diseases, and death. And there are many things, in the moral and civil life which become proper objects for the passion of fear, such as the anger of our pa-

its and superiors, and the practise of those things which expose to just infamy or punishment among men.

But the fear which I speak of in this place, is an unjust and unreasonable fear of any creature whatsoever, or of any occurrences of life: It is a timorous spirit, which subjects the whole ture to the power and tyranny of the passion of fear, beyond reasonable grounds: As for instance, a fear of being alone, in the dark, a perpetual fear of evil accidents by fire or water, wicked men; a disquieting fear of ghosts and apparitions; of the inconsiderable animals, such as spiders, frogs, or worms; reasonable and anxious fears of the loss of estate or friends; or of poverty or calamity of any kind, whereby we are too often restrained from our present duty, and our lives are made very uncomfortable. All manner of fear becomes irregular, when it rises to an excessive degree, and is superior to the danger. Now to arm ourselves against this tyrant-passion, let us take use of the following directions:

1. Abate your love to your flesh, and this mortal life, and to things that belong to it; then you will not be so much afraid to lose them. *Lay up your treasure and your hopes in heaven,* where there is no danger of being deprived of them.

2. Never rest without some comfortable hope of the love of God. If you are his favourite, and under his protection, you need fear nothing. Remember that all creatures in heaven, and earth, and hell, are under his power and supreme government; they can go no further than he permits them, nor can they hurt a hair of your head without his leave. And if he suffers calamities to fall upon you, he can make them turn to your unspeakable advantage. Say with David, "*At what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee*"; and, "*I will not fear what flesh can do against me*;" Psalm lvi. 3, 4.

3. Acquaint yourself with Christ Jesus, the Son of God, whose hands all things are delivered. He hath subdued the powers of hell to his dominion, and they are all kept in chains. Commit yourself daily to his care, both your soul and body, for time, and for eternity: He makes and maintains peace with God, and he guards us from enemies and dangers, and devils. We are safe in his hands.

4. Have a care of contracting new guilt, by indulging sin in any kind, or by the neglect of duty. Guilt is the chiefest and justest cause of fear; for if God be angry with you, then you have no sufficient security or defence from the injuries of the creatures, which are but the instruments of his providence in a way of punishment or mercy.

If therefore the evil you fear be probably the effect or consequence of your own sinful conduct, humble yourself before God, repent, and seek pardoning grace; and walk humbly and

watchfully, lest you renew your provocations of heaven. Repentance brings hope with it, and lessens the ground of our fears.

5. Think what a dishonour it is to God, for you to set up creatures as the objects of your unreasonable fears, as though they were not in his hand, or as though God, the Creator, were not a sufficient refuge. Read Isa. li. 12, 13.

6. Think how exceeding unlikely most of your fears are to come to pass. It is not once in ten thousand times, probably, that such an event will befall you: Or not one person in ten thousand hath ever met with such an accident in the same circumstances: By this means you may reduce your fear to a degree proportionable to the danger, and then most of our fears will give us but small disturbance.

7. Think how many needless fears you have had in time past, and tormented yourself with them; groundless fears where there was no danger, fears of things that never come to pass. And think also out of how many real dangers God hath rescued you, and make him your trust and defence for times to come. David remembered that *God had delivered him from the lion and the bear*, and therefore he was not afraid of the Philistine giant; 1 Sam. xvii. 35—37.

8. Suppose the worst that can come, and be prepared for it by faith in Christ, hope in God, a life of virtue and piety, a serene conscience, and a continual readiness for death itself. Besides all these general directions, I might add many particular rules, according to the particular objects of fear; as for instance,

If it be some present appearances in nature, which may be frightful at first, such as huge impending rocks, seas, cataracts, or water-falls, or some particular animals that cannot easily hurt you, or such like, endeavour to make them familiar to you, by approaching nearer and nearer to them by degrees; and when you find you are safe, you will obtain gradual courage to meet a frog, or a spider, or even a toad or a snake without shuddering or sweating.

If the groundless fear of some absent evil possesses your spirits, get the government of your fancy, and yield not to its dictates in cases which have no reason on their side. Fancy and fear swell every little danger to a mountain, and turn every bush into a bear. There are no bounds set to the wild and unreasonable ideas of terrible things which this passion fills the mind with, if it be indulged. Subdue your imaginations, and let them not rove upon frightful objects. For this end avoid the reading or hearing of frightful stories of witches and devils, or terrible accidents, or cruelties and barbarous murders, especially in younger years, or if you are inclined to timorousness and melancholy; for these things will hang about the imagination, and perplex the mind with foolish terrors.

Or if you have a sickly fancy, and are continually afraid of the distemper seizing you, read not in books of physic, where the symptoms of diseases are described; for fancy will bring all at all these diseases on you in appearance, and give you the notion, though not always the danger of them. If you are withheld from the practice of your duty, by the fear or threatenings of death, there are many remedies provided against this evil in the word of God, to inspire you with courage in the ways of virtuous religion, *viz.*

1. Preserve the love of God in your heart in its warmest exercise, and its sovereign power. Love will break through a thousand difficulties, and subdue a thousand terrors.—2. Maintain an awful view of God and his anger in a high degree, and remember it is infinitely more dangerous to provoke God, than to fall into the hands of feeble men: *Men can only kill the body, but God can destroy the soul and body in hell; Mat. x. 28.*—3. Keep upon your spirit an awful sense of the evil of sin, as a more formidable thing than any present sufferings. Fear, above all things, to offend God your Father, and your best friend.—4. Think of the courage of the ancient heroes of faith, who exposed themselves to all manner of dangers, pains and death for the sake of Christ: And above all, take the example of Jesus the Son of God, “*who endured the cross, and despised the shame, &c.*” Heb. xii. 2—5. Think of the advantage and glory of suffering for the sake of God and religion: Think of the awful *judgment-seat* of Christ, the joys of heaven, and the infinite recompences provided there for our poor little services and sufferings. But of these things I have written much more largely in the two first sermons of my third volume, which was published some time ago, and I ask leave to remit the reader to those discourses*.

SECT XXII.—*Rules to Guard against immoderate Sorrow, and to Relieve the Soul, that is under the Power of it.*

The passion of sorrow is necessary to creatures dwelling in a world which hath so much sin and misery in it. As sorrow is originally the effect of sin, so sin ought to be the chief object of it: yet we may grieve also for our own miseries, or for the miseries of others. Hereby we learn more sensibly the effects of sin in the past, and are excited to avoid it for time to come: Hereby we testify our love to our friends under trouble, and are awakened to endeavour the removal of those evils that we or our friends sustain. Jesus himself, who was all innocence, wept for the sins and sorrows of mankind.

But though sorrow, as well as some other uneasy passions, are ordained for the good of man in the present state, in order to

* See volume first, page 425—439.

excite him to his proper work ; yet when it rises to such a degree on the account of any losses or troubles we sustain, as to hinder us in the discharge of present duty, it becomes excessive and immoderate, and ought to be restrained or prevented ; and perhaps some of the following rules may be useful to this purpose :

1. Have a care of excessive love to any creature whatsoever, for this fondness lays the foundation of immoderate grief, when divine providence takes that creature from us. We should love creatures but as uncertain and perishing comforts. The greater sweetness in the enjoyment, the sharper is the sorrow at parting.

And as a part of this direction I may add, let your hopes of any earthly good be very moderate ; for in a thousand instances, we find the possession or attainment of it depends upon great uncertainties, and the concurrence of many favourable circumstances, whereof, if one be wanting, we are disappointed. And if our hope has been raised very high, our surprize of grief will be proportionable in the disappointment.

2. Meditate on the sovereignty, the wisdom, and the goodness of God, in his government of the world, and believe that all that he does is wise and good : Learn to submit your own judgment, and your own will, to the wiser determination of his providence. When our Saviour was to drink of the bitterest cup that ever was put into the hand of a creature, or at least a creature beloved of God, he submitted to the intense and unknown agonies of that hour, under the awful influence of this rule, *Father not my will, but thy will be done* ; Luke xxii. 42. Remember also that divine grace has promised, and divine wisdom knows how to turn the heaviest crosses into blessings. Perhaps God is now doing you the greatest good ; do not counterwork him by obstinate murmuring and impatience.

3. Seek after a comfortable and established hope of the love of God in the way of the gospel, and this, if well improved, will be a sufficient balance for every load of temporal sorrow. If you can *cast your burden on the Lord* as your God, *he will sustain*, and he will relieve : *He will not contend always*. Remember the revolutions and the changes of the right-hand of God. Reflect upon days past and former sufferings. How often has God relieved you, as he has delivered his people in ancient times, when there appeared to human prudence no way for escape, no method of relief ? If he be your God, let your soul live upon him. He is not an idol, whose ears cannot ear, and whose hands cannot help. Prayer will ease the wounded spirit, and engage Omnipotence on your side.

4. Take heed of bringing fresh guilt on your conscience, that so you may not be overwhelmed with sorrows of all kinds at once. A peaceful conscience will help to bear up the spirit under some of

the heaviest burdens of life ; but how unspeakably heavy and painful these burdens lie upon a spirit wounded with a sense of sin.

5. Let not your thoughts dwell continually upon your distresses and afflictions. Suffer not the chambers of your soul to be ever hung round with dark and dismal ideas : Chew not always upon *worm-wood and the gall* ; but remember the many temporal mercies you enjoy, and the rich treasures of grace in the gospel. Survey the immortal blessings of pardon of sin, and eternal life ; the love of God, and the hope of heaven. Look sometimes on these brighter scenes ; suffer not your sorrow to bury all your present and present comforts in darkness and oblivion. Thankfulness is one way to joy.

6. Remember, if you are a christian indeed, the springs of your grief cannot flow long ; the hour of death will dry them all up. The last moment of this mortal life is a certain and final period of sorrow. converse much among the mansions and joys of the visible world, and your hope which is laid up there : The very earnings of that glory which brighten the darkest providences, do relieve the soul under its sharpest pains.

7. Compare your miseries with your sins, and then you will find them lighter. You will learn then to bear your burdens with a more serene and peaceful mind, and turn your sorrows into penitence for sin. But, alas ! we aggravate our sufferings, and extenuate and excuse our sins : Whereas sufferings would appear lighter, if we did but consider how much heavier evils we have deserved from the hands of a holy and offended God.

8. Compare your own afflictions with the afflictions of many others in former and latter times. The passion of sorrow so unreasonably magnifies your own sufferings, as though there were ever any case like it before : Whereas, perhaps, you suffer nothing but what is the common lot of human nature ; and shall this overwhelm you when there are many who have been loaded with uncommon distresses, and yet have sustained them with holy courage and patience.

9. Consider that sorrow is indeed an evil, that is, a natural evil, for it is the pain of the mind, and it is never desirable for itself, but only as it is a thing appointed for sinful creatures in this world, in order to teach us some lessons of righteousness, to wean us from the love of creatures, to embitter to us our sinful follies, and to drive us to some duty towards God or man : And if these ends be attained, sorrow should be dismissed, *God doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men* ; Lam. iii. 33. *By the sorrow of heart and countenance, the heart itself is to be made better* ; Eccles. vii. 3. If this be done, bless God, and rejoice.

10. Think on the many dreadful effects and consequences of excessive sorrow, where it is indulged beyond all reasonable bounds.—1. It takes away the sweetness and relish of all pre-

sent mercies, and makes us undervalue them all: It deprives us even of the delightful sense of the love of God: It untunes both the heart and the lips, and withholds the tongue from thankfulness and praise.—2. It destroys the pleasure even of those parts of religion which we practice, and banishes comfort from the soul, even in the midst of the most refreshing ordinances: For wheresoever the body is, or whatsoever the man is engaged in, the eye of the mind is still fixed upon its own distress.—3. It sinks and weakens our trust and hope in the blessed God: It fills the spirit with impatience, the heart with discontent, and the tongue with murmurs against the wisest and the best of beings. Where immoderate grief is indulged, it prevents the soul from learning those very lessons of piety and duty which the affliction was sent to teach us.—4. It raises in the soul a froward and a fretful temper, makes us peevish and displeased with every thing round about us. Immoderate sorrow inclines to perpetual resentment; the heart within us uneasy, and there is nothing without can please us: It fills the place where we are with incessant complaints, and makes us a burden to our friends, instead of a blessing.—5. It stupifies the better powers of the soul, it buries the active faculties in a sort of dead sloth; it weakens the heart and the hand to all the duties of life, and renders us almost useless in the world. The mourner sits with folded hands brooding over his sorrows, and dark and deadly images ever present themselves to his view; the weight of grief hangs heavy upon his heart, and affects his very senses and limbs; he fancies himself on the confines of the dead, and he knows not how to rise up and act among the living.—6. Such overwhelming sorrow doth great dishonour to religion, and the grace of God: It discourages young persons who are looking towards heaven, when they find christians of such as our, disconsolate and gloomy temper, because it tempts them to believe, that melancholy belongs to the ways of godliness, and overspreads all the road to paradise.—7. Excessive grief doubles the real affliction, without giving any relief, and has often been attended with dismal consequences: It hath sometimes taken away senses, blinded the eyes with weeping, distracted the thoughts, clouded and disturbed the reasoning powers, and driven the mourner into a silent and sudden madness*: And sometimes it hath worn out the flesh itself, and brought the body to an untimely grave. *The sorrow of this world worketh death; 2 Cor. vii. 10.*—8. There are instances, not a few, wherein immoderate grief hath prevailed so far as to hurry persons into despair of the mercy of God, and armed

* It was ingeniously observed by a writer on this subject, that in bodily grievances we take a wiser course, and seek for every thing that can give us ease; but we use quite contrary methods with our minds, we exasperate every scratch till it becomes a wound; and then we rub and fret the wounds, and keep them so long open, till very often they become incurable.

their own hands against themselves, to put an end to their miserable life on earth, by plunging into eternity with a venture of everlasting misery.

11. When your thoughts have meditated on all these dismal attendants of immoderate sorrow, set your will and your hands to work, as well as your mind. Endeavour to employ yourself in some business, though your sorrow would plead for sloth, and would let all things run at random. Instead of wasting life in fruitless moans and complaints, do something, if possible, toward the relief of your present affliction, and the removal of that burden which overpresses you. Arise and shake off this heavy clog, break these fetters of the soul, constrain yourself to activity of some kind or other, if it be but in a way of amusement. Divert the mind this way from the dark and mournful ideas that press upon it. Many a person had *gone down mourning to their graves*, for the loss of some dear friend or relative, if the necessary duties and business of life had not given them a constant and powerful relief.

12. Read over the commands of scripture, to rejoice in the Lord, Phil. iv. 4. and make conscience of fulfilling that duty, as well as any other: True religion gives a sufficient foundation for constant joy, and *the joy of the Lord shall be your strength*; Neh. viii. 10. to discharge many other duties of righteousness. If a spirit of melancholy seize you, there may be several useful advices found in Mr. Roger's "Treatise of Trouble of Mind," second edition 1706, and Mr. Baxter's Account of Melancholy, and his Directions about it, gathered out of his works, by Mr. Samuel Clifford, and reduced to order in a little book, 1716.

SECT. XXIII.—*Rules to Govern our Anger, and to Prevent the sinful Effect of it, viz. Revenge.*

Anger, considered in itself, is not an unlawful passion. If we ourselves were perfect and innocent, and were to converse only with innocent creatures, perhaps there would be no occasion for the exercise of it. But since we dwell in a world where vice, folly, impiety, oppression, injustice and wickedness abound, there will be frequent and just occasion for anger. We have reason, too often, to be angry with ourselves, when we indulge iniquity and folly: And we may lawfully express our resentment against the crimes and vices of others. Their offences against God, against men, against ourselves, may raise in us a righteous resentment. Bold impiety against our Maker, or injustice and cruelty against our fellow-creatures, stir up our just indignation and wrath. Insolence, oppression and mischief, practised or attempted against ourselves, or our friends, awaken the powers of flesh and blood for sudden self-defence, or the relief of the sufferer. These ferments and commotions of nature, were

frowns on his countenance, the flame and fierceness of his eyes, his threatening and revengeful looks, the disorder and tumult that appears in his whole nature: What an displeasing and shameful figure he makes? How much like a person half distracted, and whose reason is under a cloud? How he stamps and stares? What rash vows and desperate wishes? Anger is a short madness; it throws a person off his guard; neither truth nor reason appear to him as reason or truth: The violence of the passion throws off all restraints, the phrenzy disdains all law and justice, and drives the man to wild extravagance. Is this the lovely, the desirable pattern that you chuse to imitate? Do you like this figure so well as to put it on yourself?

7. Live always under the eye of God, and suppress rising anger with the reverence of his name and presence. Remember that a holy God and holy angels behold you; and are you not ashamed to appear in their sight, under all the extravagant disorders of this passion? Remember the dignity of your nature as man, and your character as a christian, and a child of God.

8. Keep the sacred example of Jesus ever before your eyes: How meek under the vilest affronts? How patient under the rudest injuries and most barbarous treatment! How forgiving even to his bloody murderers! How did he return the highest good for the greatest evil! And paid down his blood and life to redeem his enemies from hell, and to purchase eternal joy and glory for them! *Let such a mind be in you as was in Christ the Son of God, Phil. ii. 5. who being reviled, reviled not again, and when he suffered, he threatened not, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps; 1 Pet. ii. 21, 23.*

9. When you find the warm passion arising suppress the first motion of it. It is much easier to be subdued at first, than if you indulge it a little. A spark is sooner quenched than a flame.

10. Command your tongue to silence, and your hands to peace, if you cannot presently command your spirit. Suffer not the vehement efforts of wrath to break out in reproachful names, and spiteful words, much less into blows of revenge. These outward violences, if once let loose, go generally beyond all the just bounds of resentment, they further enrage the inward flame and fury, and thus become greatly criminal. Give the fire of your passion, when it is just kindled, no public vent, and perhaps it will quickly be stilled and die.

11. At least suppress all violent discoveries of it so long till you have taken some time to consider whether you have received any real injury or no, whether the injury was accidental or designed whether the offence be of such a heinous nature and degree as your present passion represents it. Many offences are great and heinous only in the light of a ruffled fancy, and

not in themselves. It is said, concerning Julius Cæsar, that upon any provocation, he would repeat the Roman alphabet before he suffered himself to speak, that he might be more just and calm in his resentments. The delay of a few moments has set many seeming affronts in a juster and kinder light; it has often lessened, if not annihilated the supposed injury, and prevented violence and revenge.

12. If you cannot govern your spirit, and suppress the outward appearances and efforts of your passion, take the first opportunity of leaving the place and company: Withdraw from the temptation, and retire to prayer; confess, before God, the ungovernable frame of your own spirit; bewail the pride and passion that dwells in you. Ask forgiveness of heaven, and beg the divine influences of grace to subdue the disorderly ferments of your nature.

13. If you have unhappily indulged your anger to break out to the reproach and injury of your neighbour, as well as to your own shame, do not only repent in secret before God, but take a proper time to confess it to the person whom you have injured, and ask their pardon. This will have a considerable tendency to future watchfulness, and help to guard you from the same folly for time to come.

Among other directions I might have added, avoid rude and quarrelsome company, avoid excessive drinking and gaming, and all lewd and vicious courses: But I hope I have no need to mention these rules to those persons for whom I chiefly write. I proceed now to lay down some considerations, which may enforce the practice of these rules.

1. Think with yourself, how much injury you do yourself by suffering your angry passions to rise and prevail. The fire of wrath and resentment preys upon your nature, destroys your health and your ease, fills your spirit with tumults and disquietsudes, exposes you to shame before men, breaks the peace of your conscience, brings you under guilt before God, and makes a painful preparation for bitter repentance. Why will you punish yourself because another has injured you? Or, if another man be rude and wrathful, ill-natured and ill-bred, why will you imitate him, and expose yourself?

2. Think again, how much more pleasure and glory there is in overcoming the violence of your own spirit, than in yielding to your headstrong passions, and suffering yourselves to be carried away with the torrent of your own resentments. *He that rules his own spirit is a greater hero than he that conquers a city*; Prov. xvi. 32. To be angry about trifles, is mean and childish; to rage and be furious, is brutish; and to maintain perpetual wrath, is akin to the practice and temper of devils; but to prevent or suppress rising resentment, is wise and glorious, is manly and

divine. This one piece of conduct will raise our reputation for wisdom among men, more than a hundred fine speeches, or superior airs, and will greatly adorn our character as persons of piety. *The wisdom that is from above is peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated*; James iii. 17.

3. Consider how unfit you are for every duty of religion and worship, while you are under the power of this uneasy passion. With what face, or courage, or comfort can you draw near to God, while you cherish undue wrath in your heart? The sinful ferment of your nature indisposes you for worship, the guilt thereof makes your service unacceptable; and a defiled conscience makes you unwilling to come near to a God of holiness; Mat. v. 23. If there be a quarrel between thee and thy brother, *leave thy gift at the altar, go and be reconciled to thy brother, and then return and offer thy gift.*

4. Think of the dreadful effects of-ungoverned anger in the world. What tragical scenes has it introduced! What impious mischief! How has it broken all the dearest bonds of friendship and kindred! How has it divided and ruined families, and cities, and nations! It has filled the earth with private and public murders and cruelties. Blood, ruin, and destruction, have attended it from the days of Cain and Abel, to this day.

It is the wrath of princes that hath made such vast slaughters among men, hath turned beautiful cities into heaps of rubbish, hath unpeopled nations, and sent multitudes of souls into eternity by untimely death. And it must be acknowledged too, with shame, that the wrath of priests and people hath torn churches to pieces, and joined with kings to erect bloody inquisitions, those sacred slaughter-houses, to kindle fires of martyrdom, and murder millions under pretence of zeal for God.

5. Consider that it is a glorious singularity of the religion of Christ, that it commands and teaches us *to forgive our enemies, and to love them that hate us*; Mat. v. 44. But for a man that pretends to be a christian, to indulge a resenting humour, and to be ever fretful and angry, and meditating revenge, what a shame and dishonour does it cast upon the religion that we profess, and upon the sacred name of Jesus, whom we adore? Wrathful christians are a scandal to their master, *the prince of peace.*

6. Think with yourself how many greater crimes has the blessed God forgiven you, if you are a christian indeed; and will you not forgive your brother his petty offences? Has the Maker and Lord of heaven and earth forgiven you *ten thousand talents*, and will you not forgive your brother *a hundred pence*? Did the Son of God make himself a sacrifice for your offences, that you might be pardoned, and will you make your brother, who has offended you, a sacrifice to your fury?

7. But consider farther, that if you do not forgive your bro-

ther, who has offended you, you cannot expect to be forgiven of God: Nay, it is evident, according to the express sentence of the gospel, you cannot be forgiven without it. *If you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you: Mat vi. 15.* Do you not pray for pardon of your trespasses, even as you forgive those who trespass against you, and will you sin against your own prayers?

8. Remember that revenge belongs to God, and the magistrate: Now you must not take their work out of their hands. It is granted, that there may be some seasons and occasions, wherein it may be proper and necessary to shew some degrees of resentment, and let your enemy know that you are not a senseless block, or a stone without feeling, in order to guard you from universal insults and continual injuries. To resist the efforts of oppression and violence, and to smite others, so far as is plainly necessary for mere self-defence, has been always judged lawful. The measure of this resentment, and the manner of it in particular instances, must be taught by religion and prudence: But remember, that it is far better to suffer two injuries, than to revenge one. *If a man will strike thee on one cheek, rather turn the other to him; Mat. v. 39.* than take the awful work of vengeance into thy own hand. In case of lesser injuries or affronts, it is best generally to neglect and forget them: In greater injuries, or the frequent repetition of less, you may resent so far as is necessary for the defence of yourself, or for the reformation of the offender: But never let resentment carry revenge in it, that is merely to repay evil for evil.

9. Think with yourself, when you receive some high provocation, that God places you at that hour under a special trial, and he waits to see what honour you will do to his grace, and his gospel, and whether the flesh or the spirit will come off conqueror: He expects that you should shew how well you are taught by the religion of Christ to *love your enemies, and bless them that curse you; Mat. v. 44.* It is of infinitely greater importance to you, to keep your own spirit easy and innocent, and adorn the doctrine of Christ, than to take the fullest revenge of him that has injured you.

10. Consider this, that by returning good for evil, you will better obtain all the supposed designs and ends of anger, than by practising revenge: For, 1. If your enemy has any thing of humanity in him, any tenderness about his heart, you will melt him down by such a carriage, you will soften his spirit into love, and bring him, as it were, to your foot. However, 2. If this desirable effect be not obtained, you shew your obedience to the gospel, you put your case entirely into the hand of God, who will plead your cause: *Rom. xii. 20, 21. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good: If thy enemy hunger, feed*

him ; if he thirst, give him drink ; so shalt thou heap coals of fire upon his head ; either to melt him down to friendly submission, or to bring the vengeance of God upon him, if he will not be reconciled.

11. If you are angry with a good man, do you not hope to meet him shortly in heaven, in the regions of peace and love ? And will you not be ashamed to meet him in heaven, whom you reviled and persecuted here on earth ? If it be a wicked man, against whom you shew your resentment, he will shortly fall under the just wrath of God, unless he repent, and he needs not to have the addition of yours : He will be given up to the rage and insults of devils hereafter, and you need not begin to torment him here with your revenges.

12. Suppose you knew that you were near death, and that your enemy were also dying, would you not desire to be reconciled to him before that awful moment ? Consider that you are both dying creatures, borderers on the grave and eternity ; *Suffer not the sun to go down upon your wrath ; Eph. iv. 26.* lest both your souls should be required this night, lest you die before you are reconciled ; and I am sure, if you are a christian, an unreconciled spirit will make the hour of death very uneasy, and render your passage out of this world dark and uncomfortable. But I persuade myself better things concerning every one who is a true disciple of Christ.

SECT. XXIV.—*Some Universal Directions which Relate to all the Forementioned Passions, and the Regulation of them.*

I shall divide these last general directions into two sorts : The first sort may be called moral and philosophical ; and the second, religious or divine. The moral or philosophical directions are these :

1. Let the regulation of your passions be the care of your younger years, and carry on this necessary work through your whole life, without intermission. The grave is the only burying-place of unruly affections. If you are so happy as to have begun this self-government in childhood, and been taught to suppress the irregular motions of the heart betimes, you will make the remaining work much more easy, and the following parts of life more peaceful and honourable ; though perhaps there is no complete victory till we are dismissed from flesh and blood.

Root up the foul weeds of pride, malice and envy, as soon as ever you find them springing : Let them be nipt in their very bud and infancy, lest they fix their roots too deep in the heart to be removed, and bear the bitter fruits of mischief, iniquity, and death. A tender plant is sooner rooted up than an old and sturdy tree. Bend the more lawful and useful passions of love,

desire, joy, fear, anger, and sorrow, like young trees, into a beautiful and regular form, and prune off all their luxuriant branches. Begin to bring them to obey the laws of reason betimes. Keep a constant and an early watch against the wanderings and the out-breakings of every affection. Let wisdom put a bridle on them before they are grown head-strong and unruly, that you may guide them usefully, like a managed horse, through the various paths of human life, and they may bear you on to duty and happiness.

And I would earnestly recommend it to parents and teachers, to insinuate the advantage of ruling the passions to all the young people whom nature or providence hath put under their care. Let them be taught these lessons in the very morning of life. Otherwise you may expect, that a young humorist will grow up to an intolerable peevishness, and become a sour old wretch : A wrathful child, untaught to bridle his rage, will grow to an incurable fury. Spite and envy, uncurbed between ten and twenty years of age, will be in danger of making a devil at fifty. An Ethiopian may as well *change his skin, or a leopard his spots, as those who have long practised evil can learn to do well* ; Jer. xiii. 23.

2. Suffer not your irregular passions to excuse themselves by taking false names upon them, and screen themselves from censure and mortification by any disguises of virtue. Vain ambition and affectation of applause, will sometimes squander away money, appear magnificent and bountiful, far beyond the circumstances of the giver, and contrary to his duty, and the interest of his family. Then this ambitious and profuse humour puts on the name of liberality and generous beneficence, and hopes to excuse itself under this disguise, and to cover itself from just censure : But a wise observer will not be cheated by these false titles.

Pride and wrath would sometimes call themselves a becoming greatness of spirit : But he hath a greater soul, who can treat inferiors with all gentleness ; and hath learned to neglect and forget supposed affronts and injuries, as mean and little things, which deserve no special notice. When some persons have abandoned themselves to excessive sorrow, they call it a debt of love to the deceased friend ; and under this colour they go on to encourage and swell their grief, which had risen before to a dangerous height.

Others again will vindicate their passionate resentments of injury done to their reputation, or any neglect of duty and respect to themselves under the name of tenderness of spirit : They cannot bear the least slight or censure : You can hardly touch *them, but you hurt them* : Every admonition is a reproach, and every real affront immediately overwhelms them with a mix-

ture of anger and sorrow : They have too much of the child in them when they are grown to the stature of men. But while we shew some pity to these infirmities of human nature, yet these passions, and this temper, should be called by their proper names, that is, a weakness of soul, which ought to be cured, and an excessive love of self, which ought to be mortified. We must learn to go through the difficulties of life with a becoming courage, and a decent neglect of those little oppositions or injuries which otherwise will ever be breaking in upon our peace.

3. Learn and practise the art of self-denial, with regard to your appetites of every kind, and you will gain an easier government of your passions. Rule the flesh well, in order to rule the spirit. Passion has its chief seat in animal nature, and if the animal be brought under the yoke betimes, it will be more obedient to reason, and less susceptible of irregular commotions. Temperance is one of the first of virtues ; but a pampered appetite supplies new force, vigour and obstinancy to unruly passions.

4. Restrain your needless curiosity, and all solicitous enquiries into things which were better unknown. How many plentiful springs of fear, sorrow, anger and hatred, have been found out and broken up by this laborious digging? Have a care of an over-curious search into such things as might have safely remained for ever secret, and the ignorance of them had prevented many foolish and hurtful passions. A fond solicitude to know all that our friends or our foes say of us, is often recompensed with vexing disquietude and anguish of soul.

5. Get a general benevolence to mankind rooted in your heart. This will keep you from being too selfish. It is for the most part the selfish passions which are immoderate and unruly. There is not so much danger in those which arise from love to our neighbour.

6. Never let your passions determine your esteem or opinion of things or persons : These always bribe or bias the judgment to their own side, and thence it is evident, that they will often lead it astray. Whatsoever passion makes any representations of a thing, you must always make some grains of allowance ; for if it happen to be right in the main, yet it generally colours every thing too high and strong. It is therefore a matter of great importance to form and settle your judgment of things and persons, which you have to do with, in the calmest and serenest hours of life, and when you are free from the influence of every affection ; and let these judgments be reserved as rules for your constant conduct in human life, that whensoever temptations appear, or when passion solicits your nature, and makes efforts to rise and reign, you may ever have some settled truths and rules of conduct ready at hand to govern it.

7. Observe what are the passions to which you are most ble, or to which you are most disposed by your age, or any er circumstances of time, place, &c. Consider what passions ve the deepest root in your natural constitution, and watch ainst them : Enquire into yourself which are those affections to ich your temper is most inclined, or to which you are most ex- sed by your station and circumstances in the world, and set a cial guard upon them. Fear and jealousy are needful to ded you against the sin that easily besets you, the vice that dwells your flesh and blood.

8. Watch against all those seasons and temptations, those igerous hours, those occurrences, or that company which in e past have been most provoking to any of your evil passions, l whereby you have been tempted to give them too great a se. Let the burnt child dread the fire. An ox or an ass will easily be led to those places where they have received wounds bruises : Shall man, a christian, have less sense than brute atures ?

9. Have a care of indulging the dangerous passions too far, too often, such as fear, sorrow, anger, &c. lest by too frequent etition, by too intense a degree, or too long a continuance, they uld grow into a settled habit and temper ; then it will cost ch more labour and pains to subdue them.

10. Whensoever you feel some of the better and more kindly t of passions, especially those which flow from the love of d or your neighbour, working in you, encourage and promote m in a due degree, that they may fix in your heart more firmly principles of goodness, and form your very nature and tem- to virtue and religion.

11. Where the power of truth and reason has not been suffi- nt to subdue an irregular passion, it has often been found ful to abate the violence of a passion, if we call the thoughts ay from that subject by diverting the mind to another em- yment.

12. Sometimes also an unruly passion is suppressed by raising ther which is more harmless or useful. So when a stupid tivity arises from excessive sorrow, it may be corrected and oved by some frightful representation, awakening the passion ear, or perhaps, by some artful and innocent method of teasing mourner, gently to kindle him a little into anger. Joab seems have used both these methods to rouse David to his duty, he midat of his excessive sorrow for Absalom, 2 Sam. xix. 8. where, in a free and bold speech, he made the king afraid, the people should forsake him, if he gave way further to that tive passion.

Or if any particular passion prevail too much over us, some- es we may change the object of the same passion, and thereby

prevent its irregularity and excess. If the timorous christian avoid his duty, for fear of the reproach of the world, or the wrath of the magistrate ; set the wrath of God and hell fire before him, that the fear of divine vengeance may cure him of the fear of man. This was the practice of our blessed Lord to give courage to his disciples ; *Luke xii. 4, 5. Fear not them who kill the body, and can do no more ; but fear him who can cast into hell.* But I proceed now more particularly to the religious directions, which are these that follow.

1. Never think yourself sufficiently guarded against the power and danger of any of your vicious passions, till your nature be renewed by divine grace, till there be a thorough and universal change wrought in you, till you have obtained firm inward principles of universal holiness. If you would have the *fruit good*, it is in vain to labour in breaking off every irregular bud, or lopping the branches ? but *the tree itself must be made good*, in order to bear good fruit. This is the direction of our blessed Saviour ; *Mat. xii. 33.*

2. Give yourself no rest till you can find the love God has gained the supreme place in your heart. Love is the ruling passion, and if that be fixed upon the highest and best of objects, it will keep all the other powers and passions of nature in order and subjection ; as I have shewn at large in the " *Second Discourse of the Love of God.*"

3. Keep your conscience always tender : Maintain a holy jealousy of yourselves, and a constant fear of offending God : By this means your spirit will be perpetually awakened and alarmed, when an evil passion begins to stir, or when you are near the place or moment of danger, or within the reach of temptation.

4. Set God always before you in his Majesty and in his mercy. Let an awful and comfortable sense of his immediate presence at all times, and in all places, be a sovereign and divine guard upon all the dangerous efforts of your nature, or unruly motions of your spirit. This will suppress rising pride and envy, anger and malice : This will be a sovereign and sure defence against the tyranny of foolish or sinful fear, as well as a sweet support under heavy sorrows, and an effectual means to restrain them from excess.

5. Commit your soul, with all its powers and passions, to the keeping of Christ, in this state of infirmity and union to flesh and blood. He knows what it is to wear a body of flesh, with its various ferments and emotions, though in him these were all pure and innocent. He is a compassionate and sympathizing *high-priest*, who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, having himself been tempted in all things like us ; *Heb. iv. 15.* as far as innocence would permit ; and he is exalted and ordained of God to take care of feeble man, wrestling with strong temptations.

6. Whenever you feel a passion arise, and are doubtful whether it be fit to be indulged or no, make a trial of it in prayer, by appealing to God concerning it ; see whether it will bear that test, even the test of a tender conscience near the throne of God.

7. Make every irregular passion a matter of humble mourning and complaint before the mercy-seat : Pray earnestly for supplies of daily strength against the irregular efforts of nature and passion : Cry out for help from above, whenever you are combating with your unruly affections ; God has promised sufficient aid in the gospel. His grace can enable you both to conquer, and to bear vastly beyond the feeble powers of your own nature. Reason and resolution will do much, but religion is a diviner spring of strength and victory.

8. Call yourself continually to account for every irregular fit of passion. Let it never break out and defile your soul without some effectual mortification of it by holy repentance. Think how it discomposed your spirit, disturbed your quiet, ruffled your temper, broke your peace ; think how it drew your heart away from God, indisposed you for acts of worship, and unfitted you for leath. Think of this, and be ashamed of your foolish indulgence of any faulty and violent affection of the soul : Condemn yourself without spreading abroad your excuses and apologies ; and print this shame and self-condemnation deep upon your spirit : Let it live there in plain and painful characters, and review it especially in the hour of new temptation. Thus every immoderate effect of passion, and every victory that it has obtained over you, shall become an occasion of its own ruin.

9. Treasure up in your mind and memory, such words of scripture as are happily suited to subdue the various unruly passions of nature. The word of God is given us for this end. *I have laid up thy word in my heart saith David, that I might not sin against thee ; And wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way, a young man whose spirits are warin, and whose passions are violent, but by taking heed thereto, according to thy word ? Ps. cxix. 9, 11.* When these enemies of peace and holiness arise within you, take *the sword of the spirit* to hew them down ; the *word of the spirit is the word of God ; Ephes. vi. 17.* Many a vicious passion faints, and languishes, and dies at the appearance of divine truth. Shall I mention a few sentences of holy writ, which are proper to allay these criminal efforts of nature ?

Against pride and scorn, read *Prov. xi. 2. When pride cometh then cometh shame, but with the lowly is wisdom. Prov. xvi. 18. Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Prov. vi. 16, 17. The Lord hateth a proud look. Eccles. vii. 8. He that is poor in spirit, is better than he that is proud in spirit. Jam. i. 6. God resisteth the proud, but giveth more grace to the humble. i. i. 1. Blessed is the man that sitteth not in the seat of a*

scornful. Prov. xxiv. 9. *The scorner is an abomination to men.* Prov. xix. 29. *Judgments are prepared for scorers.* Prov. xvii. 5. *Whoso mocketh the poor, reproacheth his Maker.*

Against malice and envy. Rom. xiii. 9. *Love your neighbour as yourself.* Eph. iv. 31. *Let all bitterness, and wrath,—and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.* 1 Cor. xiv. 20. *In understanding be ye men, but in malice be ye children.* 1 Pet. i. 22. *Love one another with a pure heart fervently.* 1 John iv. 20. *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.* Job v. 2. *Envy slayeth the silly one.* Prov. xiv. 30. *Envy is the rottenness of the bones.* Gal. v. 26. *Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another; for hatred, wrath, strife, variance, envyings, &c. are all works of the flesh, v. 20, 21.*

Against excessive love of creatures. Mat. x. 37. *He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.* 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30. *The time is short: It remaineth therefore, that they that have wives, be as though they had none;—and they that buy, as though they possessed not.* Col. iii. 2. *Set your affections on things above, and not on things of the earth.* 1 John ii. 15. *Love not the world, neither the things which are in the world: If any love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

Against immoderate and sinful fear. There is scarce any prohibition in all the bible, more frequently repeated, than “fear not.” Isaiah’s prophecy abounds with this caution. Chapter xli. 10. *Fear not, I am with thee: Be not dismayed, I am thy God.* Isa. li. 12, 13. *I am he that comforteth you; who art thou that thou art afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man, that shall be made as grass, and forgetteth the Lord thy Maker?* Ps. xxvii. 1. *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?* Luke xii. 4. *Fear not them which kill the body, but after that can do no more.* Ps. xxvii. 14. *Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart.* Rev. xxi. 8. *The fearful and unbelieving shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.*

Against excessive sorrow. 1 Cor. vii. 30. *Let those that weep, be as though they wept not.* 2 Cor. vii. 10. *Wordly sorrow worketh death.* 1 Thess. iv. 13. *Sorrow not for the dead, as others which have no hope.* Prov. xv. 13. *By sorrow of heart the spirit is broken.* Phil. iv. 4. *Rejoice always in the Lord, and again I say, rejoice.* The book of Psalms, is so rich a treasure of divine supports and reliefs under those two disquieting passions of fear and sorrow, that there are few psalms without some of these consolations. And in the New Testament, Rom. viii. and Heb. xii. are chapters written for the comfort of suffering and afflicted christians.

Against immoderate anger and revenge. Prov. xv. 1. *A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.* Prov. xix. 11. *The discretion of a man, deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.* Prov. xxi. 24. *Aughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath.* Prov. i. 16. *A fool's wrath is presently kindled, but a prudent man vereth shame.* Prov. xiv. 29. *He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding, but he that is hasty of spirit exalleth folly.* Eccles. vii. 9. *Anger resteth in the bosom of fools.* Mat. xi. 29. *I learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.* Rom. xii. 18, 19. *If it be possible as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves.—Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.* Eph. iv. 26. *Be angry and sin not: Let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil.* Colos. iii. 12, 13. *Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And particularly treasure up in your memory the divine characters of charity.* I Cor. xiii. 4—7. *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; envieth not, vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth, or as it should be rendered, covereth all things, that is, all faults, believeth all things, and hopeth all things, that is, all good, and endureth all things, that is, all injuries and hardships for the sake of others.*

The tenth and last direction to regulate our passions about the things of earth, is to live much in the expectation of death, and in the view and hope of eternal things. Death and judgment, heaven and hell, are such grand and awful ideas, that where they are duly considered, they will make the things of this life appear so very little and inconsiderable, as to be scarce worthy of our hopes and fears, our desires and aversions, our wrath and contentments, our sorrows and joys. Such a steady prospect and expectation of things infinite and everlasting, will, by degrees, dissolve the force of visible and temporal things, and make them unable to raise any wild and unruly passions within us. Happy the soul that has a strong and lively faith of unseen worlds, of future terrors and glories: This will cure the vicious disorders of flesh and sense, appetite and passion: This will raise the spirit to the wings of devout affection, to the borders of paradise, and temper the soul to the business and the joys of the blessed.





OF THE LOVE OF GOD,

AND

THE USE AND ABUSE

OF

THE PASSIONS.



PREFACE

To the Love of God, &c.

first edition of these discourses, "the Doctrine of the Passions" an introduction to them, wherein, their general nature was explained, various kinds reduced to some regular order, the uses of them in human society, and moral and divine rules were proposed for the government of natural and active powers. This little treatise has been much enlarged, and put into a regular form, under a distinct title, viz. "The Doctrine of the Passions explained and improved." These "Discourses of the Love of God, and the Use and Abuse of the Passions in Religion" now follow; and since many readers of a different taste, who have desired each of them alone, may now chuse for themselves, or they may order the bookseller to join them together if they please.

Many years are now passed since the general design of both these treatises was formed, and some brief sketches of them were drawn, which had lain in long silence among other papers. That which inclined me, to draw up these discourses, of the "Use of the Passions in Religion," was the growing deadness and degeneracy of our christian religion, though it grew bright in rational and polite learning. It is too many persons who have imbibed, and propagate this notion, that it is almost the only business of a preacher to teach the necessary doctrines and duties of our holy religion, by a mere explication of the scriptures, without enforcing these things on the conscience, by a plain address to the heart; and that the business of a christian, in his private devotion, is to learn what these doctrines and duties are, without any pains to awaken the devout sensations of hope and fear, and love towards the God of nature hath ordained them to be the most effectual means or spurs to duty in this present animal state. We are often told, that a warm and affectionate religion belongs only to the weaker parts of mankind, and is not strong and manly enough for persons of sense and good nature. But where the religious use of the passions is renounced and despised, we do not find this cold and dry reasoning sufficient to raise virtue to any great and honourable degree, even in their men of sense, without the assistance of pious affections.

On the other hand, it must be acknowledged also, there have been many who have made their religion to consist too much in the working of the passions, without a due exercise of reason in the things of God. Some have contented themselves with some devout raptures without seeking clear conceptions of divine things; or building their faith and hope, and confidence, upon a just and solid foundation of sacred knowledge. What is vehement, if it hath but the name of God annexed to it, they will think and call sacred and divine. This sort of religion lies very exposed to all the wild temptations of fancy and enthusiasm: A great bigotry of the world, and the madness of persecution may be as easily raised as this unhappy spring. I thought it necessary therefore, to speak of the passions, as well as the use of them, and to guard against both sides.

As a foundation for these discourses, I chose to treat of the love of God, which in a sovereign manner rules and manages, awakens or suppresses all the other passions of the soul. The whole train of affections, both the painful and the pleasant ones, are under the power and regulation of love. In my pursuit of this subject, I have endeavoured to avoid all extremes; that is, neither to turn religion into a matter of speculation or cold reasoning, nor to give up the devout christian to all wandering fooleries of warm and uncontrolled passion. I hope I have maintained the middle way, which, as it is most agreeable to the holy scripture, and to the genius of christianity, so it has produced the noblest fruits of righteousness in every age. On this account I may presume, that the track, which I have pursued, will give no just offence to the wisest and the best of christians.

In order to make this work more serviceable to the purposes of practical godliness, I have endeavoured to form a pathetic meditation upon the argument of each discourse, that I might, as far as possible, exemplify the practice of those things which I recommend to the world, and assist the devout reader to make a present use of them toward his advancement in the christian life.

OF THE LOVE OF GOD,
AND
THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE PASSIONS.

DISCOURSE I.

The Affectionate and Supreme Love of God.

MARK xii. 30.—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.—

AMONG all the teachers of religion that have been sent from God to men, the most eminent and illustrious are Moses and Christ; Moses the servant of the living God, and Christ *his only begotten Son*. Both of them lay the foundation of all true religion in the unity of God, and both of them make our religion to consist in love. Thus saith Moses in the sixth of Deuteronomy, whence my text is cited, and thus saith the blessed Jesus in the place where my text lies, *Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. Thou shalt love him with all thy heart.*

It is no wonder that all the powers of our natures, with all the utmost extent of our capacities, must be devoted to the love and service of this God, since there is but one, since “is God alone, and *there is none besides him*; Is. xlv. 6. He must reign over the heart and the soul, over all our intellectual and our bodily powers, supreme, and without a rival. Though the love of our neighbour is required by Moses and Christ, as a necessary part of our religion, yet it must never stand in competition with the love of our God.

Some suppose the supreme and intense degree of this love, to be the whole design of Christ, in recommending the love of God to us in all these four expressions, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength*, viz. to intimate in general that all the faculties of nature should be employed in the love and service of God, with the greatest intenseness and full vigour of exercise.

But if we should distinguish these sentences, according to the different powers of nature, into so many different significations, I think they may be most naturally thus explained: God must be loved with *all the mind*, that is, he must stand highest in

the esteem of the judgment : He must be loved *with all the soul*, that is, with the strongest attachment of the will to him : He must be loved *with all the heart*, that is, with the warmest and sincerest affection : And he must be loved with *all the strength*, that is, this love must be manifested by the utmost exercise and activity of all the inferior powers.

The heart in the language of scripture, and in the common sense of men, is the seat of the passions, that is, of fear, hope, love, hatred, joy, sorrow, shame, desire, and such like, which are usually called the passions or affections of the heart, I shall not stand in this place to give a more exact or philosophical account of them, having done that in another treatise.* If it be enquired, why the heart is said to be the seat of the passions, there is this good reason for it, viz. It is by sensible effects on the heart, that several of the affections do chiefly exert and manifest themselves; and it was chiefly for this reason that Jewish philosophy gave the soul of man its chief residence in the heart, and made it to be the seat of the passions.

The heart also in scripture, and in almost all nations and languages, is used to express or imply sincerity; what is done from the heart is done sincerely, perhaps, because the passions are naturally sincere, and are not so easy to be disguised as the outward actions of men. Now, since it is my design to treat of the exercises of the passions, or affections of the heart in the affairs of religion, I have chosen this sentence as the foundation of my discourses. The plain and obvious proposition contained in the words is this, viz.

“ The Lord our God is the proper object of our most sincere affection, and our supreme love.” It is not enough for the eye to be lifted up to him, or the knee to bow before him; it is not enough for the tongue to speak of him, or the hand to act for his interest in the world; all this may be done by painted hypocrites, whose religion is all disguise and vanity: But the heart with all the inward powers and passions must be devoted to him in the first place: This is religion indeed. The great God values not the service of men, if the heart be not in it: The Lord sees and judges the heart; he has no regard to outward forms of worship, if there be no inward adoration, if no devout affection be employed therein. It is therefore a matter of infinite importance, to have the whole heart engaged stedfastly for God. If this be done we shall have a sufficient evidence in ourselves, that we are truly religious, and are beloved of God. In treating this subject, I shall consider these seven things:

I. What is presupposed and implied in the affectionate and supreme love of God.—II. What will be the effects of this

* The Doctrine of the Passions, page 447.

preme love to God on all the other passions, or how this divine passion will engage all the rest of the affectionate powers in the crests of religion.—III. Of what use and importance the passions are in religion, and what advantage is to be derived from them.—IV. How far the passions may be abused, even in religious concerns, or what is the irregular use of them, and how their efforts should be limited and restrained.—Under each of these heads I shall propose some useful reflections.—V. We will all shew how the affectionate christian may be vindicated, against the cavils and reproaches of men, in his warmest exercises of devotion.—VI. What relief or comfort may be given to humble and sincere christians, who complain that they feel but very few degrees of this affectionate love to God, or of the exercise of his passions, either in public worship, or in their devout retirements.—VII. What are the most proper and effectual methods of exciting and engaging the affections in religion. Of each of these in their order.

First, "What is presupposed and implied in the supreme affectionate love of God?" I answer, these five things*.

I. Some good degrees of the knowledge of God, and such an acquaintance with him, as may raise the highest esteem of him in our mind. It is impossible that we should love anything that we know not: And it is not to be expected that we should love God supremely, or *with all our heart*, if we have not known him to be more excellent, and more desirable than all other things we are acquainted with. We must have the highest opinion of his transcendent worth, or we cannot love him above all other things.

It is granted, we may love or delight in some objects of an inferior nature, as they are instruments of our health or ease, or comfort; so we are said to love our habitation and our food, because they minister to our conveniency or support in the present life. We may love some poor worthless wretches with good-will and compassion, because we design to bestow some benefits upon them. We love our country and our kindred with a sort of natural attachment of the heart, because they belong to ourselves, and we are, as it were, of a piece with them. We love our friends because we esteem them possessed of some valuable properties, and able to confer benefits on us, or to relieve our wants: But unless we see the great and blessed God, as a being possessed of the highest excellencies, and capable of bestowing on us the

* I might have described the affectionate love of God here by the love of esteem, the love of benevolence, and the love of complacency, according to the distinctions of love in the "Treatise of the Passions," mentioned in the preface; but I chuse rather in this place to shew, what acts or operations of understanding and will, are presupposed and included in the love of God: the more affectionate operations of it are reserved to the next discourse.

richest benefits; unless we see him as an all-sufficient good, we shall never love him with our whole heart: The affection to so unseen and spiritual a being as God is, can never rise high where the esteem is but low: Where the love ought to be superior to all other loves, the esteem must be transcendent.

II. The affectionate and supreme love of God, presupposes some hope of an interest to be obtained in his favour, and the highest advantages to be derived from him. If I lie down in despair of his mercy, I cannot look on God, even in all his supreme excellencies, with an eye of love. The devil, the worst of creatures, knows more of the transcendent glory and worth of the great God, than the wisest and the best of mortals here on earth: But he knows there is no hope for him to obtain an interest in his favour, and therefore he continues in his old enmity. His rebellion has cut him off from all expectation of divine mercy, and therefore he cannot love this God of infinite excellency. A dreadful state indeed for an intelligent being, that he cannot love what he knows to be infinitely amiable.

Hope is the most alluring spring of love. Terror and slavish fear stand opposite to this holy affection: Such fear *has torment in it*, and so far as we fear God as an enemy, *we are not made perfect in his love*; 1 John iv. 18. We love him, because we hope that he has, or he will love us: It is the assurance, or at least the expectation of some interest in God that engages the most affectionate love: And, perhaps, the words of my text may have some reference hereto, when it is said, *thou shalt love the Lord thy God*. When we believe or hope that the Lord is our God, we cannot but love him.

III. This love of the heart implies a strong inclination of the will toward God, a steady bent of soul toward this blessed Author of our being and happiness: It implies a choice of him above and beyond all things else, as our most desirable portion and our eternal good. If any thing in this world be the chosen portion of our souls, if any thing beneath and besides God be made our chief hope, our support, and our life, our hearts will run out in strongest affections toward it, for it is our chief happiness; and then we can never love God as it becomes a creature to love his Creator.

The holy Psalmist was a most affectionate lover of his God, and, how often does he call him the "*portion of his inheritance, his refuge, and his hope*"? Ps. xvi. 5. cxlii. 5. and in Ps. lxxiii. 26. *Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever*. Blessed saint! He had chosen God for his eternal all.

Under this head I should add also, that where the will is thus attached to God, the soul will exert itself in continual wishes for the honour of God in the world: It is the nature of love to

ish well, and to do good to the beloved object; and since God can receive no other good from us, but the manifestation of his excellencies and honours among men, we shall earnestly seek and wish this glory of God, if we are sincere lovers of him.

IV. This affectionate and supreme love of God includes in it an out-going of the heart after him, with most intense longings, and most pleasing sensations! This is what we are wont to call more eminently the love of desire, and the love of delight, which I shall speak of more at large in the following discourse. The heart of a sincere good man is restless till it find God, that is, till it obtain a solid hope and persuasion of his love, a growing conformity to him, and constant delight in him. The heart is not easy without God: It quiesces and rests in him alone. If I have God for my friend, and my everlasting portion, I have all: If he be absent, *O that I knew where I might find him!* Job xxiii. 3. And if he manifests his presence with his divine influences, "Come back, O my soul, from amongst the creatures; come back, and return to God thy rest." Ps. cxvi. 7.

V. Where the love of God reigns in the affections it will command all the other powers of nature, and all the rest of the faculties to act suitably to this sovereign and ruling affection of the soul: The eye will often look up to God in a way of faith and humble dependance: The ear will be attentive to his holy word: The hand will be lifted up to heaven in daily requests: The knees will be bended in humble worship: All the outward powers will be busy in doing the will of God, and promoting his glory: *He that loves God, will keep his commandments, and fulfil every commandment duty with delight:* He will endeavour to please God in all his actions, and watch against and avoid whatsoever may offend him. And while the several outward powers are thus engaged, all the inward affections of nature will be employed in correspondent exercises. Supreme love will govern the active train of human passions, and lead them captive to careful obedience.

This brings me to the next thing I proposed: But before I enter upon it I would make these four reflections, which will conclude the present discourse.

[This discourse may be divided here.]

Reflection 1. How vain are all their pretences to love God who know little or nothing of him, who are neither acquainted with the glorious perfections of his nature, nor with the wondrous discoveries of his grace! Love must be founded in knowledge. How vain are their pretences to love God with all their heart, and in a supreme degree, who never saw him to be a being of transcendent worth, or surpassing excellency, and capable of

making them for ever happy ; who value their *corn, and their wine, and their oil*; their business, their riches, or their diversions more than God and his love ! How senseless and absurd is the pretence to love God above all things, if we do not resolve to live upon him as our hope and happiness ; if we do not chuse him to be our God, and our All, our chief and all-sufficient portion in this world, and that to come ! Where the idea of God as a being of supreme excellence doth not reign in the mind, where the will is not determined and fixed on God, as our supreme good, men are strangers to this sacred and divine affection of love. Till this be done, we cannot be said to love God with all the heart.

II. How necessary and useful a practice it is for a christian to meditate often on the transcendent perfection and worth of the blessed God, to survey his attributes, and his grace in Christ Jesus, to keep up in the mind a constant idea of his supreme excellence, and frequently to repeat and confirm the choice of him, as our highest hope, our portion, and our everlasting good ! This will keep the love of God warm at the heart, and maintain the divine affection in its primitive life and vigour. But if our idea of the adorable and supreme excellency of God grow faint and feeble, and sink lower in the mind ; if we lose the sight of his amiable glories, the sense of his amazing love in the gospel, the rich promises and his alluring grace, if our will cleave not to him as our chief good, and live not on him daily as our spring of happiness, we shall abate the fervency of this sacred passion, our love to God will grow cold by degrees, and suffer great and guilty decays.

III. How greatly and eternally are we indebted to Jesus the Son of God, who has revealed the Father unto us in all his most amiable characters and glories, and brought him, as it were, within the reach of our love ! The three great springs of love to God are these : A clear discovery of what God is in himself ; a lively sense of what he has done for us ; and a well-grounded hope of what he will bestow upon us. All these are owing chiefly to our blessed Jesus. Let us consider them distinctly :

1. It is he, even the beloved Son of God, who lay in the bosom of the Father, who has made a fuller and brighter discovery to us what God is, what an admirable and transcendent being, a spirit glorious in all perfections. It is true, the light of nature dictates some of these things to us, and the ancient prophets have given further manifestations. *But none knows the Father so as the Son does, and those whom the Son will reveal him*; Mat. xi. 27. That blessed person, who is *one with the Father*, must know him best. That illustrious man, who is so intimately united to God, and *in whom dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily* ; Col. ii. 9. He whose name is Emanuel, *God with us* ; Mat. i. 23. or *God manifest in the flesh* ; 1 Tim. iii. 16. he must

know the Father with such an exquisite knowledge, as far transcends the reach of all our ideas.

Let it be noted also that the blessed Jesus came down from heaven not only to shew God all-glorious to men, but to make him appear all-lovely and desirable in the eyes of sinners, by representing him in all the wonders of his compassion, and forgiving mercy. Even a great, a just, and a holy God, is lovely and amiable in the sight of guilty creatures, when he is willing to *reconcile the world to himself*; in and by his Son Jesus Christ, not imputing to them their iniquities; 2 Cor. v. 19. Such a sight of God, is the first attractive of our love.

2. It is the Son of God who came to inform us what God has done for us, and thereby to engage our love. The reason of man and our daily experience, teach us that he is the author of our being and our blessings: "He causes the sun to shine, and his rain to descend on the earth;" Mat. v. 45. "he gives us fruitful seasons, and fills our hearts with food and gladness;" Acts xiv. 17. But it is Jesus, who has told us the eternal counsels of his Father's love, and what kind desigus he formed for our recovery from sin and hell, when, in his own fore-knowledge he beheld us fallen and miserable: He has told us, what eternal and unfailing provision God has made for us, by giving us into the hands of his Son, even into those hands; where he has entrusted the infinite concerns of his own honour; and that he appointed his Son to redeem our lives, by his own bloody death.

This is love glorious indeed, and fit to allure and kindle our warmest affections to God. It is the blessed Son of God himself, who, by his Father's appointment, has suffered agonies and sorrows of unknown kinds, unknown degrees, for us. *He poured out his own soul to death to secure us from the deserved wrath and vengeance of God*; he sustained many a painful stroke, to make a way for us to partake of his Father's mercy, and to render the offended Majesty of heaven a proper and more engaging object of our love.

3. Again, it is this same glorious person, the Son of God, who has informed us at large, not only what God has already done, but what he will do for us; and has given us the hope of everlasting blessings. He has confirmed all the words of grace that God spake to men by angels and prophets in former ages; and he has added many a rich and most express promise of a glorious resurrection, and a future state, and set them before us in a divine light, beyond what the prophets or the angels ever knew in ancient times: He has assured returning sinners of the pardon of highest crimes, and the most aggravated iniquities; and he hath secured the everlasting favour and presence of God to all his followers; for by the Father's appointment he is gone to *prepare mansions of glory for them*; that where he is they may be also; that they may dwell with him and with his Father for ever.

Thus it appears that our everlasting thanks and praises are due to the blessed Jesus, who has laid the foundation of love between an offended God and his guilty creature, man. He has revealed the great God to us, has told us what he is, and has set him before us, in his most amiable glories : He has taught us what wonders of mercy God hath wrought for us already, and what blessings he will bestow on us through the future ages of eternity : And thus he hath opened all the springs of love to allure our hearts to God. What christian can withhold his love and praise from so worthy, so divine a benefactor ?

IV. I may therefore well add, in the last place, that no person in heaven or earth was so proper to recommend to us this divine virtue, the love of God, as Christ Jesus, our Saviour, who speaks the words of my text : He who was himself the beloved Son of God, the first favourite of heaven, the highest object of his Father's love, and the best and most perfect lover of his Father : He who was the great peace-maker between God and sinners, the chief minister and messenger of his Father's love to men. If he had not undertook to make peace, we had still continued *children of wrath*, and in the same state with fallen angels, who are never invited to return to the love of God. There is no prophet, no messenger sent to require or charge them to love God, for there is no priest or peace-maker appointed for them.

Who is so fit a person to urge upon our consciences this blessed command of love to God, as he who came to redeem us from our state of rebellion and enmity to deliver us from the anger of God, and *the curse of the law*, and everlasting death ? Who can give us such pathetic motives, and so powerful a charge to *love the Lord our God with our whole heart*, as he who came to write his Father's love to us in lines of blood, even his own blood ? He whose heart was pierced for the sake of sinful men ; he who came to seal the covenant of love between God and man with the anguish of his soul, and the blood of his heart ! How all-glorious and well chosen is this messenger of the love and precepts of God ! This blessed prophet, who is sent from God to recommend to us eternal duty of divine love ; who is also our great *high-priest* to reconcile us to God ! Yet how little success has the message had on the hearts of men ! What a sad and just occasion of shame and holy mourning ! Forbid it, O God, that such a messenger and such a message should be sent from heaven in vain !

Meditation.—“ What shall I do to become a true lover of God ? Since I know there is but one God, I would give up my whole heart to him alone ; I would fain have him reign in my affectional supreme and without a rival. But let me recollect myself a little, and let me not deny what God and his grace have

rought in my soul. Do I not love him sincerely, and above all things? Am I not possessed of those qualifications which are obtained and implied in the affectionate and supreme love of God? Let me run over them in meditation and self-enquiry.

“Have I not beheld him as the first and the best of beings? Have I not seen him most glorious in himself, and worthy of the highest esteem and love? Am I not deeply convinced and firmly persuaded that he is the only all-sufficient good? That he is the overflowing spring of grace and blessedness? Have I not been taught to see the vanity and emptiness of all things beneath and besides God; and that without him I can never arrive at true happiness? Has he not the most transcendent place in my esteem? Yes, O Lord, through thy grace I can say, the creatures are nothing in comparison of thee; nor can any thing appear in my eyes more lovely and more desirable than God and his love.

“Again: Have I not been invited and raised by the grace to some humble hope of thy favour? Hast thou not revealed thyself, in thy word, as a God condescending to be reconciled to sinners, willing to be reconciled to me? As a God willing to make creatures happy, even every creature that desires to centre itself in God, and take up its rest in him: O that sublime, that most excellent, that supreme being, the holy and blessed God! How merciful! How compassionate! Have I not seen him in his word descending within the reach of my hope? And have I not rejoiced to think that he gives me leave to hope in him, as an eternal portion for my soul, and that he holds out the arm of his love to receive me.

“May I not proceed yet further, O my God? Has not my will been drawn powerfully toward thee, and made choice of thee as my everlasting good? Have I not turned my back upon creatures at thy call, and divided myself from every thing, that I might be more nearly united to thee? Have I not renounced them all, that I might be entirely the Lord’s? Does not my soul with firm-purpose cleave to thee, as my immortal portion, and my ever-during inheritance? Yet again, O my Lord, does not my heart sometimes go out after thee, with most pleasing sensations? O that I could say it never wandered; But I humbly hope it will never, never be at rest while absent from God. Sometimes like the needle that is feebly touched with the sovereign influence of the load-stone, it may be drawn aside by other influences, and it is too ready to wander from the beloved point: But may I not appeal to thee, O my God, that like the needle, it is ever restless till it point to thee again, to thee, the object of my strongest desire, and my supreme love?

“Are not my flesh and spirit with all their active powers, under the command of this divine principle, this holy fire of love? Does

not this heavenly affection reign in my soul over all my faculties, all my senses, and all my passions? Are not all my little affairs in this world, and all my more important concerns, regulated and governed by this holy love? Canst thou bear the thought, O my soul, of acting contrary to this inward vital and reigning principle? Are not all my mortal interests subdued and devoted to divine love, and all my immortal interests united and summed up in it? "Whom have I in heaven, O Lord, but thee, and what is there on earth that I desire in comparison of thee?" Ps. lxxiii. 25.

"These eyes of mine, whither shall they look but toward thee? These feet, whither shall they go but on thy messages? What shall these hands do, but the work which thou appointest them? What is there that my tongue is employed in, with so much delight, as in speaking of thee, and to thee, my Lord and my God? All that I am, and all that I have, is thine for ever and ever: Am I not then a sincere lover?"

"Blessed be the name of Jesus, the Son of God, and my Saviour, that has descended from heaven to dwell with dust and ashes, that he might bring such worthless wretches as we are, within the attractive force of divine love: Our sins stood between God and man like a wall of dreadful separation; but by his glorious atonement he has removed the bar, and made the way of access to God free and open, that God and man might be united in the bond of perpetual love: He called sinners by his own voice, and he calls them still by the word of his gospel, to partake of this privilege. O blessed messenger of divine love! And he sends down his own spirit from heaven, where he dwells, to make us willing to partake of this felicity, and to draw our hearts near to God. Come, O divine Spirit, come, dwell in this heart of mine, as an unchangeable principle of holy love! Guard my heart from all meaner allurements and influences, while I am travelling through the dangerous region of this world, till I am arrived beyond the reach of danger, till I rest for ever in the bosom of God, my supreme love, and my everlasting all.

DISCOURSE II.

Divine Love is the Commanding Passion.

ING declared at large, in the former sermon, what is in the supreme love of God ; the second general head of love requires me to shew, how this one passion of divine love influence all the other affections of the heart. The whole are witnesses to this effect of love in the common affairs of the world ; and this powerful passion still retains its own nature and pre-eminence over the rest, when God is the object of it, which appear in the following instances :

If the soul be warmed with divine love, " the various discoveries that God makes of himself to us, will not only be the object of frequent contemplation, but of pleasing wonder." Wonder or wonder is a noble passion, arising from the view of something that is new and strange, or upon the notice of some extraordinary and uncommon object : Now when so glorious and transcending as the great and blessed God, becomes the object of our view and our love, with what pleasure do we survey his works which are so rare, so uncommon, that there are none to be compared with them. We shall meditate on the surprizing discoveries that he has made of himself, till we find new matter of admiration in all of them. Sincere and fervent love is ever seeking some new beauties and wonders in the person so much

The lover of God traces the footsteps of infinite wisdom and almighty power, in the works of nature and providence : when he beholds the heavens, the work of the fingers of God, the sun and moon and stars which he has created ; Ps. viii. 3. he admires their immense vastness, their order and beauty, and wonders at the skill and divine contrivance of him that made them. " O Lord, how great, how manifold are thy works ? In how many hast thou made them all ;" Ps. civ. 24. And then he returns again at the condescending goodness of God to his little creature, man : " Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, the son of man, that thou shouldst visit him ?" Ps. viii. 4. The loving-kindness of God has many admirable circumstances in it, as well as his wisdom and power ; and therefore the great Psalmist calls it marvellous ; Ps. xxxi. 21. and spends his psalm in the devout admiration of it.

Many of the providences of God are surprizing : He alone

doth great wonders; Ps. cxxxvi. 4. In the heavens and in the earth *he doth things unsearchable, marvellous things without number*; Job v. 9. The soul that loves God will recall his ancient wonders with sweet delight; Ps. lxxvii. 11. and will take notice of all his marvellous ways in his present conduct of the world and the church.

There is sufficient matter in God, for the pleasurable and everlasting entertainment of this holy passion: He is an immense ocean of glories and wonders. There is nothing in God but what would be marvellous and astonishing to us, if we had our eyes divinely enlightened, and our hearts fired with divine love. Every creature has something in it that surpasses our knowledge, and commands our admiration: But what are all these in comparison of God, the all-wise and all-mighty artificer, who made them all by wisdom, and the breath of his mouth? The soul that loves God is ready to see and take notice of God in every thing: He walks through the fields, he observes the wonders of divine workmanship in every different tree on his right-hand and on his left, in the herbs and flowers that he treads with his feet, in the rich diversity of shapes and colours and ornaments of nature: He beholds and admires his God in them all. He sees the birds in their airy flight, or perched upon the branches, and sending forth their various melody: He observe the grazing flocks, and the larger cattle in their different forms and manners of life; he looks down upon little insects, and take notice of their vigorous and busy life and motions, their shining bodies, and their golden or painted wings, he beholds and he admires his God in them all: In the least things of nature, he can read the greatness of God, and it is what of God he finds in the creature that renders creatures more delightful to him. Creatures are but his steps to help him to rise toward God.

If it were possible for our admiration, to run through and finish all the marvellous things of nature and providence, there would remain still a vast field of wonders in his word, in his law, in his gospel, in his transactions of grace with the children of men. David, that intense lover of God, was ever meditating of his statutes, his word, his testimonies: he searched *wondrous things out of his law*: Ps. cxix. 18. and ever found something in them worthy of his high esteem, and his holy joy. "O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day. I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandments are exceeding broad;" Ps. cxix. 96, 97. But above all, the riches of mercy manifested in the gospel, awaken and raise the holy soul to a sublime degree of astonishment. "This is the Lord's doing indeed and it is marvellous in our eyes;" Ps. cxviii. 23. This was a mystery that was hid in God, and kept secret since the world began, it was concealed from ages and generations, and

now made manifest, to the intent that now unto principalities and powers of heaven, as well as men on earth, might be made known by the church, the manifold, the amazing wisdom of God; Rom. xvi. 25. Ephes. iii. 9. There is enough in this gospel to raise the wonder even of the sinners that refuse it: "Hear, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish;" Acts xiii. 41. Much more will it seize and employ the admiring powers of every holy soul, that has tasted of the love of God, and been partaker of this salvation. There is a divine and ten-fold pleasure attends this exercise of sacred admiration, while the soul, in the language of faith and love, can say, "Thou art the God who alone doest wonders," and thou art my God for ever and ever.

I might add after all, there is yet still another world of wonders to employ the lover of God, and that is, the person of his Son Jesus Christ, our Saviour. There God discovers himself in his fullest grace and wisdom, in his highest power and perfection. The attributes of the Father shine transcendently glorious in his Son, and become the object of love and wonder to men and angels. He is the fairest "image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature;" Col. i. 16. "He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person;" Heb. i. 3. All the marvellous things that God the Father ever wrought, it was in and by his Son. Did he create all things out of nothing? It was by Jesus Christ; Eph. iii. 9. Does he govern the world with amazing wisdom? It is by making his Son Jesus the governor and Lord of all things. Does he redeem and save guilty sinners from everlasting misery? These wonders of mercy are transacted by the cradle and the cross of Jesus, by the death and the life of Christ, by the sorrows, the sufferings, and the victories of the Son of God. "His name is called wonderful;" Is. ix. 6. For he who is *the child born*, is also *the mighty God*: The infant of days is the *everlasting Father, the first and the last, the beginning and the end* of all things. What sublime and sacred raptures of love and wonder join together, when a devout christian contemplates his God in his nature, in his providences, in all his works, in the pages of his holy book, and in the face of his Son the blessed Jesus? But I have dwelt too long amidst these divine wonders, the following particulars must be more briefly handled.

II. Divine love will command the affection of holy desire. A sense of the favour of God, and the influences of his grace will be the matter of our most intense wishes and importunate requests. We shall long for the presence of God above all things, both here and hereafter. This was the fixed desire, this the passionate aspiration of the holy Psalmist; Ps. cxix. 58. "I entreated thy favour with my whole heart." What warm and pathetic language breaks from the lips of this great saint,

this sublime lover of God, in the xlii, xliii, and lxxxiv. *Psalms*! "My soul longeth, ye, fainteth for the courts of the Lord, my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God: As the hart panteth after water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God, Early O God, will I seek thee, for thy loving kindness is better than life." When he dwells in his own palace he longs for the divine presence; *Ps. ci. 2.* "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart; O when wilt thou come unto me?" But his eminent desire is to dwell for ever in the sanctuary; "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may ever abide in his house, there to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire" and converse with him "in his holy temple;" *Ps. xxvii. 4.* O happy soul, where all these active springs of passion are touched and influenced by divine grace! Hunger, and thirst, and all the longing powers and appetites of animal nature, are too few and too feeble to express the holy desires of a soul breathing after the presence of its God.

III. When the love of God reigns in the heart, all the joys and pleasures of the man will unite and centre in God. It will be our sweetest satisfaction, and most exalted delight to have God ever near us, and to be ever near to God. As absence from God is a pain at the heart of a lively christian, fired with divine love, so his glorious presence is his chief joy. With what affectionate language does the holy soul of David rejoice in God, as his God, and how does he employ the charming arts of poetry and music to express his own joys and the praises of his almighty Friend? One must run through a multitude of his *Psalms* to copy out the bright expressions of holy delight, which he found in the love of God; even the prospect and hope of waiting on him in his temple, fills his spirit with sacred pleasure; *Ps. xliii. 4.* "I will go to the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy, yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God." *Ps. lxxiii. 5, 6.* "When I remember thee on my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches, my soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.

This joy which is derived from the love of God, is supreme over all other joys, and independent of other comforts: When all the *nether springs* of delight among creatures are dried up, this is a fountain of eternal pleasure, a spring of ever-flowing delight. *Hab. iii. 17—19.* "Though the fig-tree shall not blossom, and there shall no fruit be in the vine, though the field shall yield no meat, and the flock shall be cut off from the fold, yet the Lord God is my strength, I will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation."

IV. Where the love of God prevails in the heart, every thing that belongs to God, his word, his institutions, his church and people, will in some proportion be the objects of our choice

and love, of our holy desire and delight. Has God condescended to give us his word, to write a book of knowledge and grace for the use of men? How much delight will the holy soul take in reading and hearing the blessed words of this book! A flame of heavenly love kindled in the heart, will engage us to converse often with those divine notices of himself, which God hath sent us from heaven. *Our delight will be placed in the law, and gospel of our God, and therein shall we meditate day and night; Ps. xix. 2. O how I love thy law, says David, it is my meditation all the day; and in the night he remembers the name of God; Ps. xix. 55, 97.*

Has the great God built a temple for himself on earth, even in the assemblies of the saints? Has he appointed methods of worship in which men shall address his majesty, and whereby he will make them partakers of his love? How desirous is the lively christian to attend on all these methods of divine appointment, to abide in the sanctuary, to frequent *the house of prayer*, and wait for the manifestations of the power and glory of God? *I have desired the habitation of thy house, says David, and the place where by honour dwelleth: Ps. xxvi. 8. How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! lxxxiv. 1.*

Has God raised up children for himself, out of the sons and daughters of fallen Adam? Then every one *that loves God, will love his offspring too; 1 John v. 1.* This is one of the chief evidences of a sincere love to God, when we love his people, and those who bear his image, without the narrow view of a sect or party, or particular tribe of such a name. The saint loves all the saints, and the christian loves all christians; those who are most like to God *are the excellent of the earth, in whom is all his delight; Ps. xvi. 2.* And therefore he pities them under all their sorrows, and he relieves their wants according to his power, because they stand in so near a relation to the God whom he loves, and bear his lovely image; 1 John iii. 16, 17.

Has the great and glorious God one peculiar Son, his first-born, his only begotten, who bears his perfect image, and whom he loves above all the rest? This also is the chief object of a christian's love. Not father nor mother, son nor daughter, nor the wife of the bosom, lie so near the heart of a christian, as the Son of God doth. He not only bears the nearest resemblance to God, *but he is one with God; in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; Col. ii. 9. He is Emanuel, God with us; Mat. i. 21. God manifested in the flesh; 1 Tim. iii. 16.* There is more of the power and wisdom; there is more of the majesty and mercy of God shines through the human nature of his Son Jesus, than in all the millions of men and angels, and all the worlds of unknown creatures that God ever made: And therefore the sanctified affections of the soul go forth in the strongest manner

towards Jesus the Son of God : He is in their eyes *the chief of ten thousand, altogether lovely.*

V. Where the passion of divine love reigns gloriously in the heart, every creature separated from God will fall under a holy neglect and contempt. Nothing will serve or satisfy the good man, in the room and place of his God : All things, when laid in the balance, *are lighter than vanity ; they are in his esteem, like a small dust of the earth before a mountain, or the drop of a bucket, when compared with the ocean ; Is. xl. 15. The language of such a soul is, whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee ; Ps. lxxiii. 25.* Creatures, with all their attractives and allurements, have no power to charm his heart away from God : The divine lover is *crucified to the world ;* it is like a dead thing to him, tasteless, disrelishing, worthless and vain : There is a vast emptiness, and wide and universal desolation in the world, if the soul see not God in it.

Business and diversions, cities and palaces, with their various ornaments, fields and groves, spring, summer and autumn, with all their flowery beauties, and their tasteful blessings, are some of the delights of the sons of men : Books and learning, and polite company, and refined science, are the more elegant joys of ingenious spirits : These things are the enticing gratifications of the senses of the mind of man : They are all innocent in themselves, they may be sanctified to divine purposes, and afford double satisfaction, if God be amongst them : But if God be absent, if he hide his face, or frown upon the soul, not palaces, nor groves, nor fields, not business nor diversions, not all the flowery or tasteful blessings of spring or summer, not the more refined joys of books and learning, and elegant company, not all the rich provisions of nature or art, can entertain or refresh, can satisfy or please the soul of a christian, who is smitten with the love of his God.

I add further, if the affectionate christian find not God even in his church and ordinances ; if his mind be not raised to heavenly objects in the house of God, and in his sacred institutions, they are all empty and unsatisfying ; there is no life nor pleasure in them : A hypocrite is content with outward forms, and is well pleased with having paid his devoirs, and made his appearance in the church ; but the heart that loves God sincerely, cannot be satisfied with mere bodily devotion, nor with any pictures, shadows, or emblems of divine things, unless God who is the life, the spirit, and the substance be there, and manifest himself in a way of mercy ; unless God fill his own institution with his own presence, that is, with the influences of his grace, with the enlightening, the sanctifying, and the comforting operations of his own Spirit.

VI. The love of God prevailing in the heart, will awaken zeal and activity, and holy delight, not only in the duties of worship, but in all manner of services for God in the world. Can I do any thing for God whom I love? saith the christian, That shall be my joyful work. There is no labour or fatigue too much to sustain, no suffering too hard to endure, for the sake of God, who is so supremely beloved. What shall I do to honour the King of heaven, and to render him honourable in the earth? How shall I spread his glory before the eyes of men, who in himself is so transcendently glorious? and *what shall I render to the Lord my God, for the multitude of mercies which he has conferred upon me?* Ps. cxvi. 13. Divine love will make the law of God delightful in the practice of it, and none of his precepts will be a burden to the affectionate and lively christian; 1 John v. 3. *This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.*

The soul that loves God will be always aspiring after greater degrees of holiness, because it renders the man more like God: It is commonly said of friendship or sincere love, that it either finds or makes persons like to each other. Love to God is an assimilating principle, it works more and more, till we are transformed by degrees into his image: And if we are affectionate lovers of God, we shall never be perfectly pleased with ourselves, till we are delivered from the bondage of this sinful flesh, till we awake out of this dull and stupid state, into the world of spirits made perfect, and are there satisfied with the likeness of God. This heavenly delight shall be yet more exalted, when our bodies shall be raised in the likeness of our glorified Redeemer, and our flesh and soul together shall be made to resemble the holy Jesus in greater perfection, who is the first, and the nearest image of God. With what a gust of sacred pleasure does the beloved disciple express himself; 1 John iii. 1, 2. *We shall be like him, when we shall see him as he is;* and when with David we awake out of the dust of death, we shall see the face of God in righteousness, and be satisfied with his complete likeness; Ps. xvii. 15.

VII. Every thing that offends or dishonours the blessed God, will be a matter of hatred and aversion to the divine lover: And every thing whereby God has been offended in time past, will be the occasion of shame and grief. *I hate vain thoughts,* saith holy David, *but thy law do I love;* Ps. cxix. 113. Sin is the object of constant hatred in all its views, because it is contrary to the nature, the will, and the law of God, who is the supreme object of love: The good man is exceeding fearful of doing any thing that may offend or displease his God. When his soul looks back upon his own sins, he finds abundant matter for sorrow and holy shame, for self-resentment and pious indignation.

“ O how hateful have all my sinful thoughts been ! My proud, my angry, and my revengeful thoughts ! That covetousness, that malice and envy, which have been working in my heart ! Those wandering imaginations which have called me away from the blessed God, even from the midst of his worship ! How vile and guilty is my tongue, because of the foolish and passionate, and sinful words that I have spoken ! What a multitude of evil actions have been scattered up and down throughout my life, and intermixed with my behaviour towards God and man !” All these create bitter uneasiness and pain in the remembrance, because they are offences against a God who is supremely beloved. What holy confusion, what meltings of heart in secret sorrow, do the true lovers of God feel, after they have indulged temptation, fallen under some more grievous sin, defiled their consciences, and dishonoured their God ? What pangs of inward remorse, and what sincere indignation against themselves ? And as an evidence of their love to God, they sometimes see reason to confess and bewail their folly, even in the sight of men. Holy David was not backward upon such occasions, to confess his grief for having offended his God : We may read the mournings of his love, in his penitential Psalms particularly Ps. li. 3, 4, 17. and he offers a *broken and a contrite heart* in sacrifice, to that God whom he had offended.

A true and affectionate lover of God is pained at the heart, and feels a sensible inward sorrow to see how iniquity abounds in the land, to behold the laws of God broken by his fellow creatures, and his holy name blasphemed. *I beheld the transgressors, and I was grieved, because they kept not thy word : Rivers of tears run down my eyes, because men break thy holy law ;”* Ps. cxix. 136, 158.

VIII. Every thing that has a tendency to divide the soul from God is matter of religious jealousy and holy fear. Divine love hath its jealousies : If we love God with intense affection we shall feel an inward anxiousness and solicitude, lest our hearts *depart from the living God*, and lest God should hide himself in his displeasure from our souls. This is what holy David is ever afraid of, and begs that God would not hide himself in anger. The apostle Jude, verse 21. bids us *keep ourselves in the love of God* : The holy soul will watch against every thing that may begin a separation or break the divine friendship, and it grows jealous of every thing that comes too near the heart.

When the true lover of God is deeply engaged in the businesses of the present world, he manages them with a pious caution, lest his soul should be immersed and drowned with overwhelming cares, or overladen with increasing riches ; he is watchful, and afraid lest the dust and rubbish of this world should bury the holy seed in the heart, should obstruct the growth of religion,

should carry off the thoughts from God to idols of gold and silver, and thus defile the soul. If he has any share amongst the honours and equipages, the gay diversions and pleasures of life, he is afraid lest they should fill his heart with vanity, lest they should tincture his spirit with sensuality and intemperance, and thus take away the taste and relish of divine love. If providence call him sometimes into vain and wicked company, he is afraid of tarrying too many hours in the midst of them, lest *evil communications should corrupt good manners*; 1 Cor. xv. 33. and therefore *he will not stand among the counsels of the ungodly*, nor walk in the way where sinners dwell; Ps. i. 1. He shuns them as a pestilence, because their ways are contrary to the pure and holy nature of that God whom he loves.

Those studies, those employments, those recreations and amusements, which make the heart forget God, or withhold it too long from him, are uneasy and painful to a soul inflamed with divine love. As it is the language of the sinner who is weary of God, *When will the new moon be over, and the sabbath be done, that I may return to my trade and my labour, to my buying and selling, and the daily business of this dying life?* So the sincere lover of God is ready to say, *What, nothing but business and labour for the bread that perisheth? Nothing but buying and selling, and seeking gold and silver, food and raiment? Alas, how unhappily am I detained all the day from my God by these embarrassments! When will the evening come, and the season of pious retirement? When will the sabbath appear, that I may spend my hours with God, and begin to try what heaven is?*

IX. Where the divine principle of the love of God reigns in the heart, all sinful passions toward God and men will be subdued by it.

1. Toward God. One would think indeed, that man should not dare to indulge any sinful passion towards his Maker; but so corrupt are our hearts, that we dislike the holy nature of God, we are displeas'd with his will, and his holy commandments are grievous to us, till the love of God subdue this inward aversion of the heart to holiness, and reconcile us to the law of God by the constraining influence of divine love.

Again, we are ready to repine at the hand of the Lord, to murmur against heaven, and to quarrel with our Maker, when we meet with disappointments in our affairs: We are inclin'd to grow peevish and fretful against providence, when we lose some desirable comfort, or sustain some heavy sorrow, or long and tedious sickness; but holy love silences every murmur, and washes every repining thought. Where the love of God prevails, afflictive scenes of life will never awaken resentment against heaven, but always meet with patient submission. The sacred lover is not angry with his God when he smites him, for he ever

supposes there is a just reason for every stroke of his Father's rod: "Either, says he, my sins have deserved his correcting hand, or these sorrows are sent to examine what grace there is in my heart, and to make trial of my faith: Still I am persuaded there is love at the bottom of all these troubles, and it is the hand of love that smites me; for my Saviour hath said it. Rev. iii. 19. *As many as I love, I rebukè and chasten*; and the holy apostle assures us; Heb. xii. 6. *that God corrects every Son whom he receives.*

2. Divine love mortifies and subdues our disorderly and sinful passions toward our fellow-creatures: Wrath, revenge, malice, envy, are all subdued and kept under by this sovereign principle of divine love. That soul in whom this sacred passion keeps a constant flame, is not easily roused to a wrathful or resenting temper, by the affronts and injuries we sustain from men. The lover of God is meek and gentle under many insults and reproaches: He can forbear and forgive, for he knows that his God hath borne long with him, and forgiven him ten thousand provocations. Thus the sovereignty of divine love appears, in that it can suppress as well as raise the other passions.

X. Where divine love reigns in eminent degrees, there will be a humble holy desire to pass even through death itself to meet with God, the supreme object of love, and to dwell for ever in his presence. If faith be not too feeble, or the frailties of animal nature too prevalent, the divine lover will encounter death with courage, and with sacred joy, because it will bring him to the enjoyment of his God. *When the dust returns to the earth, the soul of every man returns to God as a judge, and the soul of a good man to God as a friend, and Father, and rewarder; Eccl. xii. 7. If we are absent from the body, we shall be present with the Lord; 2 Cor. v. 8.* In this view of things, the holy lover is ready to say, What is there in death so terrible that the presence of Christ and the enjoyment of my God, has not something infinitely more delightful to overbalance it? *Love is stronger than death.*

The love of God has been found stronger in a holy soul than all the pangs and terrors of death, even a death of violence and martyrdom: The one influences and impels toward heaven more powerfully than the other can terrify or discourage: United faith and love have passed through fires of torment, and seas of blood, in order to see God, and dwell with him in his heavenly habitation. This leads to the next particular.

In the last place, I add, that as hell will be matter of utmost aversion and holy fear to a sincere lover of God, because it is an everlasting separation from God, so heaven will be the object of desire and joyful hope, because, there God manifests himself to all that love him in his highest glory and his richest grace.

The soul that loves God with warm affection, cannot bear those dreadful words, 2 Thess. i. 9. of being *punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord*. To be *without God in the world*, during the short space of our continuance here, is a very formidable and grievous thing to the good man ; but to be cursed and condemned, to depart from God for ever, this is the very hell of hell, if I may so express it, in the esteem of the soul that loves God : To be divided for ever from God, the spring of life and love, and all happiness ; to be separated for ever from God, the infinite and the all-sufficient good ; to be thrust out for ever from the presence of God, the most lovely and the best of beings ; to see him no more, to love him no more, and to be for ever banished from his love ; the very thought of it gives the holy soul more anguish than it is able to bear.

On the other hand, heaven, which is the dwelling-place of the Most High, is the mark which the good man ever aims at, that he may see God face to face. When his love rises high, he is ever breathing passionately after this blessedness, and lives with delight upon the promises which give him this joyful hope. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God* ; Mat. v. 8. The good man's affections are set on the things above, where Christ is at the right hand of God ; Col. iii. 1, 2. His treasure is on high, and his heart is there also ; Mat. vi. 21. If we love God with all the heart, we shall keep heaven always in our eye. The foretaste of it will be our present comfort and support ; the thoughts of being for ever with God, will sweeten all the sorrows of life, will take away the bitterness of affliction, and ease the pains of death. As Jacob cheerfully sustained a hard servitude of seven years in Chaldea, through heat and cold, through frost and wind, and sun-beams, for the love of Rachel, so the christian endures all the labours and conflicts, all the fatigues and distresses of life in this lower world with patience, and with holy pleasure, in hope to dwell for ever with God, whom his soul loves supremely above all creatures.

Thus I have finished the second general head, which I proposed ; and produced a variety of instances, wherein this sacred and sovereign affection of divine love commands and influences, excites or subdues the other passions of nature, and makes them all subservient to its own great designs, that is, to the honour and to the enjoyment of God, the object of this divine affection.

[Here this discourse may be divided.]

Before I proceed to the third general head, I shall endeavour to improve this discourse by these three useful reflections

Reflection I. "How happy and easy a rule is here given us to examine how stands our love to God, and whether we love him *with all our heart!*" Are the other passions of nature influenced by this love ? Surely it is impossible for us in this pre-

sent state of flesh and blood, to love God with our whole hearts, and yet to feel no sensible workings of fear or hope, desire or anger, in correspondence with this holy passion : To have no pleasures nor sorrows, no holy longings, nor holy joys, acting in concert with this principle of divine love.

Believe me, sirs, there are no outward actions, no visible attendances on public worship, no bodily services, no costly sacrifices can so happily evidence our sincere love to God, as the steady and constant workings of the other inward powers of nature in conformity to this holy principle. A hundred outward plausible actions may be the cloak of vice, the disguise of hypocrisy. Vain pharisees may *make broad their phylacteries, may tithe* their herds and their flocks as well as *mint and cummin*, may give much alms, or build hospitals and churches ; but the various inward affections of nature, can never be kept in any regular and steady exercise of piety, by all the toil and skill of a hypocrite. And on the other hand, if the heart be thoroughly devoted to the love of God, this love will reign sovereign among the other passions. The other passions will obey love, and we may judge by their obedience, how far the love of God prevails.

II. "If mankind be examined by this rule, how few sincere lovers of God will be found among them !" It is a vain thing for a man to say, "I love God with all my heart," when his strongest desires and his most relishing joys centre in meaner objects ; when his highest hopes and his most painful fears, his deepest anxieties and disquietudes of mind, are always raised and sunk again by the things of this world only, and the changing scenes of this mortal state. Alas ! How few are there whose love to God does not fall under some just suspicion, when brought to this test ! Let us survey the world round about us, and observe what it is that influences the various passions of men, even those who are called christians, and would be thought the disciples of Christ.

Some have their hearts so filled with the business of this life, and the love of money, as their chief idol, that all their desires, their fears, and their hopes, and the perpetual course and labour of all their powers, keep this point ever in view and in warm pursuit : The disappointment of a small sum, the loss of a few pounds will hang upon their spirits with a constant heaviness, and create them more pain than twenty sins against God their Maker. What shall we think of these people, who love riches so well, that if their hands and their heads would hold out, and day-light would last, they would never be weary of this chace, nor require cessation or respite. Does the love of God appear as the supreme and reigning passion in such earthly souls as these ? There have been some in all ages, and there are the successors of them in our day, who have loved gold and silver with so warm a pas-

sion, even to the very end of life, that if they could but have contrived how to carry it away with them to the other world, there would have been but little silver; and scarce any gold left in our world long ere this time. This has employed their morning thoughts and evening affections, their earnest wishes, and their busy fingers day and night, so as to leave little room for the love of God and religion.

Others there are who make honour and esteem, or perhaps the grandeur and pomp, and equipage of life, the chief object of their love. Their hopes and cares, their desires and enquiries are, how shall I shine among men, and make a figure in the world? Every gay gilded thing they see raises their wishes: Ambition, honour and applause, engage their whole souls: A fancied contempt or neglect of them stirs their jealousy, and awakens all their uneasy passions. They mourn more, and are more inwardly and deeply vexed for one reproachful word from men, than for all their own affronts to the great and blessed God. Can the love of God reign in a heart so puffed up and filled with self and vanity?

There are others again, whose idol is pleasure and vain delight. A round of pleasing amusements, a succession of sensuities, is their chief good: This employs their constant contrivances, this engages their hopes and fears, and every passion. They spend their anxious enquiries upon the gratification of appetite, humour, and fancy: *What shall I eat, and what shall I drink?* How shall I dine elegantly, and regale myself at the table? What are the most luxurious dishes in season, and where shall I find gay or merry company in the evening? The tavern, or the meaner drinking-house, the comedy or the ball, and every place of pastime, whether lawful or unlawful, detain their souls as well as their bodies, and engage their thoughts long before-hand. Does the sincere love of God reign in such sort of spirits?

These are the things that busy and engross the daily passions of men, and scarce a small corner of their hearts is left for God and religion. But let us remember God is an all-glorious and sovereign being, his holy jealousy forbids him to accept of a corner of the heart. He refuses and disdains every lover that does not give up his whole self to him with all his powers. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul:* Every affection must and will be employed in a pious manner, where divine love is, as it always ought to be, the supreme passion. But, alas! how few souls are thus moulded and refined, how few are regulated and governed by so divine a principle? Man is the creature of God, and owes his all to him; but the creature man does not love his Creator.

III. If divine love be so sovereign and ruling an affection,

then "the best and noblest method for governing all the passions, is to get the love of God rooted in the heart, and to see that it maintain its supreme dominion there." What uneasy creatures are we made by our various passions! How often do they disquiet and torment the soul? How head-strong is their violence, like a horse unbroken and untamed! How sudden are their starts? Their motions how wild and various? And how unruly are their efforts? Now if one had but one sovereign bridle, that could reach and manage them all; one golden rein, that would hold in all their unruly motions, and would also excite and guide them at pleasure; what an invaluable instrument would this be to mortals! Surely such an instrument is the love of God, such an invaluable regulator of all the passionate powers; and it will have this effect, where it is strong and supreme, as it ought to be.

You that are daily disturbed and led astray by rising passions of various kinds, come to the lectures of the gospel, come to the doctrine of the blessed Jesus: Come see the love of God displayed in its most surprizing and powerful colours; come learn to love your Maker, dressed in the riches of his grace: And may your souls be fired with divine love, till all your carnal fetters are melted off; till you exult in a divine liberty; till you lead captivity captive, and reign and triumph over all your vicious affections, which had so often before disquieted and enslaved you.

And here again we may take up a melancholy complaint, how few are there who are taught to regulate their passions by divine love! What wild work do these unruly powers make among mankind! How dreadfully do they carry away multitudes into mischief and ruin for want of this holy government! How very few have attained this heavenly gift, this sacred principle, this golden rein of universal influence, that would hold in, and guide and manage all the passions to glorious advantage!

Meditation.—"But it is time now, O my soul, to call thy thoughts away from the multitudes of mankind, and to look carefully into thyself. There is reason enough for grief and lamentation indeed, if we survey the thousands round about us, who are mere slaves to their earthly passions, who let them loose among creatures, and shew very few tokens and evidences of a supreme love to their Creator: But would it not be matter of far more painful, more penetrating and inward sorrow if thou shouldst carry this evidence, this test of divine love, into thy own retirements, and shouldst hardly be able to prove thyself a lover of God? Awake, awake to the work, O my heart! Enquire, examine, and take a strict account how are thy passionate powers employed. Go over thy various affections, and enquire of all of them, how stands thy love to God.

“Admiration is described as the first of the passions : It arises on the notice of something new, or rare and uncommon : But it never ceases nor is lost in the contemplation of God, whose glories are infinite, and in whom the holy soul always finds something new and wondrous. He is a rare and uncommon object indeed, for there is but one such being in heaven and earth : there never was but one from all eternal ages past, nor ever will be but one to all future eternal ages.

“Hast thou seen him, my soul, so as to love him ? then thy work of pleasing contemplation and wonder will be still renewed : Among creatures we go on to admire what we love, but the love of the Creator will lead us to everlasting admiration. And if thou lovest him, thou wilt ever find something new and wondrous in him, as thy knowledge of him increases. Ask thyself then, hast thou seen the glories and the graces of thy God, so as to wonder at the infinite variety of his wisdom, the greatness of his majesty, and the condescensions of his mercy ? Are his displays of glory in nature and providence, in the bible and in the church, and especially in his beloved Son Jesus, the matter of thy joyful meditation and high esteem ? Does a sense of his transcendent grandeur and goodness strike thee, as it becomes a creature to be stricken with the ideas of a God, that is, with a holy veneration, and with an awful delight ? The love of so sublime and infinite a being is naturally turned to pleasing adoration, and becomes an act of noble worship : But when earthly lovers adore their meaner objects, to express the strength of their love, they turn idolaters, and affront God their Maker. Remember, O my soul, God alone must be adored.

“But proceed now, and ask, how stand thy desires and wishes ? Is the favour, the presence, and the enjoyment of God the object of thy strongest desires, and of thy constant pursuit ? Dost thou long after a sense of the pardon of sin, the love of God, and a preparation to dwell for ever with him, above all things besides ? Yet further enquire, what is thy heart's chief delight ? Are those the sweetest seasons of life when thou art brought nearest to God in the temper of thy spirit, in the lively hope of his love, and in humble converse with him ? Are the secret hours of retirement dear and delightful to thee, above all human society ? Are the workings of thy heart, in warm and affectionate devotion, thy sweetest pleasures ? Can it be that ever I should love God supremely, and yet not find my converse with him to be my supreme joy ?

“Again : Are the things that relate to God and eternity the objects of my choice and love, above and beyond the things that relate to men and this life ? What value hast thou, O my soul, for the bible, the book of God ? His words will be treasured up in the heart, and will become the sweet entertainment of thy solitary

hours, if God himself has the highest room in thy affections. Let me enquire again, how stand my desires toward the sanctuary, toward the places and seasons of divine worship? "Am I glad when they say unto me, come, let us go up to the house of God? Ps. cxxii. 1. Are the courts of Zion my delight, because the blessed God manifests his power and glory there? Do I love the saints of God? Is the company of lively christians refreshing and entertaining to me, above all the idle discourse of the world, or the vain merriments or more polite amusements of the age? Do I look upon the children of God with a peculiar respect, with an eye of distinguishing love, and that for this reason, because they stand related to God, and bear his image? Do I feel a sympathy with them in their sorrows? Do I pity and relieve from my very heart the poor in this world, who are the sons and daughters of the most high God? And is Jesus the supreme Son of God the highest in my esteem, and the dearest to my heart?

"Ask yet again, O my soul; is every thing little and contemptible in thy eyes, in comparison of the things of God? can any thing fill up the room and place of God? Or canst thou say all things are emptiness and vanity where God is not? When St. Austin, who was exceeding fond of the writings of Cicero, the Roman orator, came to taste the pleasures of religion, by the knowledge of Christ, the writings even of Cicero lost their relish with him, because he found not Christ there. How stands it now with thee, in respect of some of thy dearest delights of nature? Are they all placed, as they ought to be, in thy esteem, infinitely below God? Are thy best earthly joys empty and unsatisfying without God? Canst thou say, in the language of the apostle, and assume his triumph, *Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, by whom we are brought near to God the Father?* Phil. iii. 8.

"Enquire yet again, does thy love to God awaken and employ thy zeal and holy activity for his honour? Art thou solicitous to keep all his commandments, and hereby manifest thy love? There is no evidence of the love of God can be sufficient or sincere, if this be wanting. Dost thou seek to grow more and more like to God? Dost thou breathe earnestly after greater conformity to Jesus, the first and the brightest image of the Father? Is it a pain to thee to find thyself so unlike him, whom thou lovest supremely? Love will create likeness.

"Let us examine thee now, my heart, how stand thy uneasy and painful affections? Hast thou a rooted hatred of every sin? Hast thou an inward aversion to every thing that displeases God? Dost thou look back on thy own former transgressions, with holy shame and sincere sorrow? Art thou covered with an in-

ward blush at the recollection of thy past follies? Are thy sins thy heaviest burden, and the most uneasy load? Has thy sincere and unfeigned repentance been manifested by all the proper passions that attend a penitent, by self-abasement and inward confusion, by mourning in secret, and a holy displicency and resentment against thyself and thy folly? And is it a grief and pain to thee, to see and hear others transgress against thy God, and affront his law and his love?

“ Seek yet further: Hast thou a watchful jealousy over thyself, lest thou wander from God? A constant solicitude of mind, lest thou offend and displease him whom thou lovest supremely? Dost thou stand afar off from every temptation, as one afraid to be defiled with sin, and dishonour thy God? Art thou cautious of that company, of that business, of that diversion, or delight which has before ensnared thee, and broke thy holy intercourse with God?

“ Ask again, O my heart, hast thou subdued thy uneasy passions of anger, frowardness and resentment, against God and against man, by the overcoming influence of divine love? Hast thou a submissive and humble carriage under hard providences and sore disappointments from the hand of God? Dost thou love him so well, as not to murmur at his holy conduct, nor quarrel with his government? And hast thou acquired the sacred power and skill of suppressing thy wrath and revenge against men, by the constraining influence of the love of God? Dost thou forbear and forgive those who offend thee, from a sweet sense of the forbearing and forgiving love of God towards thee? If thy love to God has yet done little of this service, if it has not begun to make thee meek and mild, and dispassionate under afflictions from the hand of God, or the affronts of men, it has not acquired any great prevalence in thee, and there is too much reason to suspect the sincerity of it.

“ Come yet further, O my soul, take a step forward, and look towards death and eternity. Art thou willing to cross the dark valley, in order to dwell with thy beloved? I grant nature has its frailties and fears; I grant also, that the want of assurance of salvation damps the wings of the soul, which would be stretched forward to the enjoyment of God in the heavenly country: I would put the question therefore, in a gentle and favourable manner. Hast thou any desire to leave this sinful world, to quit all thy dearest hopes and interests here, for the sake of dwelling with God on high? Suppose thou hadst a steady hope of his love, and the pains of death were mitigated, hast thou an inward breathing and tendency towards the happiness that arises from the presence of God? O blessed souls, whose love is risen to so transcendent a degree, that they are not afraid even of the sharpest pangs, and the terrors of death! They can venture

with pleasure to cross *the swellings of Jordan*, that they may enter into the promised land, and dwell in the city of their God.

“What is it, O my heart, what is it in the word hell that strikes thee with so much horror? Is it the thought of an endless separation from thy God? What is it that makes the name of heaven carry so pleasing a sound? Is it because thy God dwells there in his fairest glory, and in his richest grace? The mere dread of hell as a place of sorrow and pain, and the desire of heaven as a mere state of rest from trouble, and of some sort of unknown happiness, are no manner of evidences of any love to God, much less of a supreme love, such as God requires. The passions of nature may be awakened by natural self-love at the views of heaven and hell, when set merely in this light: But it is the hope of being *for ever with the Lord*, that is the chief allurements of heaven in the eye of the sacred lover; and it is the eternal absence of God gives hell its blackest colours, and its most formidable appearances.

“Hast thou, O my soul, run over all thy passions in this enquiry? and what is the result of thy labour? Canst thou stand this test? art thou a lover of God with all thy heart? If thou find this divine principle, this sovereign and holy affection reigning within thee, bless the distinguishing grace of God, who has kindled this heavenly flame, and cherish it with perpetual care. Set a guard upon every affection, lest it wander from its duty. O may divine love maintain its rightful dominion, and universal sovereignty in my soul. Let me keep God always near me, and watch against the seducing influence of tempting creatures, that I may ever preserve the love of God in its supreme fervency, and its unrivalled influences: Then my whole nature, with all its powers, shall be thine, O my God, for ever and ever.” *Amen.*

DISCOURSE III.

The Use of the Passions in Religion.

WE have seen already what is included in "loving God with heart, and how this divine love will influence all the other actions into a suitable and correspondent exercise." We proceed now to the third general head of discourse, and that is, to the use of the passions in religion, or what advantage may be obtained by them, or expected from them in the christian life: here we shall find the advantages of them so great and numerous, as will render it necessary for every one who possesses a true religion to have the affections of his soul engaged in it.

Advantage I. "The passions being duly awakened, will set the powers of the understanding at work, in the search of the true and religious duty, and render the knowledge of it exceedingly desirable to sinful men." We are by nature ignorant of God and divine things: A little, a very little general knowledge of religion satisfies our desires, because we imagine it is sufficient for our necessities. The bulk of mankind have their imaginations touched with earthly things, and they are ever enquiring, will shew us where corn and wine, the pleasures of sense, the possessions of this world, honours or preferments, are to be had? Too many are ready to join with the profane wretches, as are described in *Job xxi. 14. They say unto God, depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways: we do not want now much of God, nor what is our duty to him.*

But when the arrows of conviction strike through the soul, and the heart is awakened to a pathetic sense of sin, and the knowledge of divine vengeance possesses and torments the spirit, then it is the most importunate enquiry of the heart and the lips, *What shall we do to be saved?* *Acts xvi. 30.* How shall we escape the wrath to come? How is the governing justice of the great God to be satisfied for our offences? What is the way to be made partakers of his pardoning mercy? *Wherewith shall I make my voice heard before the Lord, and in what manner shall I bow myself, and worship the Most High God?* *Micah vi. 6.* This was the language of the awakened jailor, who had just before scourged the saints of the Lord, the holy apostles; *Acts xvi. 30.* This was the earnest cry of the crucifiers of Christ himself, at St. Peter's sermon, when *they were pricked to their hearts;* *Acts ii. 37.* This is the language of nature convinced of sin, and the danger of divine indignation. St. Paul learned all the terrors of the Lord, and felt

all his painful passions in an uproar, when he was struck down to the dust, with the dreadful and overwhelming glory in his way to Damascus ; Acts ix. 3. And with what intense and hasty zeal did he make this enquiry, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* verse 6. And when he had learned the knowledge of Christ as the only way to the favour of God and salvation, how highly doth he value it ! Phil. iii. 8. *Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.*

If I am awakened to a sense of sin, and fear the anger of God, I shall long to know the awful extent of his power, and the terrible effects of his anger, as well as the methods of obtaining his grace. If I love him, I shall spend many pleasant hours of enquiry into his amiable excellencies. Each pious passion will promote its peculiar enquiries. Fear and love will wander with holy awe and delight among his glories, and be ever pursuing further knowledge of his perfections : If I love God with warm and devout affection, I shall rejoice daily to find new discoveries of his unsearchable wisdom, his all-sufficient power, his immense goodness, and the unbounded riches of his grace : I shall trace his wondrous footsteps through this beautiful creation, and endeavour to find his way in the tract of daily providences : I shall survey him and his attributes in his book of grace, and dwell upon his divine features in Jesus the *image*, and the *brightness of his glory* ; Heb. i. 3. and I shall search further continually into the knowledge of Christ, who is *God manifest in the flesh* : I shall dig in the mines of scripture for treasures of divine knowledge, and never grow weary of the work. I shall be always enquiring "What I shall do to please and serve him," who is the object of my highest love ; and how I shall obtain stronger sensations and assurances of his favour, and dwell for ever in his presence, who is the life and the joy of my soul. We long still to know more of this transcendent being whom we love : It is this divine passion that animates these enquiries after the knowledge of God ; and this shall render them infinite and everlasting, because God the object of them is everlasting and infinite.

II. "The affections being once engaged, will keep the soul fixed to divine things. The sense of them is impressed deeper on the mind, by the exercise of devout passions, and it will abide there much longer." Even where reason is bright and the judgment clear, yet it will be ineffectual for any valuable purposes, if religion reach no farther than the head, and proceed not to the heart : It will have but little influence if there are none of the affections engaged. Notions of religion in the understanding, without any touch upon the passions, have been compared to the stars in a winter midnight, bright and shining, but very cold ; or

rather to the meteor, which is called a shooting-star, which vanishes quickly and is lost in darkness.

Suppose we are convinced by calm reasoning of the being of a God, of the duties which we owe our Creator, of his government of the world, and of his final judgment; suppose we are led into a demonstration or evident proof, that we are guilty creatures, having broken the laws of God, and that there is no salvation for us, but in and by a Mediator; suppose we are really convinced in our judgment, that there is a heaven or a hell, that waits our departure from this world; that we must die shortly, and that we are for ever miserable without pardoning mercy, and sanctifying grace; all this is valuable in its kind, and is necessary in order to salvation: But if all this knowledge make no impression on the affections, it is not likely to abide with us, nor to do us much good: Knowledge wears off the mind, if never used. Cold affecting notions, will have no powerful influence to reform our lives. Every new scene of business or pleasure brushes off these thoughts of religion from our souls, where they have not been let to the heart, nor possessed the passions: They vanish like the morning dew, or like an early cloud that passes away; Hosea . 4.

It is one great end and design of the passions, to fix the attention strongly upon the objects of them, to settle the thoughts with such intenseness and continuance on that which raises them, at they are not easily taken off. What we fear or desire, what we love and hope for, what we lament or rejoice in, will seize and busy our minds, and take them up perpetually, notwithstanding the importunities of other businesses or cares: The passions are supremely importunate, and will be heard. Now if the passions are strongly engaged for God, the world will have but little power to call off the heart from religion.

Suppose two preachers were desired to minister to the same auditory, on a day of fasting or praise, and on the same subject. One of them has all the beauty, force and skill of clear and calm reasoning; the other not only instructs well, but powerfully moves the affections with sacred oratory: Which of these two will best secure the attention of the people, and guard them from drowsiness or wandering? Surely he that touches the heart will seize the eyes and the ears, and all the powers; while he that merely endeavours to inform the head, will find many wandering eyes, and some sleepers.

Suppose two persons have heard the same discourse from the pulpit, which was both rational and pathetic. One of them is pleased with the fine reasoning of the preacher, and hath his judgment convinced of the necessity and importance of the duty which he is exhorted to practise, and goes no further; the other hath not only felt the very same conviction of his understanding by force of

divine love : it was faith rising high in the hope of a *better resurrection*. A naked and simple belief of things unseen, would scarce have wrought these amazing effects in human nature, without some warm and joyful efforts of the affections of hope and love.

Behold the hero of the gospel St. Paul, that little contemptible figure of a man, bearing down all opposition before him in his sacred course of zeal and duty. Under this influence he can triumph over all the formidable things of nature, and the terrors of this world ; Rom. viii. 35. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Who shall divide our hearts from him ? Who shall make us weary of his service, or tempt us away from the faith and obedience of his gospel ; Shall tribulation, shall distress, shall persecution, shall famine or nakedness, or peril, or sword. As it was written of the saints in former ages, so shall it be fulfilled again in our age, for thy sake we can bear killing all the day long: the sheep of Christ can stand the axe, or the knife of slaughter: In all these things we are more than conquerors, through the grace of Christ that hath loved us. Every holy martyr hath made it appear, that love is stronger than prisons, or death: It hath its flames that are superior to common fire, and can overcome all the terrors of men.*

When this divine love and hope have possessed the spirit, what poor and paltry things are all the allurements of flesh and sense ? How feeble and insufficient are all the gay and glittering appearances of nature in this world, all the flatteries of pride and sensuality, to draw the heart away from God ? The holy soul can boldly withstand all the enticements of sin, when divine grace hath seized the affections, and got possession of those sprightly and active powers. What the nerves and spirits are to animal nature, the same thing are the passions to the soul : They are its very nerves and spirits, its most vigorous and unwearied springs of action, both in the zealous discharge of every duty, and the firm resistance of every temptation to sin. These active springs set all nature to work in the affairs of grace.

The sanctified affections are so great a part of the new creature, that the very graces of the holy Spirit are called by their names. What is divine love, religious fear, and heavenly hope ? What is a sacred contempt and disdain of sensual vanities, and an immortal aversion to sin, and utter abhorrence of it ? What are holy desires, penitent sorrows, and spiritual joys ? What is all this blessed catalogue of the fruits of the spirit, but the passions of nature refined and renewed by grace.

It is the influence of religion on the passions, that doth in a great measure make the difference between the true christian, and the mere outward professor : The mere professor may know as much of the doctrines of religion, and of the duties of it

as the most religious man ; but he doth not fear and love, and desire and hope, and mourn and rejoice, as the true christian doth. If a bare rational knowledge of divine things were sufficient to make a true disciple of Christ, the greatest student in divinity, and especially, the sharpest critic in scripture, would be the best christian : But it is not always found so ; critics and students, rich in knowledge, may have cold hearts, and lie dead in a state of sin.

IV. " The practices of religion are not only rendered easy, by having the affections employed in it, but they become pleasant and delightful, and every sin is more painful to the soul where the passions are engaged for God." If the christian be employed in holy meditation, how does the soul that loves God travel with delight over the various scenes of his glory, in the lower and the upper worlds ! How does he dwell upon the majesty and the mercy of his heavenly Father ; upon the excellencies of Christ the Saviour, upon his offices and his dignities from day to day ! How pleasurably doth the mind diffuse itself in contemplation upon his pre-existent state when he dwelt in the Father's bosom : his condescending incarnation and coming into flesh and blood, the labours and sorrows of his life, the anguish and amazing love of his death, the glory of his resurrection, the honours paid him at his ascent to the throne of God in heaven, the efficacy of his intercession, and the joyful and dreadful appearance of the Great Judge, when he shall come in the clouds of heaven to *be admired of his saints*, and to give vengeance and destruction to those who have ridiculed and rejected the gospel of his grace ? How are the thoughts fixed on the sacred theme, without an inclination to rove and go astray ? How are the powers of imagination devoutly employed, when the holy passions are roused into activity, when our fear, our hope, our love, our joy, are all in happy exercise ? But if these are absent, and we are left merely to rational enforcements of duty on the mind, without love or affection in the heart, with what a cold indifference do we set about the work ! How fluttering are our thoughts ? How wandering are our hearts ! And every flying fancy calls us away, and scatters our powers among a thousand vanities.

I might instance in the duty of prayer or praise, when the love of the heart flames out into holy desires, how ready and eager is the soul to seek the Lord ! Not the shadows and silence of the midnight, not the early business and cares of the morning ; can withhold the good man from calling upon his God. *With my soul have I desired thee in the night, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early ; Isa. xxvi. 9. and I prevented the dawning of the morning and cried to the Lord ; Psal. cxix. 147.* Or if the heart be warmed with a sense of divine mercy, and kindled into religious joy, how gloriously does the tongue break forth into

praises ! *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name : Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits ;* Psal. ciii. 1, 2. *Seven times a-day will I praise thee : My heart is fixed, O God my heart is fixed ; I will sing and give praise : Awake, my tongue, my glory, awake to the joyful work ;* Psa. lvii. 7, 8.

While the pious affections are duly engaged in prayer, even a common christian is enabled to make divine work of it : Our minds never want matter, nor our tongues expression. Sense and language are very much at the call of the devout passions, where the mind is tolerably furnished with the principles of religion ; and then the soul converses with its Maker with unknown delight. But when we are impelled by a mere precept commanding us to our knees, and conscience goads us on as it were to the task and drudgery of prayer, without any devout affection, how cold is the heart ! How languid the worship ! How dry the mind ! How scanty the language ! The invention and the lips strive and labour, and all to little purpose. In such a case, I cannot but think that well-composed forms of devotion may be useful helps to awaken the drowsy powers, and to call up sleeping religion. But where these powers are awake and lively, such helps are less needful in our praying seasons.

The same experiment may be repeated in reading the word of God. How full of sweetness and holy pleasures are the discoveries and the promises of the bible, when devout affections are at work ! How sweet are the histories of Abraham and David, the prophecies of Isaiah, and the predictions that point to Christ ! How glorious the epistles of Peter and Paul ! How divinely pleasing is the gospel of John, and the dying discourses and prayer of our Saviour in the xiv. xv. xvi. and xvii. chapters of this evangelist ! How full of rapture and holy transport are the Psalms of David ! We enter into his spirit, and we feel his divine sentiments and joys. But what a deadness, what a dryness overspreads even the most delicious and heavenly parts of those divine writings ; what an insipid and tasteless thing is the gospel itself, when the holy passions are all asleep ! So it is in hearing sermons : When our sacred affections are awake, we dwell on the lips of the minister, as on the lips of an angel of God : Every sentence seems to come from heaven ; and even a feeble teacher, with all his infirmities at such a season, seems like a divine messenger, and raises your attention and delight. But the cause is within yourselves, the activity of your devout affections under the influences of divine grace.

Is not benevolence and kindness to our fellow-creatures, liberality to the poor, and especially to our fellow-christians, another part of our religion ? *Pure religion and undefiled—is this, to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction ;* James i.

27. *He that loves God must love his brother also*; 1 John iv. 21. But how can we fulfil the several duties of help and relief, defence and consolation to our brethren, if we do not indulge the warm and tender affections of pity, and sympathy and love? The bounty of the hands, even to the most distressed object, will be but scanty and small, if there be no compassion in the heart: But when we love our brethren for God's sake, and excite in our hearts all the friendly and compassionate affections towards the poor and the miserable, then covetousness and self-love lie down vanquished, and have no power to withhold the hand from a liberal distribution of blessings to those that are in need. Compassion melts the heart, and makes the hands flow with bounty and relief.

I might give other instances also of the same happy effect of holy passions, in the more difficult duties of religion, in mortification of most beloved sins, as well as in denying our most darling interests for the sake of Christ. "How sweet is it, saith St. Austin, under the power of divine love, how sweet is it to abstain from all the old, sweet and sinful delights of the flesh?" *Herein is our love to God manifested, that we keep his commandments; and none of his commands are grievous*; 1 John v. 3.

And as the duties of religion are fulfilled with unusual delight, so every sin becomes more painful to the heart, when the passions are divinely tinctured. The very dwelling of sinful principles in the heart, the working of unruly appetites and unholy inclinations, and the first motions of pride, and wantonness, and malice, and envy, and love of the world, are all very grievous to a soul whose affections are renewed and sanctified. Every compliance with temptation breaks in upon the sweet serenity and peace of the spirit, and gives it great disquietude. Read the case of the holy Psalmist and of St. Peter, after their folly. Thus it is in some measure with every sincere and lively christian; nor is the spirit ever at rest after any remarkable sin, till that sin hath been made bitter to the soul, and till the soul has made fresh and warm application to the throne of grace, by humble repentance and faith in the blood of sprinkling.

It is a known doctrine, both in the Jewish and christian church, that not only the pleasant, but the painful and uneasy passions of the heart are consecrated to divine purposes. Sorrow for sin, and deep mourning, teach us powerfully that *it is an evil and bitter thing to forsake the Lord our God*; and in this manner *our wickedness is appointed to correct us, and our backsliding to reprove us*; Jer. ii. 19. By grief of the soul, and *by the sadness of the countenance arising from it, Solomon tells us, the heart is made better*; Ec. vii. 3. When holy David began to be sorry for his sin, when he *watered his couch with his tears, when*

his eye was consumed with grief, and he roared by reason of the disquietness of his heart; Ps. vi. 3, 6, 7. he was then under the workings of recovering grace. When St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians made them sorry for their connivance at the incestuous iniquity of one of their members, he tells them, in his second letter, how necessary this sorrow was, this *godly sorrow, which worketh repentance* unto salvation: What a train of holy passions attended it! *What indignation* against sin, and the sinner! *What holy fear* of defilement by communion with such a crime, or the indulgence of it! *What vehement desire* after cleansing and forgiving grace! *What revenge* against such foul iniquity! *What zeal* to approve themselves clear before God and man! 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10, 11.

The blessed God *does not willingly afflict and grieve the children of men*; Lam. iii. 33. and he would not have made the sorrows and the bitter groans of repentance so necessary a part of the christian life, had he not known the painful passions of nature to have so happy an influence in the kingdom of his grace. By this anguish of the conscience, by these afflictions of the spirit, God carries on his own designs of mercy, and makes the soul *partaker of his holiness*; Heb. xii. 10.

V. To employ the passions for God, is to take a most powerful engine of mischief out of the hand of sin and Satan, and to reduce it to the obedience of Christ." It is the recovery of a considerable part of human nature out of dismal captivity and bondage. The passions are the warmest and strongest powers of the soul: They are the artillery whereby man wages war either for or against heaven. The passions by nature are devoted to the service of sin, and engaged on the devil's side in his wars against the Almighty, and they are charged with the seeds of impious fire and thunder: But when divine grace hath taken hold of them, and employed them on the side of God and religion, it is like seizing the cannon of the enemy from their old batteries, and planting them in new bulwarks, to make war upon the devil and all his army.

Fearful and impious work do the passions make when they are engaged on the side of the flesh, the world, and the devil. What bold contempt of God, and all that is holy! What unruly violence of love to vanity and sensual pleasure! What mad delight in sin! What impetuous desires of forbidden objects! What malice boils in the heart against our neighbour, upon every supposed injury! What wicked envy frets and rages in the soul at the welfare of others! What wrath, and indignation, and revenge, are continually ready to be in arms! And how do these hellish passions employ the tongue in slander and lies, and sometimes embroil the hands in mischief and blood! Now what a glorious victory is it to have the vicious affections en-

ely subdued, and the other powers of nature, which had been wrped by hell, seized and restrained, and consecrated to e God of heaven, and become instruments of holiness and peace !) have these engines of iniquity become happy mediums of oration and service to God, and of hourly benefits to men ! blessed and divine change ! O the sovereign power of con- rting grace !

VI. " I might add, in the next place, that when the pas- ns are sanctified and formed to a divine temper, it gives the spel of Christ credit and honour in the world, in that it can umph over the strongest powers of corrupt nature and subdue em to the service of God and religion." With what wicked)lence were the passions of Paul engaged against the cause of ristianity, when, to use his own expressions, *he was exceedingly id against the saints, compelled them to blaspheme, and perse- ted them to strange cities*; Acts xxvi. 11. When he *breathed t threatenings and slaughter* against the disciples of the Lord ; ts ix. 1. Now to have this man changed from a lion to a mb, from a persecutor to a preacher of the gospel ; to hear this an propagating that gospel with zeal, which he so lately en- avoured to destroy with fury, what divine honours this ent gave to the religion of Christ when it was but young the world ? And as there werheyultitudes of such instances in ose primitive days, so I hope they are not utterly wanting now.

There are, I hope, in our age, in this city, and even in is assembly, some christians that can bear sacred witness to e divine power of the gospel in this respect. One can say, how fond was I of vanity and sensual pleasure ? Regardless God, and thoughtless of religion, with an aversion to all that as virtuous and holy ? But, through the grace of God, the ject of my love is changed : I delight now in the things of od ; I love his word, his people, himself, and his Christ, above l things in the world."

Another can say, " I was greedy of money, and ambitious ' vain-glory." Another confesses, " I was fretful and quarrel- me ; I was malicious and envious ; I was wrathful and resent- g ; and my ungodly passions were ever ready to rise and riment against my fellow-creatures : But, now, through the fluence of grace, I find my chief ambition is to be a child of od, and to exceed others in holiness : I covet the riches of ace, and the benefits of the gospel, above all other treasures : ow I am angry at myself because of sin, and angry at sinners hen they dishonour God and my Saviour : I love my Lord aus, who hath procured forgiveness for me ; and I would love l men, and forgive them for Jesus's sake."

It is a public glory brought to the gospel of Christ, when ir devout and pious passions surmount all the carnal affections

of the heart; when the fear of God rises so high, and grows so strong in the soul, as to subdue and overcome all other fears: And if we fear God sincerely, we need fear nothing else. It is very honourable to Christ and his religion, when the love of God and of Jesus Christ, the Saviour, flames high above all other loves, and makes us forego and forget every thing which might be dear and valuable to us before, if it stands in competition with God, the supreme object of our love. When the christian can rejoice, and say "I love my father and my mother, my wife and children with as true and tender an affection as ever I did; but I love God, and my Redeemer, with a more sublime passion. Neither father nor mother, nor dear young children, nor the wife of the bosom, shall withhold me from my duty to God; and, through the aids of divine grace, I would be ready to offer myself, with all my interest in them, as a sacrifice to the love of Christ.

It is glorious indeed to see the devout passions so much transcend all other passions and appetites, all other fears, loves, and desires, as that they all melt away and vanish before the power of divine fear and divine love. To see all our fondest desires, and our warmest passions for creatures languish and sink, and lie under the present influences of devout affection, as the light of a candle vanishes and is lost in the midst of sun-beams, or as the noise of a shaking leaf, dies and is unheard in the midst of thunder: O happy souls, who have arrived at this sublime degree of christianity! Thither let our hearts aspire daily, and never cease our holy labours and prayers till we love, till we fear, till we desire God, in this glorious and intense degree.

VII. In the last place I add, "the sanctified passions render us so much the more conformable to the blessed Jesus, and fitter for his presence and enjoyment in heaven." As the Son of God put on our flesh and blood, so he assumed the various powers and properties of human nature, the appetites and passions of mankind: He endured hunger and thirst, he had fear and love, hope and joy; nor were the more troublesome affections of anger and sorrow left out of his constitution, but they were all innocent and holy; they were never tainted with sin as ours are; they had no corrupt mixtures to defile his soul. Our passions are like water with mud at the bottom; when they are moved, they too frequently raise the mud, and betray their impurity: But the passions of Christ were ever pure; like water from the clearest fountain in a glass of crystal, which, though it be never so much agitated, is still unpolluted.

These pathetic powers of his holy soul were ever engaged in the interest of religion, and employed for pious purposes. He loved God his Father with the most perfect and intense affection; and he let the world know, that he loved the Father;

John xiv. 31. He rejoiced in spirit, when he gave thanks to God; Luke x. 21. and when God hid his face from him, and forsook him, *his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death*; at. xxvi. 38. He was grieved and angry with the hypocrites and the blasphemers of his day, and *looked round upon them with wrath and holy indignation*; Mark iii. 5. How pathetic and vehement was his zeal for his Father's honour, when he scourged out the buyers and sellers from the temple? *The zeal of the use of God consumed and wasted his spirits*, as it is said; John ii. 17. He loved his church with most astonishing fervour, *his love was stronger than death*; Eph. v. 26. *And greater we hath no man than this, that one should lay down his life for another*; John xv. 13. How passionately did he mourn at his own foresight of the dismal distress of his enemies at Jerusalem? He looked upon the bloody city with tender compassion, *and wept over it*, with the tears of grief and love; Luke xix. 41. And what divine passions were exercised in his devout retirements, what holy fervours in the wilderness and upon midnight-mountains, is only known to God, and to ministering angels.

Thus it appears, that the more our affections are tinged with piety and goodness, and the warmer is their engagement in the things of God, the more nearly shall we imitate our glorious redeemer. O divine pattern, beyond all our imitation! But blessed are those who are the nearest copiers of it.

But you will enquire, "How will this exercise of devout passion fit us the more for the heavenly world?" Angels are not clothed with flesh and blood as we are, and the spirits of the departed saints have left this part of their nature behind them in the grave: What efforts of passion therefore can there be among the inhabitants of heaven? To this I answer, that though spirits departed, and angels can have no such ferments of animal nature, as go to make up those principles and powers, which we feel the passions in this mortal state, yet there is something akin to them, which may be called affections in the very nature of every intelligent creature: Spirits which have no relation to flesh and fear and hope, can love and desire, can rejoice and grieve, and that in strong and intense degrees; otherwise there would be no hell for the separate souls of the wicked, and for the punishment of devils; nor would there be a heaven for the reward of *the spirits of just men made perfect*: There cannot be a heaven without pleasure, nor a hell without grief and anguish: Since therefore there is, and must be something of pure affection in the separate spirits that bears a correspondence with our passions in this mortal state, we may be well assured that the more these passions are refined and sanctified, and the more they are engaged about divine objects, in a proper manner, according to the will of God, we shall thereby acquire a greater meetness for the

business and blessedness of heaven, and be better prepared for the exercise of those more spiritual affections which belong to the saints departed, and to the happy inhabitants of the intellectual world.

The holy apostle teaches us this doctrine in that sweet period of scripture; 1 Pet. i. 3, 6, 8. When we are *begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, therein we greatly rejoice*; and the joy surmounts all our present heaviness, and bears us in conquest and triumph through our *manifold temptations*: It gives us a transporting view of praise, honour and glory at the appearance of our Lord Jesus; *whom having not seen we love: in whom though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory*; or as it is in the original, with unspeakable and glorified joy. You see here that the three blessed affections of hope, love and joy, bring the soul to the confines of the heavenly world, set him as it were at the gates of paradise, fill the heart with those divine sensations which are near a-kin to the joys of glorified spirits. Thus, by the exercise of the holy passions in a sublime degree, *we are come to the spirits of the just made perfect, and almost admitted into the glorious presence of Jesus, our adored Mediator*; Heb. xii. 23, 24. Let us awake, let us arise, let us *shake ourselves out of the dust of this earth, and dress our souls in these beautiful garments*: Let us long and breathe after these sacred sensations of refined pleasure, to which the church itself is too much a stranger, in our degenerate times. These are fair emblems and sweet foretastes of those unknown "pleasures which flow from the right-hand of God without ceasing, and run, like rivers, an everlasting course, through all the ages of eternity"; Ps. xvi. 13.

Meditation.—"How glad am I to find that not only my understanding and my will, but that all my passions may be made serviceable to God and religion, to my noblest designs, and my eternal interest! I am sure some of them have had an unhappy influence to lead me astray from my God, and my duty, and I am greatly pleased to hear that they are capable of being reduced to the service of my Maker, and become instruments of holiness and peace. Descend, O divine Spirit, descend into my heart! Take hold of these active and sprightly powers of my nature, and bind them to thy eternal service. Awaken my fear of the majesty and the justice of God, that I may seek earnestly what I shall do to please him, and how I may obtain his favour: And let my fear be constant and restless till my feet are led into the paths of salvation, and I feel the constraining power of divine love.

"Let my devout passions be ever awake and lively when I hear the things of God spoken, or when I read of the momentous

concerns of religion, and a life to come. Then the sacred truths and duties of christianity shall be impressed deep on my memory, and written there as with a pen of diamond, never to be blotted out. O may the warm passions melt my soul to tenderness, and make me susceptible of every holy impression! May this heart of mine, this table of stone, be softened by devout affection, till all the necessary and important parts of religion are written there in lasting characters! May my heart, O Lord, receive the stamp of thy gospel with all its sacred lineaments, till I am become a new creature, transformed into the image of the Son of God?

“How easy will all the duties of holiness become, and all my temptations to sin how weak and ineffectual, if the passionate powers of my nature are warmly engaged for God? “How delightful and pleasant shall I then find even the difficult practices of religion! How hateful will every sin be in my eyes, and how painful to my heart, when divine love as a sovereign has taken possession of it, and set all the train of affections at work there in its own service! No more shall I complain of weariness, or be tired of religious worship: I shall say in my heart no more, *when will the sabbath be over?* Nor cut short my prayers and meditations, to gratify the flesh and obey its corrupt influence. If I am winged with holy passion I shall climb over mountains of difficulty in my way to heaven, or remove hills of temptation that obstruct my course: Divine love, as well as faith, can remove mountains.

“O how happy shall I be when all my passions are sanctified. They have been, and I mourn to speak it, they have been wretched engines of mischief in the hand of sin and Satan: They have defiled my soul shamefully; they have broken the law of my God; they have abused his grace and his gospel, dishonoured my Saviour, and grieved his holy Spirit. When shall these powers of my nature be rescued from their sinful slavery, and be devoted to purposes divine and heavenly? O that my fear and my love, my anger, and my desire, my grief and my joy, were all pointed to their proper objects, that they might never more break out in an unruly manner to dishonour God, or to awaken sharp anguish in my own conscience! I would watch, I would pray, I would labour, and wrestle day and night against the body of sin that dwells in me. O for the sovereign influence of almighty grace, to correct all the disorders of my soul, and to turn every passion of my nature into a principle of holiness! Let the blessed gospel of Christ obtain this triumph over me: Let the gospel subdue these rebellious powers to the obedience of my Lord and Saviour: May the gospel have the glory of so divine a change!

“ Come, blessed Saviour, set thy holy example before me, in a more illustrious and transforming light: Let all the devout passions of zeal and love, which reigned in thy heart, reign also in mine: O that I might copy out the wonders of thy zeal for the honour of God, and thy love to the race of man! With what a divine vehemence were thy holy affections engaged in worship! But alas, how cold are all my attempts of devotion! Kindle, O Jesus, the sacred fire within me: Let it melt down my heart, and mould me into thy likeness. Let my soul be made up of divine love, as a happy preparative for the joys of heaven, and the everlasting presence of God and my Saviour.”
Amen.

DISCOURSE IV.

Inferences from the Usefulness of the Passions.

THE last discourse has informed us, that the Passions are not useless things, even in the important affairs of religion and godliness. We have seen how many and glorious are the advantages that we may derive from the right use of the affections in the christian life. Let us not suffer so momentous a theme to pass away, without drawing some inferences or remarks from it.

Remark I. May the passions of our nature be made so serviceable to the interests of our religion, then “surely the doctrine of the stoics is a very unreasonable opinion, for it teaches us to suppress all our passions entirely, and if possible, to root them out of our natures.” It is evident from what we have heard, that our pursuit of the important things of religion, in this present state, would be very faint and cold, and feeble, if it were not animated by some of these vigorous principles, these affectionate powers and sensations: And shall we abandon and destroy all these assistants to piety and goodness, which are wrought into the very frame of our beings?

It is granted, that our passions in this fallen state have their unhappy share of the general corruption of our nature: It is granted they are sometimes made the mischievous incentives to vice, and lead us astray from the path of holiness; and, if they could never be reformed, they ought to be rooted out. But when they are once sanctified by a touch of the finger of God, and tinctured with a savour of piety, they become very pleasant and powerful springs of duty, both to God and man.

A holy fear of the great God our Creator, and a solicitous concern what shall become of us when we die, is the first and most general spring of religion: This wakens us to enquire “what we must do to please the God that made us.” When we arrive at some comfortable hope of our acceptance with God, then divine love promotes our piety and virtue: Then religion works within us by nobler principles, and it is advanced to higher degrees, than a mere principle of fear could raise it: All the passions of the man are subject to the government of holy love, and are employed by it for heavenly purposes. When we love God supremely, we shall love men also, who are *made after the image of God*: From a due benevolence to men, spring a thousand words and deeds of charity and pity, and godlike goodness.

When our refined affections work in this manner toward God and men, we come by degrees to delight in all that is holy; we arrive at the true taste of religious pleasures, and make near approaches to the joys of the upper world, where holiness and pleasure are perfect and everlasting.

Thus it may be said, that after some general foundations laid in the knowledge of God and ourselves, "Religion begins in fear, it is carried on by love, and it ends in joy." Erroneous and unhappy is that philosophy that would banish these affections from human nature, which have so powerful an influence on the religious life, and assist our preparation for death and heaven.

II. "How happily has the blessed God suited his various revelations in scripture to the powers of our nature?" How well are they fitted to work upon our affections, and to engage those active powers of the soul in the interests of religion and godliness! God himself, by his own methods of address to men, from one end of the scripture to the other, proves the truth of this discourse, and the advantage of the passions in things of religion. If God speaks of himself, how bright are the displays of his majesty and grandeur, to awaken our reverence and religious fear? He is *the holy one that inhabits eternity*, who created all things by his word, *the Lord of lords, and the King of kings*: He speaks and the earth trembles, and *the pillars of heaven are astonished at his reproof*; Job ix. 6. xxvi. 11. He is a God *fearful or tremendous* even in his praises; Exod. xv. 11. How surprising are the discoveries of his power and knowledge, to raise our wonder! He ranks the stars in their order, and *calls them all by their names, and not one fails to appear at his call*, Ps. cxlvii. 4. His eye surveys all the creation, and *knows the thoughts of the heart afar off*; Ps. cxxxix. 2. *He takes up the Isles as a little thing*; Is. xl. 15. *He touches the mountains and they smoke*; Ps. civ. 32. *Who can stand before him, or lift up the hand against him and prosper?*

If he manifest the riches of his mercy and goodness, how is the divine language suited to strike upon all the springs of our hope and love, and to allure our hearts to him? *How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God?* Ps. xxxvi. 7. *In his favour is life, and his love is better than life*; Ps. lxxiii. 3. He has magnified his love towards us, and the exceeding riches of his grace, that *while we were enemies and rebels, he sent his Son to die, in order to redeem us from death.*

If he reveal to us Christ Jesus, his beloved Son, in what a glorious light does he place him before our eyes, to command our veneration and honour, our faith and our fervent affection? *He is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person*; Heb. i. 3. *He was with God before the foundation of the world, for by him the worlds were created*, John i. 3. He

as the man in whom *dwells the fulness of the godhead bodily*; Col. ii. 9. He is *God manifest in the flesh*; Tim. iii. 16. He came down from the Father's bosom, *not to condemn the world, but to expose his own life and blood for our sakes, to make his soul an offering for our sins*, and to sustain unknown anguish and sorrows, in the room and stead of such rebels as we are.

If he opens heaven in the gospel, and brings *life and immortality to light*, what *thrones of glory*, what *crowns of righteousness* does he set before us? What mansions of paradise, what *ivers of pleasure* flowing from the throne of God, what rich fruits of the tree of life, what blissful visions in the presence of God and Christ, what blessed society of angels and holy souls are described, as the enjoyments of this heaven, on purpose to draw out our strongest desires towards it, and raise our joyful hope, and our warmest zeal in the pursuit of it!

When he gives us a view of hell, how dreadfully are the executions of divine wrath described there? What a gnawing worm in the conscience *that never dies*, what a *fire that is never quenched*? What burning lakes of *fire and brimstone*, kindled by the breath of an angry God? What troops of devils and damned spirits must be our companions there, and *the smoke of their torment ascending for ever and ever*? Rev. xiv. 11. How happily are these divine descriptions suited to awaken us out of security, and to excite us to passion of fear in the highest degree, that *knowing the terrors of the Lord*, we may stir up all our powers to *flee from the wrath to come*, and seek reconciliation to God by the blood of Christ.

If sin be mentioned in scripture, in what odious colours is it set before us! It was sin that ruined our first parents, and drove them out of paradise, and spread death and misery through all this lower world: It is the *unrighteousness of men* that has awakened and *revealed the wrath of God*, in all the terrible instances of it, from the ancient apostacy and fall of angels in heaven, to the final destruction of this world by fire, and the punishment of men, and devils in hell for ever: And all this that sin might appear exceeding sinful, and raise in us the highest hatred, and utmost aversion.

The great and blessed God, who formed us at first, perfectly knows our frame; he is well acquainted with all the powers and passions of human nature, and the design and use of them all: And therefore when he wrote these holy messages to us by his apostles and his prophets, he does not only reveal things to our understandings, which reason could not find out, and then leaves us to make the best of them; but he warmly and powerfully addresses himself to the affectionate principles within us, in order to make the discoveries of his grace pierce deeper into our souls, that he might recover us from our guilt and misery, and persuade us to partake of his salvation.

III. We may learn from this discourse, "how much it is the business of a minister of the gospel, to engage the affections of his hearers, and to bring them over to the service of God and religion." It is granted that the first work is to inform the understanding, to teach mankind what they are to believe concerning the great God, and what duties they owe to him. To this end the preacher must not only draw his doctrines from the light of nature, but from the word of God, and bring them down to the capacities of his hearers. It is his constant business to explain the word of God to men, to propose the naked truth with the strongest reasons to support it : He must endeavour to strike light into the mind, and convince the reason and judgment of men ; he must make it appear that they are guilty before God, and that there is no way of relief or hope, but in and by Jesus, the great Mediator, and thus lead sinful and perishing men into the knowledge and faith of Christ, as an all-sufficient Saviour : All this is a necessary and indispensable part of his work ; but it is not the whole of it. When the understanding is enlightened, the passions must also be addressed ; for God has wrought these powers into human nature, that they might be the vital and vigorous springs of actions and duties.

If the judgment be never so much convinced, yet while the affections remained unmoved, the work of religion will be begun with difficulty, and will drive on but very heavily. This the prophets and the apostles well knew ; and the great God, who employed them, knew it too, and therefore he sent them armed with the powers of natural and divine oratory, to reach the inmost affections, to penetrate the heart, and to raise holy commotions in the very centre of the soul. What mean all the promises of the gospel, but to work upon our hope, and to raise our highest expectations ? What means the dreadful language of so many severe threatenings, but to shake us out of our security, and to rouse our fears ? If there had been no such principles as hope and fear in man, I am persuaded there would scarce have been any such things as promises and threatenings in the book of God. The word of the Lord is compared to a fire and a hammer ; Jer. xxiii. 29. *Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces ?* And it ought to be delivered and pronounced by the preachers of it, in such a manner, as may break the rocky heart of stubborn sinners, as may fright them from their beloved iniquities, by the terror of everlasting burnings.

The holy scripture is a cabinet of divine curiosities, full of admirable allurements to invite and entertain awakened minds : It should be so happily unfolded and displayed by the preachers of it, as to represent, in a noble manner, the amazing grace and love of God, and the blessings of the gospel ; and that with

ch a holy fervour, as to light up a divine flame of desire, hope and love, in the souls of all that hear it. To what purpose were the fancies of the holy writers enriched, from heaven, with so bright and various a treasure of sacred images, but to raise the devout passions of their readers, by flashing upon their imagination with divine light? Their words are sun-beams, that not only diffuse a sacred illumination around the eye of the soul, but kindle the heart into life and zeal. To what end doth all the pomp of oratory display itself in their writings? To what end do they use all the arts of trope and figure, all the beautiful and striking and the terrible colours that nature can afford, and that metaphor can borrow? Is it not all with a design to strike the mind of man in its most passionate powers, and spread vital religion through the inmost recesses of the heart?

Let the ministers of the word, who are zealous for the honour of God, for the glory of Christ, and for the success of their labours, read the writings of the holy prophets night and day, and make them their pattern, transferring the beauties of the law to the ministry of the gospel. The prophets do not merely tell us in a dry and cold manner, that sin is an evil thing, but they terribly pronounce the thunder of the wrath of God against it, and pour down his vengeance on the heads of guilty rebels, to work upon our fear, to affright us from sin, and hasten us to fly to the arms of divine mercy. Nor do they merely say to us, that God is merciful; but in a most delightful and inviting manner, they display the boundless mercies of God, and the workings of his bowels of compassion, in all the pathetic language of tenderness, as though they were made of flesh and blood as we are.

When our blessed Lord himself came down on earth, to become a preacher of his Father's wrath and mercy, what eternal rebukes does he pronounce against hypocrites and impenitent wretches? How gently does he invite the *wearied and heavy laden* sinners to come to him that they may find rest? Mat. xi. 21. How liberally does he unfold the gates of his Father's mercy, and that he would admit even murderers, and adulterers, thieves and blasphemers, that sinners of the largest size may enter in and be partakers of the same salvation. How happily does St. Paul imitate his blessed Master! *Knowing the terrors of the Lord, he persuaded men, and beseeches them in the most endearing language, in Christ's name, to be reconciled to God; 2 Cor. v. 11, 18—20.* In what pathetic language doth he set before us the glorious love of God, contriving the recovery of fallen men, and providing grace for them in Christ Jesus, before the world began; and in saving them by such a surprising method of mingled severity and mercy, he death and agonies of his most beloved Son! And all this on purpose to melt or soften our affections into repentance, love, and gratitude! How wonderfully do the sacred writers attack the

passions on all sides, *if by any means they may save a soul from hell?* Happy preachers, who approach this divine pattern!

Can any of us now content ourselves to bring cold and languid discourses into the pulpit, with this bible under our hands? Will not all the sacred fervors of these inspired preachers reproach us to our faces, while we read and explain their sermons! Shall we go on to affect a calm and stupid politeness of phrase, in the very face of these warm and heavenly orators? Can we be content any longer to be the cold and lifeless rehearsers of the great and glorious things of our religion? Can we go on to speak to perishing sinners, who lie drowsy and slumbering on the brink of hell, in so soft, so calm and gentle a manner, as though we were afraid to awaken them? What shall we say to these things? Does divine love send dreaming preachers to call dead sinners to life? Preachers that are content to leave their hearers asleep on the precipice of eternal destruction? Have they no such thing as passion belongs to them? Have they no pity? Have they no fear? Have they no sense of the worth of souls? Have they no springs of affection within them? Or do they think their hearers have none? Or is passion so vile a power, that it must be all devoted to things of flesh and sense, and must never be applied to objects divine and heavenly? Who taught any of us this lazy and drowsy practice? Did God or his prophets, did Christ or his apostles, instruct us in this modish art of still life, this lethargy of preaching, as it has been called by a late writer? Did the great God ever appoint statues for his ambassadors, to invite sinners to his mercy? Words of grace, written upon brass or marble, would do the work almost as well. Where the preachers become stone, no wonder if the hearers are moveless: But let the ministers of the living world, who address men upon matters of infinite concernment, shew, if possible, that they are infinitely concerned about them. This leads my thoughts to the next remark.

IV. "How kindly has the grace and wisdom of God dealt with us, in appointing men of like passions with ourselves, to become his ministers and our teachers in the things of religion!" Men, who have the same natural affections, who can feel within themselves all the train of devout passions, and express it in their holy ministrations! Men, who are subject to the same sins and follies, and are capable of the same religious fear, and penitent sorrow! Men who stand in need of the same salvation, and must be trained up to heaven, by the exercise of the same faith, and love, and hope.

If angels had been made the only messengers of the gospel, angels, who have no flesh and blood, no communion in the same animal nature, no share of our fears and sorrows, no interest in the same redeeming mercy and pardon, they could not

have expressed all the same passions, nor given us such an example of them in themselves. But a minister of the word, taken from among men, has been in a sinful state, and is now become a sincere christian, or he should be so. He is supposed to have his own soul filled with love to God; he has felt his own fears awakened by the terrors of the Lord, and the threatenings of eternal misery; he has found his trembling soul encouraged to hope by the rich promises of grace; he has felt his own hatred against sin, his delight raised by the views and expectations of the favour of God, and eternal happiness in his presence. How well is such a teacher suited to set the terrors of hell, the evil of sin, and the riches of divine grace, in Christ Jesus, before the eyes of sinful men, who have the same natural passions within himself; and to turn these affectionate powers of his hearers to a religious channel, by representing these awful objects in a pathetic manner?

The preacher should be an example to the hearers, and when he preaches with most power and success. It is a well known saying, "If you would draw out my tears, you must first weep yourself." How cold and dull, and unaffected with divine things, is mankind by nature! How careless and dolent is a whole assembly, when the preacher appears like a lifeless engine, pronouncing words of law or grace! When he speaks of divine things, in such a dry, in such a cold and formal manner, as though they had no influence on his own heart! When the words freeze upon his lips, the hearts of hearers are freezing also: But where we find devout affection mingled with solid argument in the discourse, there the words of the preacher seem to speak light and life at once, and he helps to communicate the holy passion all around him by feeling first himself.

And here I am sure, we, who are honoured with this sacred employment, have reason to examine our hearts, to reflect on our indolence, our lifeless conduct, and our cold labours at the pulpit; and mourn to think how imperfectly, and how effectually we perform the awful work of the ministry. And all our own affections still be so unraised and unmoved, while we speak of the great and momentous things of God, and Christ and religion, of death and judgment, of heaven and hell? Shall we always preach with such a deadness of spirit, such a shameful absence of divine fervor? May the blessed God forgive your preacher, and may you forgive him; and may sovereign grace raise a warm flame of vital religion in his heart, and communicate it to all your souls!

V. If the passions are so useful in the solemn affairs of religion, "there is yet further occasion to admire the wisdom and grace of God, that he has appointed several such institutions;

or parts of worship to belong to our holy religion, as are suited to work upon our senses, and thereby to awaken pious passions within us ?

Besides the voice of public prayer, and the affectionate speech and language of preaching the gospel, we are also taught and exhorted to sing the praises of God with holy melody. What a multitude of exhortations are found in the book of Psalms, to *make a joyful noise unto the Lord*, and to sing new songs before him in the kingdom of the Messiah. The advice of St. Paul in the New Testament, echoes to the harp of David, and calls upon us to *speak* to one another, as well as to ourselves, *in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs*, and to sing and make *melody with grace in our hearts to the Lord* ; Eph. v. 19. and Col. iii. 15. St. James gives the same encouragement: *If any be merry*, or chearful, let this passion of joy express itself in a devout manner, by singing psalms ; James v. 18. How happily suited is this ordinance to give a loose to the devout soul in its pious and chearful affections ? What a variety of sanctified desires, and hopes and joys, may exert themselves in this religious practice, may kindle the souls of christians into holy fervor, may raise them near to the gates of heaven, and the harmony of the blessed inhabitants there ? Nor are pious sorrows utterly excluded from this ordinance : There are tunes and songs of mournful melody to solace the humble penitent, and to give a sweetness to his tears.

And besides all this, there are the two glorious and sacred ordinances of baptism and the Lord's-supper, wherein divine things are exhibited to us in a sensible manner by figures and emblems which are designed to impress animal nature, and by the eyes to awaken the passions of the heart. How proper an emblem is *baptism* to represent our being washed in the blood of Christ ? and the pouring out of water on the face or head, how well is it suited to represent the pouring out of the Spirit of God on men, and by this means to awaken the holy affections of hope and joy ? How happily is the *Lord's-supper* contrived by divine wisdom, to represent the death and love of our blessed Saviour, and the benefits that we derive from his sufferings ? Jesus Christ crucified is *evidently set forth before our eyes* ; Gal. iii. 1. He is represented even in his bleeding and dying love, while the bread is broken, and the wine poured out before us. O how should we loose the springs of pious passion at such a season ! How should our love to our Redeemer kindle and rise high at the sight of the sufferings of the Son of God, who took our flesh and blood, that he might be capable of dying ! that his flesh might be torn, and cut and bruised, that his blood might be spilled for our sakes, that he might bear such agonies as belonged to sinful creatures, with a gracious design to deliver us from

misery and everlasting death. For ever blessed be the name of Jesus, who has suffered such pangs and sorrows in our stead; and blessed be his wisdom and grace, who has appointed the continual repetition of such an ordinance, such a lively memorial of his dying love, to touch all the springs of religious affection within us.

VI. Since the passions of human nature have so considerable an influence in matters of religion, then we justly infer that youth is the proper time to set about the important work of religion, when the passions are warm and lively, and active. After we have been well instructed in the principles of christianity, if we can but engage these sprightly powers of our natures, betimes, on the side of God and godliness, we lay a happy foundation for the practice of piety all our lives. It is of admirable and unknown advantage, to have all the passions of the heart tinged deep with heaven and religion in our early days. By this means virtue and piety will be fixed and rooted in the soul; it will stand the blasts of violent temptation, and bring forth the living fruits of holiness through the following years. We shall be better prepared to combat every opposition; we shall be better secured against the snares that beset our youth; we shall resist the gay allurements of the world, and the flattering vanities that attack our senses and our souls in this dangerous season of life. It is the great cunning and the design of the devil and the world to work upon the warm passions of youth, to engage them in the service of sin and folly: Happy are those who are possessed of a divine antidote against this poison! who have their passions all watchful and armed, ready to resist the assaults of hell, and to disappoint every attack that is made on virtue and religion!

VII. Is there so much advantage to be expected from the passions in the practice of religion? Then "how much do we lose both of the profit and the pleasure of religion, for want of the engagement of our passions therein!" Therefore it is that virtue and godliness seem to carry with them so dull and heavy an aspect in the world; therefore they appear so little inviting, because there are so few christians, in this degenerate age, that have these affectionate powers of the soul deeply tinged with the things of God. We live at a poor, low, cold rate, when we only talk of christianity as a matter of dispute, and practise the outward devoirs and ceremonies of it, as a matter of custom and form, while the heart and the passions of it have little share in our christianity. If our love and desire, our hope and our joy, are all laid out on the things of sense and time, and we leave only a few cold reasonings to be employed in the most awful and sublime things of God, and heaven and eternity, it is no wonder we find so little of the pleasure of godliness, and that religion

gains so little reputation, and so few followers. O what blessed lives did the primitive disciples of Christ enjoy! What divine satisfaction, what heavenly glory, what convincing power attended their practice, when their whole souls, with all their affections, were devoted to God and Christ, and engaged in the affairs of the upper world! They lived on earth like the children of heaven, and brought a foretaste of the pleasures of the upper world, into these lower regions. O when shall these holy seasons return again? When shall the noble principles of the christian faith animate all the powers of nature, and make us live as becomes the followers and the worshippers of the holy Jesus.

Meditation.—“ Many and useful are the lessons, which I have now learned from the happy influence of the passions, in the important affairs of my salvation. Blessed be God that I was not born in heathenism, and left merely to the teachings of the philosophers. Even the Stoics, who were some of the best of them, deprive us of all the advantage of pious affections, and all the pleasurable sensations that may be derived from religion; while they teach us to root the passions, if possible, out of our natures. My soul shall mourn in secret for my sins, and be ashamed of my follies: My heart shall fear and love the Lord my God, and rejoice and hope in Jesus my Saviour: My spirit with all its warmest affections are thine, O my God, for ever and ever!

“ Let all the sects of philosophy hide their heads, and lie silent; give me the bible, where God himself speaks to me by his prophets and apostles: How divinely excellent are their writings! With what sovereign influence do they address my fear and my hope, by the discoveries of a hell and a heaven! How powerfully do they awaken my repentance for past sins, and melt my soul into holy sorrow! In what an illustrious light do they set the majesty of the blessed God, and command my humble adoration! How do they display the wonders of his wisdom, and the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus, to attract all my powers of desire and love! What a blessed foundation have the scriptures laid for an infinite variety of devout inferences and pathetic meditations, suited to my own case? There I find the divine truths that can relieve my soul under every distress; and there I learn the affectionate and devout method of applying them. In every needful hour I will go to the book of God: God and his holy book are my life, and my exceeding joy: Let my soul abide and live upon the divine or awful variety and transporting objects, which are set before me in those sacred pages. Let me be taught with sacred skill to spread abroad my thoughts on the right-hand and on the left, and to expatiate on these holy and heavenly themes: They are fountains of life, and every stream flows with

sliness and consolation. O may all my affections be under the command and influence of these sacred writings: and while they give me intense delight, let them animate me to uncommon zeal in the practice of every duty!

“And why should not our ministers in their labours of the sanctuary, imitate their inspired predecessors, the apostles and the prophets, in raising the pious passions of all that hear them? Why should they not talk to men in such warm and pathetic language as God himself uses? Doth not the great God, the author of our nature, know what methods are most effectual to fill our hearts with divine sentiments, to draw us near to himself, and prepare us for heaven? Has he condescended to give us so many glorious patterns of preaching in his word, and shall we all that are employed in the divine work copy out the spirit and fervor, the life and power of these inspired examples! O may this dull and heavy heart of mine ever enjoy the happiness of a fervent and lively ministry, that may not only enlighten my understanding, but warm my heart!

And since God has ordained that I should be instructed in divine things by men of like passions with myself, may those whom providence has appointed to instruct me, be also examples of pious affection; that while I see their hearts filled with religious fear and holy love, and joy in the Lord, I may also be smitten with the same religious passions, may catch the holy fire, and find in the train of sprightly and devout sensations conveyed to the very centre of my soul!

“Blessed be the wisdom and grace of my God, that has blessed sensible signs and emblems to the articles of the christian faith. Let me remember, that I was washed with water in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit; and let me be ever jealous, lest I defile myself again: And when I attend the sacred institution of the supper, let all the springs of pious passion be let loose, while I view the Son of God suffering for my sins: Let me feel the meltings of holy sorrow, and the highest and strongest efforts of gratitude and love to that glorious and divine person who gave himself to death for me.

“Have I heard that youth is a proper season for lively religion, because the passions of nature are then vigorous; Lord, sanctify all my affectionate powers in this season of youth, and sanctify them to thyself. Prevent the influence of the wicked world by the early impressions of thy grace, that I may resist the vain allurements of flesh and sense, by having those sprightly powers of nature engaged first on the side of religion. Or if my years of youth have enjoyed this rich and divine favour, I would remember the early loving-kindness of my God, and praise his name in my advanced years with joy and thankfulness.”

“ Grant, O Lord, that I may never lose the pleasure of religion, by suffering my affections to grow cold and languid. Quicken this lifeless spirit of mine by daily influences from above; Shine upon my soul, O Sun of Righteousness; awaken my drowsy powers to active piety and zeal, and let all my passions conspire with my reasoning faculties to promote the interests of religion in my own heart and life, and to diffuse the savour of godliness all around me. *Amen.*”

DISCOURSE V.

The Abuse of the Passions in Religion.

In two last discourses, we learned the use of the passions of religion, and what advantages may be expected from them, in the christian life : We proceed now to the fourth ; and that is, to enquire into the abuse of the passions ; when our concerns, or when the exercise of our affections, in the service of God, may be pronounced irregular, and in what respects they should be limited and restrained, and put under correction.

Case I. Then are the passions irregularly exercised, when we suffer them to influence our opinions in religion, and to direct our judgment in any points of faith or practice. Passions were made to be servants to reason, to be governed by judgment, and to be influenced by truth ; but they were never given us to decide controversies, and to determine what is right and what is error. Even the best affections, and those that have a strong tendency toward piety, are not always safe in this respect ; yet they are too often indulged to sway the mind in its search after truth or duty, as I shall make it appear in several instances :

Suppose a person should be exceedingly affected with the merciful goodness and abounding grace of God ; if, by this affection towards God and his goodness, he is persuaded that God has no such severe vengeance for sinful and rebellious men, and that he will not destroy such multitudes of mankind as the scripture asserts, or that their punishment will not be so long and so terrible as God has expressly declared ; here the passion of love and esteem for the divine goodness, acts in an irregular manner, for it takes off the eyes of the soul from his awful holiness and his strict justice, and directs them to his own evil that is in sin. It prevents the mind from giving attention to God's express word, and to those perfections of his divine nature, and his wise and righteous government, which may demand such dreadful and eternal punishment, for the rebellion of a creature against the infinite dignity of its Creator and Governor.

Suppose a christian has most powerful impressions made upon his mind by the tremendous ideas of God's majesty, and punishing justice, and thence he concludes that the great

God will pardon no wilful sins, that he will forgive no repeated iniquities, no sins after baptism and the Lord's-supper, or after vows or solemn engagements, that he will have no mercy upon apostates, even though they turn to him by repentance; this is yielding up truth to the passion of fear, and an abuse of our religious dread of the majesty of God; for such an opinion runs counter to the great design of the gospel, which assures us that *Christ came to save the chief of sinners*; 1 Tim. i. 15. to remove the guilt of wilful and repeated sins, and to provide forgiveness for some of the most profligate rebels, even for all that renounce their rebellion.

3. Some pious persons have had such an affectionate zeal to honour God, that they have been led by this passion to contrive various forms of service and ceremony, gay and costly rites, with long and painful exercises of devotion, which God never appointed, and have introduced a number of them into his worship. A childish fondness to please the great God with bodily services, has tempted them to forget his own divine prerogative, to prescribe how men should worship him. They have been blinded with this sort of fondness for ceremony, in such a degree, as to lead them far astray from the divine simplicity of worship, which the New Testament has appointed.

4. Some persons out of a passionate desire to honour Christ, and ascribe the whole train of their blessings and salvation to him, have been tempted to think that they are to do nothing toward their own salvation, but to lie still and be saved without any labour or care of their own; so that they have sought no more after sanctification and holiness in themselves, than they have sought to make atonement for their own sins. But this zeal has much darkness in it, and betrays them into a gross mistake, as though they could not ascribe their salvation sufficiently to Christ, unless they fancied that he came to save them in their sins, rather than to save them from sin.

5. It is possible that a person may have so high an esteem and so excessive a love for some near relation, some christian friend, some wise and pious minister of the gospel, that he sees no fault in them: He imitates all their practice, as though they were perfect patterns; he receives all their opinions for certain and divine truths, and believes every thing which they teach, as though they were infallible, without comparing it with the bible, which is the only test of truth in matters of revealed religion. This affection of love to ministers or christians is certainly irregular, when it tempts us to set up their judgments, their practices and their dictates, in the room of the word of God.

6. Again, it is the same culpable indulgence of our passions to sway our judgment, and bias our understanding, when our souls are
 he holy fire of love and devotion under a

particular sermon, and we cry out, " This is the best sermon that ever was preached, or the finest that ever was composed." Or, perhaps your devout affections flag and languish under a sermon; you sit indolent and unmoved, and then the sermon goes for a poor dry discourse, and the man that delivered it for a dull and heavy preacher. Each of these hasty and irregular judgments, built on the passions, is very common to christians, and ought to be corrected.

7. I might add another instance a-kin to the last; and that is, when our devout affections of fear and hope, of holy love and heavenly delight, are raised in a place of public worship, whether at the established church, or among the several denominations of the protestant dissenters, and immediately we conclude, " This is the right mode of worship, this is most agreeable to the gospel, and these people are the only true church of Christ." How weak is this reasoning! And yet how many are there, who have been determined both in their opinion and practice, for or against such a particular community of christians, or mode of worship; and that for their whole life-time, merely by the effects that one or two attendances at such a particular place of worship have had on their affections?

These arguments drawn from the passions, have been often employed to support idolatry and transubstantiation, and all the wild inventions of men in the worship of God. What sighs and tears, what warm affections of sorrow and joy, have been sometimes produced by some ingenious orators in the Roman church, in their sermons at Lent, when they have held up a crucifix before the face of the people in the midst of their discourse? While they set forth the sufferings of our Saviour in most pathetic language, the preachers have fallen down on their knees, and embraced and adored the wooden image: The natural affections of the hearers have been awakened in a very sensible manner, and being mingled with some thoughts of Christ and religion, they have fallen down and worshipped the idol, and have imagined all this to be pure devotion and piety towards God, and his Son Jesus; and after all they have made their lively passions a sufficient argument that God approved all their fooleries, though by his own word, he hath expressly forbidden the worship of images.

I have read of another instance; when a poor devout creature hath come to the sacrament of the mass of the Romish church, and her passions being raised to a rapturous degree, as she thought, by the presence of Christ there, under the form of the consecrated wafer, she hath boldly declared, " should all the men on earth, and all the angels in heaven, join together to assure me, that God himself was not there, I would not believe them, for I have seen him, and felt his divine presence." What

a wretched and mischievous abuse of passion is this, when persons shall suffer it to lead them to such unwarranted and sinful modes of worship, and persuade them to believe such strange doctrines, as are not only contrary to the express word of God, but a perfect contradiction to nature, sense, and reason! Instances of this kind might be still multiplied. I have mentioned these few only to make it appear how unreasonable a thing it is to form our opinions in religion by the influence of the passions.

II. Then must the affections in matters of religion be pronounced irregular, "when they run before the understanding, or when they rise higher toward any particular object than the judgment directs." As in the foregoing particular, I told you that the passions were not designed to be directing powers of the soul, in the search of truth or duty; so neither are they made to rule all within us; but they are to be governed by reason and understanding: And in whatsoever instances they assume a superiority over the understanding, or run before it, they are excessive and irregular. Let us enter into a few particulars:

I. Some persons as soon as they begin to find further light dawning upon their minds, and are let into the knowledge of some doctrine or sentiment, which they knew not before, immediately set their zeal to work: Their zeal is all on a flame to propagate and promote this new lesson of truth, before their own hearts are well established in it, upon solid reasonings, and before they have considered whether it be a doctrine of great importance, and whether it merit such a degree of zeal. How common a case is it among christians, and too often found among ministers of the gospel, to give a loose to their affections at the first glimpse of some pleasing opinion, or some fresh discovery of what they call truth? They help out the weakness of the proof by the strength of their passions, and by the pleasure they take in the opinion they have embraced. This confirms their assent too soon, and they grow deaf to the arguments that are brought to oppose it. They construe every text in the scripture to support this doctrine, they bring in the prophets and apostles to maintain it. They fancy they see it in a thousand verses of their bibles, and they pronounce all men heretics that dare maintain the contrary opinions. Their conduct in this matter is so vehement, as though every gleam of light were sufficient to determine their faith, because it happens to fire their affections; they grow so warm about it, as though every opinion in religion were fundamental; and so fiery is their zeal, as though every mistake deserved the severest censures.

Nor is this the case of christians only, with relation to the new opinions they receive: There are too many who take up most of their articles of faith at first without due examination, and without sufficient argument: Their veneration for great

mes, or their affection to a particular party, has determined their opinions long ago: Their passions and other prejudices have formed their schemes of doctrines, with the neglect or abuse of their understandings; and yet they pronounce as positively on truth and error, as though they were infallible. Happy are those whose faith is built on better foundations!

2. Again, there are some persons, when they begin to be convinced that such a particular practice is culpable or unlawful, their indignation is too soon awakened, and rises too high; immediately they condemn it, as inconsistent with salvation: Their hatred of it grows as violent, as if it were blasphemy or idolatry: they are ready to break out into hard speeches and railing accusations against all that practise it, and pronounce them apostates and sinners of the first rank. The sudden rise and warmth of their passions does not suffer them to consider that there are some faults and follies that a good christian may be guilty of through ignorance or inadvertence; there are some sins that do not carry in them such malignity and poison as to destroy all our christianity.

3. There have been some weak christians, when they have heard a sermon, or read a discourse full of sublime language and mysterious darkness, and especially, if the style and manner has been very pathetic, and they have been raptured and transported, though it contained the deepest sense, the noblest truths of religion, and the highest discoveries of grace and the gospel: whereas, perhaps there may be scarce any thing in it which has just agreement with reason or scripture; but when well examined, it proves to be a mere jargon of words, a mixture of unintelligible and unmeaning sounds, with some affectionate airs among them, whereby their passions were fired, and that without knowledge, and beyond all reason: And it is well, if after these flashes of affection and violent transports, they are not deluded to shameful iniquities. This has been the case of some high pretenders in elder and later days. They have *spoken great swelling words of vanity*, they are *murmurers and complainers* against the common rank of christians, but they "*walk after their own ungodly lusts*; they turn the *grace of God into lasciviousness*, and they *allure others into lusts of the flesh, through such wantonness*, and *while they promise liberty, they are the servants of corruption*; 2 Pet. ii. 18, 19. and Jude, verses 4, 5, 18.

4. This irregular exercise of the affections running before reason, is eminently exemplified also in another weak sort of people, who are very sincere in the main, but if they read an awful and terrible threatening, or if they hear it pronounced in the pulpit with a just degree of authority and proper accent, their fears are raised in an excessive manner, and their soul is

filled with long sorrows and doubtings: Or, if they happen to read or hear a sentence of comfort, they are transported with sudden joy, and rise almost to assurance of the love of God: They give themselves up to the sudden efforts of passion before they suffer themselves to enquire according to scriptural grounds, whether this text of threatenings, or whether the other sentence of comfort, do really belong to them or no.

There are many other cases, wherein it is evident, that the affections in the things of religion, get the start of the understanding, and run far before it. But I proceed,

III. It is a very gross abuse of the affections, "when we encourage them to rise high, and grow very warm about the lesser things of religion, and yet are content to be cold and indifferent in matters of the highest importance." There are too many christians whose warmest zeal is employed about the *mint, the anise, and the cummin* of christianity; Mat. xxiii. 23. and have few passions awakened or engaged in the weighty things of the law, or the gospel. They are furiously intent upon speculative notions, and some peculiar opinions, that distinguish the little parties of christendom, and crumble the church to pieces: Their fears, their hopes, their wishes, their desires, their grief and joy, are all employed in party-quarrels and in a strife of words: But they are thoughtless and indolent about the momentous duties of love to God, and Christ, of justice to men, of charity to fellow-creatures and fellow-christians. So a sickly fancy is fond of trifles, and careless of solid treasures: So children have their little souls wrapped up in painted toys, while the matters of manly life and necessary business awaken no desire, no delight in them.

Suppose a man mourns to see the church of England lose ground in the nation, or to see the assemblies of protestant dissenters grow thin and decrease, and yet he finds not his soul grieved, and his heart mourning over the atheism and profaneness of the land, the drunkenness and lewdness, the growing heathenism and infidelity of the age: Or suppose a christian triumphs to see the controversy about baptism well managed, and his joys arise, according as his own opinion is bravely supported, while at the same time he takes little pleasure to hear of the conversion of a sinner, or that a wicked family is grown religious. What shall we think of such a person? Is not his religion in a childish and sickly state? Are not his passions, even about religious objects, managed in a very irregular manner, and worthy of just and severe reproof.

IV. There is also another evil conduct of the affections, in the matters of religion; and that is, "when they express themselves in an improper or indecent manner, and especially in such a way as is unnatural and unadvised, foolish and ridiculous,

vage and barbarous, contrary to the dictates of reason and human nature, or the word of God." Take for instance, some of the persecutors and idolaters, the bigots and enthusiasts of the church of Rome. And I wish such persecution and bigotry, enthusiasm and idolatry were never found among any other sects of christians.

1. With what furious and burning barbarity do popish persecutors express their zeal for their religion! They arm their tongues and their pens with bitter reproaches, and gail against those who divide from their communion, and would reform their gross corruptions; and they still profess it is out of love to christ, and to the souls of men, that they imprison, cut, burn, torment and destroy their fellow-christians. *O my soul come not to their secrets, nor learn such unrighteous and bloody zeal!*

2. Survey popish idolaters. They imagine they can never shew their affectionate devotion to Christ sufficiently, without making images of a crucified man, and placing them continually in their sight, in order to pay their worship to Christ by those appointed mediums. Sometimes they wear these little idols in their bosom, near their heart, and then they think they manifest how much their heart loves him. They kiss these wooden baubles, or their silver figures, with a strange childish fondness, and sometimes bedew them with their tears, to shew their inward affection to Jesus, their Saviour. There may be much animal passion, much commotion of nature and the flesh in these practices, with very little spiritual love. Sometimes they make pictures even of God the Father, and then perform their devotions toward them with forbidden ceremonies, and break God's second commandment to express their love to him. Strange and preposterous expressions of love, to practise what he forbids so often in his word, and that upon severe penalties!

3. Turn your eyes now to the Romish enthusiasts. God forbid that I should so condemn all that are educated in that church, as though there was no sincere devotion among them, though the church itself is abominably corrupt: But it is well known, that when some of these devotees have fancied themselves possessed with such a sublime love to God, that they have thrown themselves into odd postures and strange disorders of body, and appeared more like distracted persons than sober christians, as though it must be something not human that must exceed their divine affections. Others have imagined they could never do nor suffer enough to manifest the inward fire of that love to God which dwelt in their heart, and they have contrived what torments they should inflict upon themselves, as they used to press it, for the love of God.

Others, to shew their sorrow for having offended him, have not only worn sackcloth upon their skin, but they have scourged

themselves, till they have been covered with blood; they have bound themselves with vows to travel barefoot, and to make long and tedious pilgrimages to distant lands. Some have sent themselves to death by voluntary starving; others have tortured and destroyed themselves with excessive thirst; and either made their bodies miserable, or put an end to life to shew their love to God. These are wild and frantic superstitions indeed, extravagant methods of expressing any devout passion, and most of them utterly unlawful. Let us remember, that the religion which God teaches, has nothing in it contrary to the light of nature; nor must our inward piety break in upon the rules of reason and decency, when we would express it by any outward signs.

There are some religious affections, which are very properly expressed and manifested in the common way, whereby nature usually expresses those inward sensations of the soul. Godly sorrow naturally vents itself in groans and tears; Ps. vi. 6. Holy joy sometimes by a smile of the countenance, and often by the voice of sacred melody: And this not only appears in the example of the royal Psalmist, but in the precepts of the New Testament; Eph. v. 19. James v. 13. *If any be merry let him sing psalms.* Pious and earnest desires of the presence of God, and of his favour, are signified by stretching of the arm towards him, or lifting up the eyes and hands to him; Ps. lxxviii. 31. and xxviii. 2. and cxxi. 1, 2. Repentance and shame is naturally signified by downcast eyes or blushing; Luke xviii. 13. Ezra ix. 6.

Some of the stronger outward appearances, and vehement tokens of inward holy passion, are indeed rather to be indulged in private than in public worship: But in all our behaviour in this respect, let us take heed that the inward affection is sincere, and is the real spring of all the outward signs and expressions. Let us see to it, that we indulge not that practice which our Saviour so much condemns in the hypocrites of his day; Mat. vi. 16. Let us make no sad faces, nor put on dismal airs, nor smite the breast with the hand, and disfigure our countenances, merely to make the world believe that we are penitents: Nor let us make ourselves remarkable in public and mixed company, by turning up our eyes to heaven, to tell the world how often we pray in the midst of our secular affairs; though secret prayer may and ought to be sometimes rising to God, and we may lift an eye to him, while we are among men: Nor in public worship should we use frequent and loud groanings, to persuade our neighbours that we are more deeply affected with divine things than they; though devout affection will sometimes vent a groan or a sigh.

But above all, let us take heed lest we make use of these outward colours and forms of passion, to cover the want of inward devotion and piety. We should ~~not~~ make our religion ap-

pear to the world with a natural and becoming aspect; and in a decent dress to invite, and not forbid those who behold us. Let us take care that we do not disguise our holy christianity, nor make it look like an irrational thing, by unmanly or unbecoming sounds or gestures; lest we thereby expose ourselves to the charge of hypocrisy, and give up our holy profession to the ridicule and contempt of the profane world.

V. It is an irregular management in the affairs of religion, or an abuse of devout passions, "when we content ourselves with the exercise of these inward and affectionate sensations of the mind, while they have no influence on the holiness of our conversation." Consider, my friends, what were the passions made for? Not merely for the sensible pleasure of human nature, but to give it vigour and power for useful actions. I have but a poor pretence to be a sincere lover of Christ, if I rejoice to hear his name repeated often in a sermon, and say never so many affectionate things of him, in the language of the book of Canticles, and yet take no care to keep his commandments: Whereas this is the appointed way wherein Christ has required his disciples to manifest their love to him; John xiv. 15. *If ye love me keep my commandments*; chapter. xv. 14. *Then are ye my friends, If ye do whatsoever I command you.* In vain do I pretend to pious sorrows, in vain do I mourn for some great and grievous sin, in my secret retirements, or in public worship, if my life be spent among the gay follies and vanities of the world; if I run into new temptations whenever the world beckons to me, and follow every son of mirth that waves the hand of invitation.

True christianity, where it reigns in the heart, will make itself appear in the purity of life. We should always suspect those flatteries of affection, those sudden inward sensations of sorrow or delight, which have no power to produce the fruits of holiness in our daily conversation. *The fruits of the spirit*, are found in the life and the heart together, as they are described; Gal. v. 22. Love to God and man, joy in holy things, *peace of conscience*, and peace with all men, as far as possible, *long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith*, that is, faithfulness, *meekness, temperance*, and particularly a crucifixion of all sinful affections. Let us never content ourselves with any exercise of lively devotion, unless we feel our corrupt affections in some measure subdued thereby.

O how shameful a sight is it, and what a reproach to the profession of the gospel, to see a christian just come from church and holy ordinances, where his devout affections have been raised, and immediately to find him breaking out into vain, earthly merriment, and carried away with idle and sensual discourse! What a scandal is it to our religion, to see some zealous professors *coming down from their closet*, where they fancy they have been

which is very near a-kin to this, and may stand next in rank ; and that is, when we behold the vices of men with holy aversion and hatred, and immediately transfer this hatred to their persons, whereas we ought to pity and pray for them : Or when we see a fellow-christian fall into sin, and because we hate the sin, we hate the sinner too, and suffer our hatred to grow into disdain and irreconcilable enmity, and that even though the offender has given signs of sincere repentance. This is not christian zeal, but human corruption ; and such criminal indulgence of the passions, which ought to be mortified, if ever we would be imitators of the holy Jesus : He hated even the least sin, but loved and saved the greatest of sinners, and delighted to receive penitents to his love.

3. It is a culpable exercise of the passions, when holy emulation degenerates into envy. At first we admire the virtues of others, we respect their persons highly, we imitate their conduct, and aspire after the same degrees of piety and goodness ; we have a holy ambition to equal them in every grace, and in every virtue, and if possible to exceed them ; all this is right and worthy of praise ; but when I shall fall short of the attainments of my neighbour, and envy him on the account of his superior character ; when I feel an inward displeasure against my brother, because his gifts or graces shine brighter than mine, then the holy affection degenerates, and becomes a *lust of the flesh*, instead of a *fruit of the spirit*.

4. I might give another instance also of this kind ; and that is, when love to fellow-christians begins on a spiritual account, between persons of different sexes, and there is a mutual delight in each other's company and pious conversation ; but without great watchfulness this christian love may be in danger of degenerating into vicious desires and corrupt passions.

5. It may be worth our notice also, that there is another danger of the degeneracy of a devout passion, when persons of a pious and cheerful spirit have taken great delight in singing the praises of God, and meet together at the stated seasons for this purpose ; but, in time, this has sensibly sunk into the pleasure of the ear, into a mere natural relish of harmony, and delight of sounds well connected. This may have easily happened, when fine instruments of church-music have been used to assist psalmody, or when persons pride themselves in too nice and delicate a skill in singing, in too exquisite a taste in harmony, even though the words which they sing may be holy and religious.

To guard against these dangers, let christians frequently enter into their own hearts, and endeavour, as far as possible, to examine their spirit and conscience, to distinguish between their inward workings of piety, and the mere exercises of animal nature, or the workings of corrupt affection, and set a constant guard upon their hearts in this respect.

VIII. The last thing I shall mention, wherein some christians are guilty of an irregular conduct, with regard to their affections in matters of religion, is this ; “ when they live entirely their devout passions, and make them the only rules of self-enquiry concerning their temper, their habitual state of soul, and their present frame of spirit, and concerning every thing that longs to their christianity.” Such persons have little regard to the growth of their knowledge, the improvement of their understanding in the things of God, the steady and fixed bent of their will toward religion, and the constant regular course of a lively conversation. They seem to make all their religion consist in a few warm and pious affections. There are two sorts of persons subject to this mistake.

1. Awakened sinners, who feel their passions of fear and desire excited by some convincing sermon, or awful providence, and the rich doctrines of grace suited to their case and state, raise in them some hopes of heaven, and sensitive commotions of joy. This may continue for many months, and incline them to infer that they are converted from sin to God ; and being also in a great measure reformed in their lives, they imagine they are new creatures, and all is safe for eternity : Whereas they never had their heart fixed in the love of God, and in the hatred of every sin ; they never became hearty and resolved christians ; and, in a little time, their devout passions die, and all their religion vanishes, as it had no root.

2. There are also some real converts, who are but weak, and are too much by their passions. If their hope, and desire and love, are but engaged and raised high in their secret retirement, or in public worship, then they are good christians indeed, in a heavenly state, and they think exceedingly well of themselves : But if at any time there is a damp upon their passions, through the indisposition of their animal nature, when they feel not a great degree of animal fervor powerfully assisting their pious exercises, they are ready to pronounce against themselves ; they sink into great despondencies, and imagine they have no true grace.

Such christians as these live very much by sudden fits and starts of devotion, without that uniform and steady spring of faith and holiness, which would render their religion more even and uniform, more honourable to God, and comfortable to themselves. They are always high on the wing, or else lying motionless on the ground : They are ever in the heights or the depths, travelling on bright mountains with the songs of heaven on their lips, or groaning and labouring through the dark vallies, and never walking onward, as on an even plain, toward heaven.

There is much danger, lest such sort of professors as these be so, which I have mentioned, should deceive themselves, if not judging of the truth of their graces, yet, at least, in their

opinion of the strength or weakness of them, for they judge merely by their affections. Let us watch against this danger, and remember that though the passions are of excellent use in religion, yet they were never designed to stand in the place of reason and judgment, or to supply the room of an enlightened understanding, a sanctified will, and a conversation attended with all the fruits of holiness. Thus I have finished what I designed to say concerning the abuse of the passions in religion. The remarks which I shall make on this head of discourse are these three:

I. "Those christians are best prepared for the useful and pious exercises of their passions in religion, who have laid the foundations of it in a regular knowledge of the things of God." Let your understanding therefore be fully persuaded of the necessity and excellency of religion, of the duties you owe to God, as your Maker and Governor; let all your reasoning powers be convinced of the evil of sin, of the holiness and justice of God, of the danger of eternal death, of the relief and hope that is held forth in the gospel of Christ, of the necessity of faith and holiness, in order to eternal happiness; and amidst all the workings of devout affections, maintain a constant exercise of your reason and judgment. The scripture itself was not given us to make the use of our reason needless, but to assist its operations, and to render it more successful in our enquiries into the things of our everlasting welfare. Knowledge and affection should go hand in hand, in all the affairs of religion: The more we know of God, and the things of the upper world, we shall have the stronger spring for our holy passions, and a more secure guard against any excesses and irregularities in the exercise of them.

II. As it is the business of a preacher to assist the devout passions, so it is part of his work to guard his hearers against the abuse of them. We have granted and maintained that it is the business of every sacred orator, to raise the affections of men toward the things of God: Let him therefore manage his divine arguments, in such a manner, as to awaken the fears, the hopes, the desires, the penitent sorrows, and the pious joys of the whole assembly, in a sublime degree; but, in order to secure them from excesses and irregularities of every kind, let him lay the foundations of their religion in clear ideas of divine things, and in a just and proper explication of the holy scriptures.

When he has a mind to lead his hearers into any particular religious sentiments, which he firmly believes to be true, and which he supposes useful to their edification, let him not begin with their passions, and address himself to them in the first place: He must not artfully practise upon these warm and animal powers, before he has set these doctrines or sentiments of his, in a fair and convincing light, before the eye of their understanding,

their reasoning faculties: The affections are neither the guides to truth, nor the judges of it, nor must the preacher set them to their sprightly and fervent work, till he has informed them by clear explication and sincere argument. The sun in the morning gives us a fair document in this case: His light comes first, and then the dawn of the morning grows up by degrees, and introduces the fervors of noon. So let the preacher diffuse his light over the assembly, before he kindle their warm affections. Let him convince their reason and judgment of the truth of every article of religion, which he persuades them to believe; let him shew the duty and the necessity of every part of holiness, which he prescribes for their practice. Let him imitate that noble pattern, Apollos at Ephesus, who *was an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, he was fervent in spirit, and could raise the passions of those that heard him, yet was willing to kindle the flame of his own oratory by the light of his own understanding, and when he himself had learned the will of God, more perfectly, he mightily convinced the Jews by his argument, and shewed them by the scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ; Acts xviii. 24, 28.* Then there was a proper preparation made for his following zeal and fervor to display themselves.

III. If the passions are of such eminent service in religion, and yet they are in danger of unruly excesses, "how much should we have to beg earnestly at the throne of grace, that they may be all sanctified?" It is only the sanctifying influence of the blessed Spirit, that can excite them in a due degree, and can give them proper limits and regulations. It is nothing but divine grace can raise them to a due height, on all just occasions, and yet preserve them from any irregular conduct and unhappy effects.

In this sinful state of corrupt nature, we are averse to the designs of God: Our passions are violent toward sensible objects, but are hardly moved by the most important discoveries of religion. It is God alone who can correct and change their corrupt bias, and give them a divine tendency. They are so ready to take a wrong turn, and sometimes to make wide circles, even in the matters of religion, that God alone can keep them constant in their right situation and course. They are like living wheels of strong and powerful movement in human nature, but they make wretched work if they are not put in motion by a regular and happy spring. They are glorious and noble instruments of religion, when under good conduct, but they are ungovernable and mischievous powers, when they go astray; and they are also too prone to wander from their proper course and duty. Let it, therefore, be the matter of our daily prayer, that we may be "sanctified throughout in body, soul and spirit;" 1 Thess. v. 23. and that every faculty of our nature may have its proper aid to the kingdom of grace within us, till we

are trained up by the piety of this present state, and made fit for the unknown exercises of a sublimer sort of devotion in the kingdom of glory.

Meditation.—“What a wide and unhappy ruin has the fall of man spread over all the powers of our souls! Our understanding is darkened, our will grown perverse, and our passions corrupt and irregular in their exercises; and even when they are engaged about the things of God, their conduct is not always wise and holy. We have seen what glorious instruments they are, when managed by the hands of divine grace, to promote piety and goodness: But if they are left to themselves, they will sometimes make wild mischief, even in the sacred concerns of religion.

“Guard and secure me, O my God, against those false lights which my affections may cast upon the objects I converse with, and so delude my judgment. Suffer me not to be imposed on by the false colours, in which my passions may happen to dress up error, and make it look like truth. Let my judgment be always directed steadily by the reason of things and the discoveries of thy word, and not by the delusive flatteries of the passions. Let me remember that these were not given for my guides in the search of duty or truth; they were not made to teach me what is false and what is true, but to awaken me with the greater zeal to pursue truth, and to practise whatever I learn to be my duty.

“May I be so happy as always to lay solid reason and scripture for the foundation, whence my devout affections may take their rise, and ascend high toward God! Let them never flutter in the dark, nor break away from the government of my understanding; that if, at any time, my conscience calls me to account for the warmest and boldest flights of my pious affections, I may be able to support and justify them all upon the foot of reason, and by the divine examples and encouragements of the word of God.

“If, at any time, my zeal has been too fervent about the lesser matters of christianity, while it has been cold and listless in the things of the highest importance, I would take shame to myself in the sight of God and men. Blessed Jesus, never suffer my anxieties, my fears, my desires, and my joys to rise, but in due proportion to the worth and importance of their objects. Let my name never be numbered among those men of irregular zeal, who *strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel*; Mat. xxiii. 24. When I read or hear of the idolaters and the bigots of the church of Rome, in what a strange childish manner, and with what ridiculous fopperies they express their love to God and Christ, and to saints departed; when I read how they scourge their bodies to shew their sorrow for sin, and put their flesh to torments which God never appointed nor required; when

I have been told how they cut and burn and destroy their fellow-christians, animated by a supposed zeal for God and his church, I bless God that I have been taught better methods of expressing my devout affections. *Come not, O my soul, into their secrets, to their assemblies be thou not united*; Gen. xlix. 6. Nor let my religion make me sour and unsociable; not let me indulge awkward gestures, or put on a distorted countenance, nor appear with any unmanly or unbecoming airs, to express the inward workings of my heart. I am afraid of all those outward forms which would turn piety into contempt, before an ungodly world who take all occasions to ridicule things sacred.

“ I would remember that religion does not consist in a warm flash of affection, or in sudden efforts of devout joy, where holiness has no settled root in the heart, nor any visible fruits in the conversation. Let me be all of a piece, and if my christianity raises my pious passions in the church, or in the closet, may the same christian spirit be found in all my daily behaviour: May it regulate my words and adorn my actions, that God, angels, and men may see the golden thread of religion running through my heart and life, in an uniform manner, in all times, places, and stations. Never let my devotions break in upon any part of other necessary duties which I owe to God or man: The great God does not permit sacrifice to stand in the room of works of mercy, nor will he allow of robbery for a burnt-offering. Remember this, O my soul.”

“ Help me, O my God, to keep up my pious affections to their own character, and let them not degenerate into a vicious or criminal temper of mind. Suffer not my zeal against error to turn into fury against a mistaken brother. Teach me to pity the man while I endeavour to cure his unhappy mistakes by the only methods which Christ has appointed by gentle reasoning, by arguments drawn from scripture, by the winning arts of love and goodness, and by earnest prayer for his recovery from the error of his way. Let me watch against every instance wherein holy affections may be corrupted and turned into vice or folly.

“ Though I desire to have my passions deeply tinged by the things of God, yet I would not live entirely by the efforts of devout passion, nor judge of my state and frame merely by these sorts of emotion. It is possible that sudden flashes of affection may sometimes deceive our judgment, and make us determine suddenly and unjustly, concerning ourselves and our state godward. Let my religion and love to God be deeply rooted in the mind, and in the principles of solid knowledge; let my will be strongly and unchangeably inclined towards God and things heavenly; and let my love and hope, my desire, my sorrow, and my joy, be all awake and engaged, in proper seasons, to promote the divine work within me, and make blessed advances daily toward the world of perfection.” *Amen.*

DISCOURSE VI.

The Affectionate Christian Vindicated, and the Sincere Soul Comforted under his Complaints of Deadness, &c.

WE have seen what are the various advantages that may be derived from the exercise of the passions, in the concerns of religion; and we have taken notice of the irregularities to which they are liable, and have endeavoured to guard against the abuse of them. We proceed now to the fifth general head of discourse which was proposed, and that is to vindicate the affectionate christian from the unjust reproaches of men, in his warmest exercises of love to God and devotion. Surely one would think there appears sufficient reason for pious souls to indulge their most lively affections in worship, and that without any abuse of their reason, or abasement of their religion. These inward sensations of holy delight, these secret joys which a stranger intermeddles not with, these experimental parts of godliness may be set in a rational light, and be justified to the understanding of men. What is there in all this account of a christian's love to God, and the regulated exercise of pious passions, that is not agreeable to solid reason, and to the natural notions that we have of God and our duty, as well as to the brighter discoveries we have by divine revelation? What is there in all these workings of a holy soul, but what is the just and proper result of the nature of man, as an inferior spirit, in the present circumstances of flesh and blood meditating on God, the infinite and supreme Spirit, with a lively hope of his favour and acceptance?

Will the deist and the infidel tell me, that "this is all mechanical religion, the mere effect of animal nature, the visionary scenes of fancy, and the boilings of a warm imagination?" Will they laugh at all this account, and say, "there is nothing in it but the passionate ferments of flesh and blood, which we mistake for a reasonable religion and worship?" I would enter the lists with them, even upon the foot of reason, and justify these sensations of experimental christianity, by a few plain and gradual steps of argument.

1. Is not the great God the Creator and supreme Governor of all things? Is he not the most glorious and most excellent spirit? Is he not a being of infinite majesty, of holiness, and of mercy? Is he not a God of infinite sovereignty, a wise ruler, and righteous judge? Is he not an ever compassionate toward his

able and obedient creatures? Is he not a fountain of eternal blessedness, and an all-sufficient and everlasting good to those that seek and serve him? Is he not a God that hath terrors to vindicate his government, and to punish those that break his law? Is not this the God that the wiser and better sort of heathens acknowledged, and do acknowledge as well as the christians?

2. Is not the mind of man made capable, in some measure, knowing this God? And are we not bound to acquaint ourselves with him? Is not man therefore bound to get these notions and ideas of the attributes of God his maker, represented to his mind, in the truest, the fairest, and the strongest light? Or are the faintest and the feeblest notions of our Creator the best? Are we not under an obligation sometimes to recollect these ideas of God when we come to converse humbly with him? Should we not endeavour to bring them fresh and strong into our memory, and to make his majesty and his mercy, as it were, present to our souls, by the fullest and brightest conceptions we can form, when we come to worship before him, when we address him with prayer for any blessing that we want, or when we praise him for the mercies we have received from him?

3. Ought not this knowledge, this holy remembrance of God, to influence the other powers of our nature? Doth not conscience itself tell the deist, that his own sentiments of so glorious being demand his highest honour, and his humblest worship? Do not his own thoughts require of him a behaviour agreeable to all those high conceptions which he hath of the perfections of the divine nature? Are not our minds bound to think of him with high esteem? Are not our wills bound to resolve upon obedience to this wise and holy Governor, and to submit with patience to all his providences? Are not our eyes made to contemplate his works, and ought we not to give him the honour of his wisdom and power, that formed this world of wonders which our eyes behold? And are not our tongues obliged to speak honourably of him, and to render him a just revenue of praise? Is it not our duty to offer the tribute of our lips in thankfulness for a thousand blessings we receive from his bounty and beneficence?

4. Are not our passions or affections a particular power of human nature that owes God some honour as well as the understanding and will, the eyes and the tongue? Were not these affectionate powers made to be excited by thoughts of the mind, and to be exercised agreeably to the judgment and conscience? Or are the passions the only powers of our nature that owe no homage to the God that made them, and must not be employed in his service? Many of the affections are pleasing to nature in their various exercises, and can they not have leave to be employed in piety? Must religion be made so dry and tasteless and

melancholy a thing as to forbid all pleasure? Have we not permission to love God the most amiable spirit, whose perfections and glories surpass all created beings? Must we never take delight in God, the Author of our nature, and the source of eternal blessedness? Is religion the only thing whence all pleasing affection must be for ever banished and excluded? And must I withhold all these pleasant and powerful sensations of nature from intermingling with the things of God? Hath my wise and merciful Creator given me such a faculty as admiration, and may I admire the heavens and the earth, the fishes, the beasts, and the birds, and not admire that all-wise and almighty Being that made me and them? May I lay out my wonder on any thing, or on every thing besides the great God, who created all these wonders? Hath he formed my soul to delight and love, and hath he confined these sweet and pleasurable capacities only to be employed about creatures, when the Creator himself is infinite and supreme in loveliness? Will not this most amiable of beings expect that I should love himself, and give me leave to make him my delight? Is it lawful for me to fear a lion or an adder, a whirlwind or a flash of lightning, and may I not indulge a holy and solemn dread of that glorious being that made lightnings and whirlwinds, adders and lions, and has unknown thunders in reserve for profane sinners? Doth he give me leave to mourn and weep for the loss of my ease or my health, or my friends, and may I never indulge my sorrow, to arise for all my multiplied offences against his law, my former rebellions against his government, and my refusals of his grace? Thus far I have begged leave for the passions to assist religion and I think reason gives an ample permission. But I may rise to bolder language here, and pronounce my argument with stronger force, if I should resume the first part of this head of reasoning, and make all these enquiries turn upon the point of obligation and duty. Since I know this God to be infinite in goodness, and the author of all my comforts, am I not bound to love him with all my strength, and with all my soul? If he is a being of sovereign power, holiness and justice, ought I not always to *fear before him*, and to grieve heartily that I have offended against his holy laws? Is it not my duty to mourn for sin, and to be ashamed of my unnatural and unreasonable conduct? And doth not God require, that I should rejoice before him with thankfulness, when I have some hope that he hath accepted my submission, pardoned my sin, and holds me in his favour and love?

But let me proceed yet further in this argument, and say, have not my passions themselves been too often engaged in folly and sin? And must they do nothing for the interests of religion and virtue? Hath not the great and blessed God been affronted and dishonoured by these warm and active powers of my

ture? And may not he make some reprisals of them by making them captive by his grace, and devoting them to his own service? Must the passions which have been defiled with so much iniquity, and which have helped to defile the soul, never be refined? Never be sanctified? Never attempt to restore the tribute of honour and obedience to the great God, of which they have long defrauded him? Have I loved vanity? Have I delighted in sin? Has my desire, my hope, and my joy, been hitherto employed on criminal objects? And must these affections of desire and hope, of love and delight, be forbid to pursue objects divine and heavenly, and be for ever excluded from all pious employment? Have I grieved for the loss of a sinful pleasure, *been angry with my brother*, and hated him *without a cause*? And ought I not to turn the stream of my wrath and hatred against my sins, and to give a loose to the passion of grief, and to mourn with a pious sorrow for my guilty behaviour toward God and man? Are these faculties of my nature capable of sinning only, and incapable of practising virtue and goodness? Or is it not lawful to attempt to employ them in the service of religion? Let the Stoics, and the men of cold philosophy tell me, that virtue and duty, and goodness, consist only in sublime ideas of God, and a will devoted to him; and that it is only the pure affections of the mind or spirit, that are to be exercised towards God and religion; but the motions of flesh and blood must have nothing to do here, nor passions of the animal have any part or share in the religion of the man. To such objectors I would reply thus:

5. Is it possible that the purest affections can be exerted in any vigorous efforts in our present state of mortality, but flesh and blood will feel and follow them a little? Can these sublime ideas of the blessed God, and these pure and spiritual affections be raised to any high degree, but the powers and passions of animal nature will be suitably touched and moved, at least in some degree, according to the natural temper? All persons are not equally capable of warm affection, and vigorous ferments of blood: but there is not a son or daughter of Adam, without some degree of these natural emotions. They have been felt by wise and holy men, that have lived in all ages of the world; and it must be so, in some measure, while we are such a composition of flesh and spirit.

I grant, indeed, that some such cold and indifferent worshippers as can make this objection, whose religion consists only in philosophical thought of the great God, and a devout wish perhaps once in a week or two, may not feel any of these sensible effects in animal nature. Those also may be excepted who are brought up in a mere round of forms; and never say their prayers, but at the sound of a bell, and a public hour; I except so those popish devotees, who mutter over their latin service;

“their pater-nosters” and “ave-marias” by tale, and drop their beads, to count their prayers right, and to secure themselves from mistaking the number. All these sorts of worshippers may join in the same opinion, and renounce their affections in their religion, and that for this reason, because they have not religion enough to employ them. But where a constant and supreme love to God is the real spring that moves us to our duties, the rest of the natural passions will have some correspondent share in the work. And it is a very false way of judging for these kinds of people to compare all men with themselves, and make their cold indifference, and their lazy practice the standing model of the religion of all mankind.

Let us suppose for once, that we were confined to the mere religion of nature; hath it not been sufficiently proved, that reason and the light of nature provide for the passions some share of employment, even in natural religion? And it is to be feared, that it is not merely the unbelief of christianity, but the want of serious inward religion of any kind, that inclines the infidels of our age, to oppose and ridicule the exercise of devout affection. Is not the book of Psalms a noble and sublime collection of lyric poesy? Are not several parts of these sacred odes confined to such notions and practices in religion, as the light of nature and reason dictates? Now if these persons had true piety at heart, one would think they should rejoice in these sprightly and pious compositions, and use them as a help to raise their souls to God, their Creator, in love and praise. Will they make this excuse, that the language is too warm, too much animated and pathetic, that there is too much of the beauty of metaphor, too many bright images that strike powerfully upon the passions, whereas the religion of nature, in their opinion, is a more calm and sedate thing? Surely it is much to be feared and suspected, that their prayers and their praises, and all their pretences to piety, will go but a little way to raise their souls to heaven, when their modes of worship cannot bear the language of such devout affection, and admit of no elevations above calm ideas and sedate indolence.—But I return to my vindication of the affectionate christian, in his warmest exercises of devout passion.

I might proceed much farther on this point, and say, when the affections are impressed and awakened to a powerful exercise, by divine truths, will not these lively powers have a farther and a reflexive influence on the mind and the will? Do they not sensibly impress the ideas of divine things with much stronger force on the mind? Do they not set all the affairs of religion in a more lovely and attractive light? Do they not confirm the will in all its holy resolutions for God and heaven? Have they not often been found to stamp divine things on the memory and

science, with more lasting efficacy? Do not the devout passions awaken the latent images of fancy, and dress all the chambers of the soul with divine ideas and ornaments? And have you not, by this means, assisted the soul to maintain its converse with heaven? Is it not in the power of the sacred affections to raise and brighten the language of the tongue, as when they command the tears of the eye-lids, and the smiles of the countenance? Are not our hope and our fear given us to be like spurs to duty, and wakeful guards against temptation and disobedience; and do they not often employ the hands and the feet to direct the eyes, and awaken the voice? Will not holy love and joy give a lively and pleasing motion to the blood and spirits? Will not the hope of having sin forgiven, and our souls made for heaven, excite a thousand pleasures in human nature? Will not the love of God fill the soul with overflowings of gratitude, and make the heart abound in expressions of joy and praise? And will not the love of God be attended with a peaceful and pleasing aspect, and establish a sweet serenity in the heart and eyes? And all concur to support and sustain religion in the power and the joy of it?

Christians, be not afraid of professing the pleasures of religion. These men of pretended reason are vanquished at their own weapons, when they dare deride your converse with God, and fight against the inward power of your devotions. Be ye not yoked therefore, and be established in this truth, that it is not the warmest exercise of our affections, that can be ridiculous in the eyes of men, when they are excited by a just apprehension of divine things: But then it is, the passions are justly censured, when they are indulged to raptures in the confusion and darkness of the mind; when they flutter and make a tumult in the twilight of understanding, or when they are raised high by mere enthusiasm, and the visions of fancy, without the solid foundation of knowledge and judgment to support them, as I have shewn in a foregoing discourse.

Give diligence, therefore, O my friends, to improve in the knowledge of God the Father, and in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ! Maintain your humble converse with heaven, and strive in meditation and prayer, till you get near the throne of God, and find sweet access to his throne, through the mediation of Christ and the aids of the blessed Spirit: Awaken all the springs of holy love and divine joy. These sacred pleasures animate you to every duty; will be a guard to your souls against temptation, and give you courage to stand the ridicule of an unbelieving age: These divine refreshments like the heavenly manna, will support your spirits through all the wilderness, and make your travels easy and delightful. These will carry you on with joy to the promised land, and prepare you to abide for ever with that God, with whom you have here enjoyed.

so long and blessed a correspondence.—We proceed now to the sixth general.

Since it appears to be a matter of such importance to have the affections engaged in the affairs of religion, some humble and sincere souls may be ready to pronounce hard things concerning themselves, and conclude they have no true religion, because they feel their affections but little moved : We proposed therefore, that the sixth general head of discourse should offer some “consolations to such honest and humble christians, who endeavour to love and serve the Lord their God with all their powers, but find very little of this exercise of the pious passions in comparison with what others feel.” Let me address such persons as these in the following manner :

I. Since you doubt whether you *love God with all your heart*, that is, with your warmest affections, “search and enquire with holy fear, and with the greater diligence, whether you love him with all your mind, with all your soul, and with all your strength.” Do you love him with all your mind? Have you the highest esteem of him in your judgment as the most excellent and best of beings, and as your only sufficient good? Do you love him with all your soul! Have you chosen him for your eternal portion, both in this world and that which is to come? Is your will firmly resolved for God and religion? Are you sincerely willing to forsake every sin and to return to God, to give up yourself to him as your Lord and Ruler, and receive him as your God and reconciled Father, according to the discoveries of his grace in Christ Jesus? Do you love him with all your strength? Do you desire to obey and serve him all your days? Do you worship him with holy diligence, and promote his honour in the world, according to the utmost of your capacity?

If you find these things wrought in you, and done by you, you have abundant reason to take comfort in this evidence of your christianity. Where the mind and will are sincerely engaged on the side of God and religion in this manner, the love of the heart is not utterly wanting; the affections must be in some measure sanctified, though perhaps you may not feel so frequent, so powerful, and so lively an exercise of them as other christians may enjoy. These things are a better proof of true faith and real piety, than a sudden flash of affection can be, where these more steady operations of the mind and will are wanting.

II. Though all the sons and daughters of Adam have some degrees of passions in their very frame and nature, yet remember that the temper of all men is not equally affectionate. Consider now and enquire, whether your temper has so much of these affectionate principles wrought in it, as some of your neighbours

ay possess : There are some of a much calmer and more sedate institution ; their passions of desire and joy, of fear and hope, sorrow and anger, are seldom moved about earthly things ; and then it is no wonder that they are not so sensibly impressed with things heavenly. God requires no more than he gives ; where he has wrought these pathetic principles in the constitution, he requires the exercise of them in the things of religion : it where persons are of a more dispassionate and a calmer temper, there God will require less of the sensible exercises of affection in the christian life. 2 Cor. viii. 12. " If there be a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man has, and not according to what he has not."

I confess if you have warm and lively passions for all other things, and none at all for God and religion and heavenly objects ; if your fear, joy, sorrow, and desire are vigorous in their motions, and are immediately raised by the affairs and occurrences of this life, and yet lie always asleep with regard to divine things, it is a very bad sign indeed, and has a very unfavourable aspect on the case of your soul : For " where much is given, much shall be required ;" Luke xiv. 48.

III. " Consider what is your present stage of life : Are you in the flower of youth, when all the powers of nature are active, and the passions are warm and lively : Or are you in the decay of nature, and on the verge of life ? Is old age coming upon you, or is it already come, when the animal powers are weakened, when the operations of flesh and blood are more languid ?" An old man cannot have those lively passions and appetites with regard to sensible things as belong to the years of youth and the vigour of nature. Old Barzillai could not feel his desires awakened and tempted to dwell at court by all the pleasures of a royal table, or the sprightly music, or the rich entertainments there ; 2 Sam. xix. 35. And therefore it is no wonder, that the devout passions be then more languid and unmoved. An aged christian may have the most fixed resolution for God, and the firmest principles of piety rooted in his soul ; he may do much good for God, and in this sense " may flourish and bring forth fruit in old age ;" Ps. xcii. 14. and may have great advancements in real godliness, though there may be few such sensible evidences of it given to himself or to his neighbours, in the lively motion of his pathetic powers.

But on the other hand, it is a very sad and melancholy symptom, if the evil passions of covetousness, of anger, of revenge, of envy, reign and exert themselves with violence in old age, while there is little or nothing of warm affection exercised in the things of religion.

IV. " Let humble and sincere christians remember also for their encouragement, that though spiritual things may be the

chief object of our hope and desire, yet our passions may not always be so powerfully impressed by them as they are by sensible and carnal things, and the reason is because they are spiritual and invisible."

The passions which are wrought into our present frame, belong partly to animal nature, as well as to the mind; and therefore, the things of sense are nearer a-kin to them: They touch and strike our passions sooner, and awaken them to more vivacity, and engage them with more vehemence than things which are unseen. The passions are certain principles in man which depend much on flesh and blood; and therefore, they are more naturally impressed by things that strike our eyes and our ears, and by them find a way to their hearts. It is possible that God and heaven may be really more beloved than men and this earth, though the animal powers of joy, hope, fear, and desire, may not be so sensible and vehement in their operations toward spiritual, absent and future objects, as towards things present and sensible. There is not therefore sufficient ground to conclude that we do not love God above creatures, because we sometimes feel the more passionate exercises and commotions of flesh and blood about creatures, than we do about God himself: And indeed were it not for this reasonable salvo, this spring of consolation, a multitude of christians would be ready to give themselves up to despair, and I doubt there would be very few of us who would not have reason to suspect the truth and power of our inward religion.

Yet I cannot conclude without this observation: In the last place, that "what comfortable evidences soever of our love to God may be derived from the high esteem of him in our minds, and the attachment of our wills to him, yet these evidences and comforts will be greatly brightened and increased by feeling the affectionate love of God in the heart." To love the Lord our God, with all the mind, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, becomes more glorious when it influences the affectionate powers of the heart to join in the practice of religion.

It is granted that the mere flashes of sudden passion in a devout moment, without a settled supreme esteem of God in the mind, without a firm attachment of the will to him, and careful obedience to his commands, will yield but small and feeble consolation in a time of trial and enquiry: The hearers who receive the word like seed in stony ground are said to receive it with joy, but their religion was but a flash; it endured but for a short season; it sprung up on a sudden and quickly withered, because it had no root in the understanding and the will; Mat. xiii. 20, 21. Yet it is better, infinitely better to find and feel that we love God with all our powers; we should therefore use all proper methods

to stir up our drowsy affections, and engage them in divine things that we may live in the pleasures of godliness as well as in the power of it, and have our hopes rising high and approaching to the joys of heaven, while we dwell here on earth. What these proper methods are, whereby the devout passions may be raised will be the subject of our next enquiry.

Meditation.—“It is strange that any person should cavil against the exercise of the warmest affections of man in the things that relate to the great God, and in matters of our own immortal interest. It is strange to hear any dispute arise against the engagement of our strongest and most sprightly powers in the service of the best of beings, and our eternal friend. O may I know him, and love him, and fear him, and delight in him, as becomes a creature to fear and to love a God, that is, in a supreme degree. In vain shall the world assault me with their keenest reproaches, in vain shall a bantering and godless age attempt to laugh me out of countenance for indulging the divine sensations of religion. Let them tell me, “It is mere animal nature and the caprices of flesh and blood,” let them charge me with enthusiastical folly and feverish heats of religion, I dare pronounce boldly in the face of ridicule and scandal that the prudent affectionate christian in his devoutest hours does nothing beneath the dignity of reason, nor unbecoming the character of the wisest of men. I have David and the prophets, I have Christ and his apostles engaged on this side of the question by their own practice, and I shall count it my honour to be a humble imitator of such blessed patterns.

“O may I find the secret joys of religious retirement, joys which a stranger intermeddles not with! May I feel some pious affection animating me to all the duties of the christian life! May I see myself rising high above earthly things with holy contempt, mounting as on eagles’ wings toward heaven; and then I shall not be frightened nor discouraged at all the arrows of reproach that are shot against me. The affectionate christian has much more reason on his side than all those indolent worshippers, those dry and joyless creatures, those cold pretenders to religion; who have denounced their affections in the things of God, and creep on at a slow and groveling rate, feeding only on some natural truths and speculations without life, power, or pleasure.

“But if I find my natural temper has very little of the pathetic composition in it, and that my affections by nature are not so vigorous as those of my neighbour: if I feel the more vehement efforts of love and fear and holy sorrow, and pious pleasure sink and decline, through the decay of nature or growing age, I will comfort myself with this, that it is the desire of my soul to have all its powers and passions engaged for God in their most vital and active exercises.

“ If at any time I am so unhappy as to feel my affections exert themselves, in a more vigorous manner, towards the objects of flesh and sense which are present, than they do toward things absent, divine and heavenly, I would mourn over the frailty of human nature, in this present state, where we are so much attached to the things of this body. I will endeavour through divine grace “ to love the Lord my God with all my mind, and with all my soul,” to raise him higher in the esteem of my judgment, to cleave to him more firmly by a resolute bent of my will, to abide daily with him, and live upon him, as my all-sufficient and everlasting good, that I may attain some comfortable establishment in the hope of his love : And when my flesh and heart, and all my animal powers shall fail me, I may still rejoice in having God for my God, who will be the strength of my heart, the life of my spirit, and my portion for ever ;” Ps. lxxiii. 26.

DISCOURSE VII.

Means of exciting the Devout Affections.

WE are now come to the last thing designed in these discourses, and that is to propose “ a few proper methods, whereby affections of nature may be awakened and employed in the christian life.” Take them in the following order :

I. See to it that the leading and ruling faculties of the soul, the understanding and the will, be deeply and firmly engaged in religion. Let the mind be well furnished with divine knowledge, and the will be as resolutely bent for God and heaven. Where the understanding has but a poor and scanty furniture of things of God, the pious affections will have the fewer springs to raise them : And if our ideas of divine things are obscure and confused, our passions are in great danger of running wildly away, and of being led away by every delusion. Seek therefore not only a large and plentiful acquaintance with the things of God, but endeavour, as far as possible, to get clear and distinct conceptions of them, that the pious passions may have solid ground whence to take their rise. And then let your will be steadily set for God without weakness or wavering. If the reserves and purposes of the heart be feeble and doubtful, the affections will never rise to any high degree in a regular or lasting manner.

But I have said so much on these points that I shall not enlarge here. If the mind and will are sanctified, it is certain, according to the very frame of our natures, that the passions will in some degree follow the influence of these governing faculties. Why is it our passions are suddenly alarmed and so warmly influenced by the things of this world ? It is because our minds set too high a value for them, our wills are too much attached to them, we place our happiness too much in them ; Mat. vi. 21. *Where the treasure is, the heart will be also* ; the heart with all its passions. Why are our desires, our longings, our fears, and sorrows, our joys, and resentments so keen, and so intense for the things of life ? It is because these things are too much esteemed as our treasure, our portion, our inheritance. If God be our portion, Christ our life, and heaven our inheritance, and heaven our home, then our “ affections will be set on the things that are above, where Christ is at the right-hand of God ; Col. iii. 1, 2.

II. “ Engage the most powerful and governing passion for God, that is, the passion of love :” All the train of affections will

obey its ruling power and influence, they will follow its motions and sovereign dictates, as was made evident in the second discourse on this subject. And we have shewn you before, that in order to excite divine love in our hearts, we must meditate frequently on these things, viz. what the great and blessed God is in himself, what he has done for us, what he daily does for us, and what he has promised to do, both in this life, and the life to come. Never be easy, or at rest, therefore, if you find your love to God flag and languish, for then the other affections will grow cold and lifeless in religion. Take all opportunities to warm your heart with this sacred passion, and to re-kindle the fire of divine love within you, when at any time you find it declining.

III. " Watch carefully against the too strong attachment of your affections to creatures : Remember that this *world is at enmity with God* ; James iv. 4. *If any man love this world, the love of the Father is not in him* ; 1 John ii. 15. Where the love of the world is habitually prevalent, the love of God is not found ; for God is the supreme good, and the most lovely of beings, and he counts that love as nothing which is not supreme. *No man can serve two masters. You cannot serve God and mammon* ; Mat. vi. 25. that is, the true God, and the god of riches : And we may say by the same rule, you cannot love the true God, and the god of honour and ambition, or the god of sensuality and carnal pleasure. A God carries a supreme idea, and demands all the soul. Not only unlawful objects, and sinful pleasures, but even sensible delights, possessions, and enjoyments, which are lawful, take too fast hold on the heart, and draw it away from God. Remember that the creatures around you have this advantage, that while God is a spirit, an unseen being, the creatures are ever striking upon our eyes or ears ; they are ever making their court to our senses and appetites, and have a thousand ways to insinuate themselves into the heart. The world, and the flattering enjoyments of it, are suited to work upon flesh and blood, and to draw off the soul from God its centre and its rest : They are ever near at hand on all occasions, and they are ready sometimes to say, *where is your God?* Keep your God therefore, always near you, and watch against the pleasing flattery of alluring creatures, lest your heart cleave too fast to them, and be thereby divided from your God.

Amidst all the endearing relations and engaging businesses of life, single yourselves, as much as possible, for God, and let not many things dwell too near your soul, lest you lose the sight of your heavenly Father, and the pleasing sensations of his love. Where the love of sensible things prevails, it draws with it all the long train of hopes and fears of desires, joys, and sorrows ; of painful heart-aches, and fond wishes, and keen resentments. Thus the affectionate powers of nature are carnalized, are tinc-

tured deep with the things of earth, and become too much estranged from God and heaven. Whensoever you find a tempting creature taking too fast hold of your passions, set a guard of sacred jealousy upon it ; keep your heart at a holy distance from that creature, lest it twine about your inmost powers, and draw them off from their allegiance and duty to God your Creator. The love of God is a flower of divine original, and of the growth of paradise ; if the holy Spirit has planted it in your heart, let not any other love be planted too near it, nor too much nourished, lest it draw away the vital moisture, and cause the love of God to languish and wither.

IV. Be not slight and careless in secret religion. Let private devotion, reading, meditation, prayer, have a proper share of your time allotted them. In pious retirements you may indulge all the holy passions with much greater freedom : You may there give a loose to all the devout affections of the soul in their warmest exercises and expressions : You may say a thousand things to God in secret, which are not proper for public worship : You may pour out your souls before him in the strongest and most pathetic sentiments of holy desire and divine joy : You may tell him all the inward pains of your conscience, the secret anguish and shame of your heart, because of your past offences ; you may sigh deeply, and blush before him, and dissolve your eyes into tears : You may tell him in secret how intense are your desires to taste and be assured of his love, and to be formed after his image : You may rejoice in his sight with pious exultations and triumph, in hope of his eternal presence in the upper world. Such exercises as these will keep all the passions in an habitual practice of religion, and maintain inward piety in the life and power of it.

V. Converse much with those parts of our holy religion, and with those books of scripture, which are suited to awaken your warmest affections. Let your thoughts take occasion from the various occurrences in nature and providence, to meditate on the glorious perfections of God, the wonders of his wisdom in contriving the several parts of the creation, so happily fitted to answer his great designs. Think on his amazing power, that could form all things by his word, and bring a whole world into being at his will. Awaken your souls, to admire the wide spreading influence of his sovereignty and government, who manages the immense affairs of the upper and the lower worlds, the nations of men, and the armies of angels ; and yet extends his care to every one of us in particular, and even to the meaner figures of flies and worms. Think on the infinite extent of his knowledge, that he is acquainted not only with every creature he has made, but with every thought that passes through our hearts, with all our most secret actions and purposes. This will awaken

in you a holy fear of his majesty, and you will dread the thoughts of sinning against him, since it can never be concealed from his notice; and while you think on his omnipresence, you may rejoice in him as your guardian and defence through all times and places where or whencesoever it is possible for danger to attend you. Meditate on his boundless goodness: Our *God is love*, and all nature is filled with the blessings of his bounty. He has overspread the skies with light, and covered the earth with food for man and beast. Of what a vast and surprising extent is the whole family of creatures which are maintained out of the stores of God! What a transcendent veneration should we have of that goodness, which satisfies the craving appetites of millions daily and hourly!

Besides these general effects of the divine goodness, it is proper to have the memory furnished with particular instances of protections, deliverances, escapes from danger, rich and unmerited blessings, which we ourselves have enjoyed, that we may awaken our gratitude, re-ignite our dying love, and exalt our hearts and our voices in praise. Nor is it less useful to meditate sometimes on the sins and follies of mankind, that we may admire the patience of a God so affronted and so abused: Nor is it less needful to recollect our own follies, and our guilt, that we may keep holy repentance in its lively exercises: for the spring of godly sorrow should never be dried up while we dwell in these regions of sin and defilement. Then the astonishing designs of divine mercy towards guilty creatures, call for a due share of our meditations: Designs of mercy in the heart of God, counsels of peace transacted with his Son Jesus Christ *before the world began*, in order to rescue mankind from the ruins of nature, and to raise up a chosen seed for his own glory out of the rebellious race of Adam.

Here the thoughts of a christian should spread themselves abroad, and give a loose to holy contemplation and wonder. Let us run back to ancient ages, and view Jesus the Son of God, *the brightness of his Father's glory* in his pre-existent state of light and happiness, before he visited us in flesh; Heb. i. 3. There he dwelt in the *bosom of the Father*, before he made our world, or appeared in it: We should trace his various appearances to the patriarchs, and his conduct of the church through many ages, under the name of *the angel of God's presence*, under the character of *the king of Israel*: We should meditate on his wondrous condescension to become incarnate, to dwell in such feeble flesh and blood as ours is, to be compassed about with infirmities, to sustain perpetual labours and sorrows, fatigues and reproaches through the course of a mortal life, to bear those unknown agonies in the garden, and on the cross, which were the price of our pardon, and the means of his atonement for our guilt. What amazing love is this! How divine! How unsearchable! It

has heights, and lengths, and breadths, and depths in it, that pass all our knowledge; Eph. iii. 18, 19. and demand our devoutest praises. Trace him then from the cross to the tomb, follow him through the regions of the dead, behold him in the power and glory of his resurrection; see him ascending on a bright cloud to heaven, attended *with the chariots of God, which are twenty thousand, even unnumbered thousands of angels*; Ps. lxxviii. 18. view him *sitting on the right hand of God*, making intercession there for sinners, rebels, enemies, that they may be divinely transformed into saints, children, friends. Survey him at the head of all *principalities and powers*, ruling all things according to his Father's decrees, for the glory of his Father and for his own glory, as well as for the eternal welfare of his church. What bright and vigorous contemplations, what entertaining ideas, what efforts of pious passion may be raised by a sanctified mind travelling such a spacious round of divine wonders.

Enter into yourselves, think what once you were, corrupt, abominable, unclean, unholy: Remember the distinguishing grace of God, whereby you were awakened to a sense of your sin and danger, and were taught to fly for refuge to Jesus, your all-sufficient hope: Think on your iniquities all pardoned; think of your garments and soul washed white in the blood of the Lamb; think on the powerful influences of the Spirit, that hath changed your vile nature, and made it holy, that has guarded you from a thousand temptations, and is training you up to everlasting blessedness. Which of the passions is there, that would lie cold and silent, under the lively sentiments of such a various and important scene of things?

But I proceed to the second part of this fifth direction; and that is, "we may have our devout passions quickened by converse with those parts of the holy bible, which contain the most affecting subjects, and express them in the most pathetic manner." Read some of the wonders of mercy and love, in the transactions of God with his ancient people, how he rescued them from the midst of barbarous nations and hostile armies; how he brought them out of bondage and brick kilns, by a mighty and miraculous effort of power and grace; how he led through seas dry-shod, and commanded rivers to cleave asunder, and leave a path for their march; how he visited them after by missionary angels, and sometimes in his own royal person; for *they saw the God of Israel*; Exod. xxiv. 10. Read and meditate the vengeance, and the terrible destruction executed on the old world that was drowned in the flood; the deluge of wrath that fell on Sodom and Gomorrah, which perished by divine lightening; for *the Lord rained down fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven upon them*; Gen. xix. 24. Read the ten plagues of Egypt, and and the desolations that were sometimes spread over rebelli-

ous Israel, and sometimes over the heathen nations, by an angry God, in the writings of Moses, and the book of Judges. Read the soft and melting language of divine mercy, inviting sinners to return to God by Isaiah, the evangelic prophet. Survey the promises that are big with blessings, that contain pardon, and righteousness, and grace, and life, and salvation, and glory in them ; and let the pious affections of hope and love break out and diffuse themselves with sweet delight. Read the history of the life and death of our blessed Lord, which is made up of love and wonders, and look into some of the more affectionate paragraphs of St. Paul, and the pathetic parts of all the sacred epistles.

But above all, for this purpose, I must remember the specimens of divine meditation, and divine worship, the complaints, the supplications, and the songs of praise which are offered to God, by holy men in the Old Testament, and in the New. You find some of these in the books of Moses, Ezra, Job, Daniel, and other prophets ; especially, the Psalms of David : A rich and heavenly treasure is this. A repository, or an altar of sacred fire. The people of God, in all succeeding ages, have had recourse to it, both as an example and a spring of most lively and exalted devotions. Chuse a psalm suited to your own case, and frame and temper ; compare your hearts with the Psalmist, and your circumstances with his ; lift up your souls to God in the words of David, or imitate his language, where his words do not so perfectly express your case. Enter into his spirit, form and model your pious affections by that illustrious pattern ; and be sure to bring Christ and the sweet discoveries of grace, and the blessings of the gospel into this sort of devotion. David himself, under the influence of the holy Spirit, practised this ; though in a more obscure manner, and in the stile of prophecy : And if in the midst of such a dark dispensation, surrounded with types and shadows, we find surprising efforts of fear and love, of joy and wonder, of desire and hope, of faith and adoration, and praise, how unspeakably glorious and entertaining would it be to us, if we had a book of such holy melody, such harmonious worship, written by divine influence in the language of Christ and his gospel, interlined with the blood of the Son of God, adorned and enlivened with the grace and glory of a rising and reigning Saviour, and animated and enriched with the holy Spirit, and the blessings of the New Testament ? Perhaps, this is too sublime a privilege, too high a favour for the church to expect or enjoy in this corrupted and degenerate state : Perhaps we must wait for such a seraphic volume, till we are raised to join the songs and the harps of the heavenly Jerusalem ; or at least till the happy *time of the restitution of all things*, when a new heaven and a new earth shall introduce such a state of things among men, as shall be near akin to the glory of the upper world.

But it is time now to go on to the next particular :

VI. "When you find a devout passion arising in your heart, indulge and cherish it, if there be a convenient season." Take heed that you do not banish the holy thought, or suppress the sacred affection. Do not immediately plunge yourself, without necessity, into the businesses of life, or any vain amusements, lest you damp the wing of your holy desires, which would bear you upward to God; *quench not* those seeds of divine and heavenly fire, which God has kindled in your souls. When the quickening spirit takes hold of your heart, take care that you do not refuse to follow him: Resist not the motions of the blessed Spirit, lest he retire grieved, and it may be long ere he return; 1 Thess. v. 19. Eph. iv. 30. When the blessed God does, as it were, take you by the hand, and lead you aside from the world, to converse with himself; when your blessed Saviour doth, if I may so express, touch the springs of devotion within you, and as it were invite and beckon you to holy fellowship with him, have a care that you do not turn rudely away from him, and renounce his invitations. Let such sacred seasons, such heavenly moments, be duly valued and improved. Let pious affections be indulged and promoted, unless plain and necessary business call you away, at that time, to other engagements.

But if it should happen, that the providence of God and your duty demand your thoughts and your hands to be employed in secular affairs, when you feel a devout passion arising, you may in some measure remedy this inconvenience, by the following advice :

VII. "Endeavour to keep up a constant savour of religion, in the midst of the businesses and cares of this life." While you are travelling through the wilderness of this world, walk always with God: *Do every thing in the name of God*, as under the influence of his command, and with a design for his glory: And let your soul go forth often towards him, in short and holy exercises; this will keep the devout affections awake and active. If you have found God in the closet, or in the church, carry him with you into the things of the world, into the shop and the family, so far as a proper attention to your daily business will permit. Suffer no long intermissions of your heavenly work, lest your pious affections grow cold. Let your thoughts in short intervals of worship go out towards God. Never let an hour pass, if possible, without some devout aspirations towards heaven. In the evening watches, at midnight, and at the dawn of the morning, the holy Psalmist sent up his thoughts to God; and he was often breathing out his soul towards him, amidst the affairs of the day; Ps. lxxiii. 6. *I will meditate on thee in the night watches*; Ps. xxv. 5. *thou art the God of my salvation, on thee do I wait all the*

day. O blessed souls who imitate the practice of that sublime saint, *the man after God's own heart.*

VIII. "Confine not your religion always to your thoughts." Sometimes, perhaps, *while you are musing, the fire will burn*, as David found it; Ps. xxxix. 3. *Then speak with your tongue*, to God, or to man, as David did, who was most exquisitely skilled in all the holy methods of a devout life, and was the noblest pattern of sacred fervor. Gain some acquaintance with lively christians: Mutual conversation shall raise the divine flame higher, like united torches, which increase each other's blaze. Sharpen your desires, and kindle your hopes and joys, by mutual and holy discourse. Borrow a coal from the altar of the sanctuary, from the ordinances of public worship, and warm your own hearts, by endeavouring to warm the heart of your neighbour. Speak to one another of the heavenly world, till each of you find your wings stretched for the flight, and you long for the divine summons. Mix your flames of celestial love, as angels do, and let them aspire upward, and point toward Jesus, your beloved. Man is a social creature, and his passions were made to be raised by converse. Break therefore through the reproach and shame of a degenerate age, and aspire to the life and discourse, and joy of angels.

XI. "Seek earnestly the influences of the quickening Spirit." *Without him you can do nothing.* It is the Spirit of God, who raises dead sinners at first into a divine life, and he puts all the languid springs of life into new motion. Those vigorous and active powers of the soul, which have so strong an influence to promote the vivacity and beauty of true religion, are under his government, and they want a divine touch from his finger, to quicken and accelerate their motions. It is he who awakens our fear, who excites our hopes, who kindles our love and desire to things holy and heavenly; and it is he who exalts our spiritual joys. How often does the pious psalmist cry out for quickening grace in the cxix. psalm, and for the continued influences of the holy Spirit, in others parts of his devotional writings? The whole church prays for the same quickening operations; Ps. lxxx. 11. *Quicken us, O Lord, so will we call upon thee.* Let this be the matter of our daily and importunate requests to heaven. And let us remember too, that, under the gospel, Christ is the spring of our life; he is appointed by the Father to bestow his spirit: He himself is called our life; Col. iii. 3. He himself is a quickening Spirit; 1 Cor. xv. 45. All the principles of our holiness must be derived from him, as our head of vital influence.

X. The last thing I shall propose in order to keep the devout passions awake and lively in religion, is to live much in the faith of unseen things, and to die daily. Set yourselves continually as on the borders of the grave, and the invisible world: This

as St. Paul's practice; 1 Cor. xv. 31. *I protest by our* rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus, our Lord, I die daily:* And daily living, in the views of death, had a happy influence to intain his rejoicing in Christ. If you constantly look on yourselves as dying creatures, and place yourselves on the borders of eternity, you will then take leave daily of sensible things and live in the faith of things invisible. You will then behold God as ever near you, God, the judge of all, the everlasting hope, and the portion of his saints: You will be very unwilling to have your heart absent from God, while you look at death as just at hand.

Then the blessed Jesus, both as a Saviour, and as a judge, will be much on your thoughts. "Am I ready to appear before my judge? Have I any strong and secure evidences that Jesus is my Saviour? Then the gates of heaven will be ever as it were opened before you, and the glories of it always within your view: you will think much of the heavenly world; with all its holy inhabitants, with its divine enjoyments, with its everlasting freedom from temptation, and sin, and sorrow, with its delightful sweetness, and its unknown pleasures.

Then this world will be as a dead thing in your eyes; it will have very little power to work on your passions, and to draw you aside from God: He will be your love, and your all. The strength of faith, and the views of death, will command your fears, and hopes, and desires, and confine them to the things of religion. Then you will be ever solicitous to brighten your evidences for heaven, to keep your hopes firm and unshaken, by often reviewing the grounds and foundations of them: And your spirit will be solicitous to be found ready at all hours, for the call'd summons into the upper world. Every power of nature, and every passion will be kept in its right frame and posture, under the influence of such an expectation. You will hate every sin, and abhor the thoughts of it, lest your souls be defiled afresh, when they are just called to depart: You will keep your desires to God always warm, and set a guard on your love, lest it suffer by decay: You will raise your thoughts to a continual delightful converse with heavenly things, and enter into the spirit of joy and praise. O blessed souls, who daily practise this sort of detachment from the body, and anticipate the pleasures of the heavenly state! Who love the blessed God, and delight in him here on earth, as far as mortality will admit, and are breathing after a more consummate holiness and joy of paradise! This was the frame and temper, this the devout language of Armelle

* Most of the Greek copies, as well as our own translation, read it "your rejoicing;" but it is hard to make sense of it, without changing the word "your" into "our," which in the Greek is but the small change of one letter; and one more manuscript copies have the word "our," and support this alteration.

Nicolas, a poor servant maid, who had spent more than thirty years of her life in the constant exercise of divine love. "God has not sent me, says she, into this world, but to love himself, and through his great mercy, I have loved him so much, that I cannot love him more, after the manner of mortals : I must go to him, that I may love him after the manner of the blessed."

Meditation.—"I have learned so much of religion, as to know that it does not consist in vehement commotions of animal nature, in sublime raptures, and ecstasies : We may be sincere christians in the exercise of repentance and faith, and in the practice of holy obedience, without any overwhelming sorrows, or transporting joys. Yet since the various affections of fear and hope, love and sorrow, desire and delight, belong to my nature, I am sure they ought to be all engaged in some measure in the service of God and religion : And I have been taught in this discourse, by what methods it may be obtained. Let me now recollect these advices briefly, in order to practise."

And first, "I will endeavour that the ruling powers of my soul, the understanding and the will be employed in these affairs of everlasting importance. O may my memory be richly furnished with treasures of divine knowledge ; may I be fully convinced of the necessity and worth of true religion ! May I have the most exalted esteem of God and things heavenly ! May these be the objects of my dearest choice ! May my will be firmly determined, to fix on these as my highest portion, and my everlasting all ! " And can I go thus far, without making God the supreme object of my love ? Can I chuse him with all his excellencies, his graces, and his glories, as my all sufficient happiness, and live upon him as such, and yet not love him ? I think this is impossible. Let me then cherish and improve this divine principle of love ; and divine love will govern all the other passions of nature, will employ them in their proper work, and distribute to them, their several offices in the religious life. Love is the sovereign and commanding passion. "But what shall I do, O Lord, to love thee more ? How shall I kindle this divine flame ? How shall I nourish it and raise it high ? I meditate on the wonders of thy nature, the extent of thy goodness, and the riches of thy mercy, and yet how little do I love thee ? I review the sweet variety of blessings, that I have received from thy hand in this life, and the surprizing transactions of thy condescending grace, which relate to the life to come, "and yet how little do I love thee ?" I behold Jesus thy Son sent out of thy own bosom to take flesh and blood, and to dwell among sinners, even Jesus, the Son of thy highest love, sent down to earth to be made a sacrifice, and to die for the sake of such guilty wretches as I am, an amazing instance of thy love to us, "and yet how little do I love thee ?" I read in thy word,

what thou hast done for me in ancient times and ages, long before I was born ; and what thou wilt do for me in worlds and ages beyond death and time, and yet I am ashamed to think how little I love thee ? My thoughts run from one eternity to another, and trace the various and transcendent wonders of thy love in the several periods of time ; glorious and astonishing instances of the compassion of a God, to a worthless creature, to a worm, to a dust, an atom of being, yea worse, to a sinner, a rebel that deserves thy immortal hatred, and “ yet how little do I love thee ? I wander in meditation through the various fields of nature and grace, and methinks I see my God in all of them, diffusing the unbounded riches of his wisdom and love through them all : I endeavour, to take my warmest passions with me, while I rove among the unknown scenes of thy power and goodness, and yet, O my God, after all, I am forced to confess, “ how exceeding little it is that I love thee ! ” Lord, it is thy own work to turn a heart of stone into flesh, to make it feel all the tender impressions of divine love, and to kindle the celestial principle of life and love within me. Come down from on high, thou Sovereign of all nature ; come down into my heart, take possession of it for thyself, and let it ever burn and breathe towards thee, and send up the perpetual incense of holy desire and love.”

“ I will set a watch upon my eyes and my ears, and all the avenues of sense and appetite, that the creatures may not enter in too far, and dwell too near my heart, which I have given up to God. I would place a sacred guard upon it, to keep off every rival. I know the danger that arises from the flattering objects of flesh and sense : If they but once gain admittance into the heart, they are ever busy to take too fast hold there. Many of the weeds of this wilderness have gay and flattering blossoms, and if once they are permitted to creep into the soul, they twine about every passion, and root themselves there, to the certain prejudice of divine love : Alas, for that holy plant ! The flower of heavenly original ! How the noxious weeds of this world choak its growth, and cause it to decay and languish ! “ O may all the tempting trifles and vain delights of this life stand aloof from my heart, for I have devoted it to God, for a habitation. Keep your distance, ye dangerous creatures, from the gates of this temple where my God dwells. There let him dwell alone and reign over all my powers for ever.

“ I would seek after my God in his public ordinances, I would seek after him daily in my secret retirements : I would give my pious passions a greater loose where no eye beholds me, where no ear can take notice of me. O may these retiring hours be the special seasons for the lively exercise and the increase of my devout affections ! There I can tell my God all my heart in

private groans and private rejoicings. He shall know what my sighs mean, what are my fears and my painful sorrows : There I can blush before him for my secret sins, and open the floods of holy mourning : There I can pour out into his ear my bitter complaints of the rising corruptions of my heart : I can lament over the vanity of my thoughts, and spread my unknown temptations before his eyes. I can lay myself low at his feet in the dust, and tell him with humble confusion of face and soul, how much I have received from him, how much I have done against him, and how little I have loved him.

“ In these secret chambers of retirement, I may join the exercises of an active faith and a chearful hope, with the sighs and tears of penitence : There I can breathe out my most vehement desires after the presence of my God, and after the sweeter sensations of his love. *My flesh and my heart may pant and cry out after God, the living God, and say, when shall I come and appear before him?* Ps. xlii. 1, 2. When shall I be made more entirely like him ? When shall these days of sin and temptation, these tedious seasons of absence and distance from God, come to a final period, never, never to return again. “ The lonely and retired devotions of a christian, may lead him near the walls of paradise, and the seats of the blessed, almost within the sound of their songs and praises. In a solitary cell, in a field remote from cities and men, or in a grove, such as *Abraham planted*, we may call upon the name of the Lord, the everlasting God ; Gen. xxi. 33. There we may send up our souls toward heaven in most pathetic breathings of love and joy : The heart and the tongue may rejoice together in God our Saviour, while none but the trees and the skies bear witness to the hidden pleasures of our religion, and the sweet sensations of a conscience at peace with God : The trees in all their lovely bloom and verdure, and the skies in a cloudless and serene season, are happy emblems of such a conscience, serene and blooming with life and glory. “ When the sun and day-light are withdrawn, we may talk over our hopes, and our holy joys to the silence of the moon and the midnight stars : Silent are they, and secure witnesses of those divine lights, to which the noisy and the busy world are too much strangers, and which the public must not know. There we may make our boast aloud in the name of Jesus, as our Saviour, and our beloved : We may reckon up before him, who sees all things our fairest evidences of an interest in his love, and may glory in the hope of his salvation : Surely when all the pleasing passions of nature are excited into such a just and lively exercise on divine objects, the power and the pleasure of religion within us will acquire thereby a lasting strength.

“ In order to carry on this happy work, I am directed to converse much with those parts of christianity, which are suited

to raise the most sprightly affections. I have done it, O Lord, and yet I feel my heart too little warmed and raised! But I would repeat the holy work; it is all duty, and it should be all delight: I would repeat it, till I find the sacred fire kindle and glow within. I would run over again that vast and extensive field of wonders: Again, let me survey the sublime glories of thy majesty, thy power, thy wisdom, thy goodness, all unsearchable and all infinite. I would dwell upon them till I am lost in this boundless ocean of godhead, and swallowed up in adoration and wonder. Then would I recall my past days of life, and bring past years back to my remembrance. With a sacred solemnity would I revolve in my heart the multitude of my transgressions, and the multitude of divine mercies, till my soul be melted into repentance and love: There is an unknown pleasure in the tears of pious love and holy mourning. I would read the astonishing history of the love of Christ, and trace the divine path of it down from his Father's bosom to his state of infancy, to the manger, and the stable at Bethlehem: I would follow this golden track of love, through the weaknesses, the fatigues, and sorrows of a life of poverty and reproach: I would trace it on the midnight mountains of prayer, and through the solitary wilderness, the stage of his sore temptations: I follow the shining thread of this unwearied love, till it brought him to sustain unknown agonies in the garden, and nailed him to the cursed tree: I behold him there groaning and expiring under the weight of my sins: Amazing spectacle! What will awaken devout passion, if such varied scenes of divine love and divine sorrow cannot do it?

“ Let me borrow those blessed patterns of warm and living devotion, which David has left us, and tune the songs of Zion to the name of Jesus: The sweetest songs, and the sweetest name will happily unite and increase the divine harmony. O when shall I feel the ardent desires, the penitent sorrows, the holy wishes, and pious elevated joys of the ancient Psalmist? O for the return of the same Spirit that gave the soul and the harp of David, these sacred and immortal elevations! When I find a divine influence reaching my heart, and raising a devout passion there, I would hold fast and cherish the heavenly sun-beam, till I feel the holy warmth diffused through all my powers: Nor would I willingly suffer the tides of business or care in this world to quench the spark which was kindled from above. “ I would keep up the savour of divine things among the common affairs of this life. A present God in the midst of the labours of this world, will sweeten and sanctify them all, and bring heaven down to earth.

“ Suffer me not, O my God, to bury all my religion within me. Let my tongue communicate some of the wonders of thy

mercy, and be the lively instrument of thy praise: Give courage and wisdom, that I may know when and how to divert vain discourse, and may dare to speak for God. O when shall the time be, that *they which fear the Lord, shall speak often one to another*: Mal. iii. 16. and warm each others hearts with heavenly conversation? When shall the blessed Spirit revisit the forsaken churches, and dwell again in the degenerate families of christians? While we feel our hearts heavy, and our affections cold and languid in the things of God, we toil and heave in vain without this Spirit. We flutter upon the ground, and make attempts to rise heavenward; but alas, we grovel and groan under our impotence, till the Spirit gives us an eagle's wing to mount us up toward the heavenly world. With all our pious endeavours, let us join our efforts of importunate request for the return of the quickening Spirit, and his vital influences. "O that I might live much in the faith of unseen things, and set myself continually as on the borders of death. Turn aside the veil, O blessed Jesus, that I may look into the unseen world! Or give the eyes of my faith vigour enough to pierce through the veil, and see my God and my Saviour. And may this blessed sight make a divine impression upon all the powers of my nature, such as may awaken every vigorous and pleasing passion of the heart, such as may engage me to keep my hopes always awake, my evidences for heaven unspotted, and my desires ever breathing toward thy presence, my Saviour, and my God! If my pious passions were in their warmest exercise, I should be ever ready to obey the divine order for my removal hence: I should receive the messenger death with a smile on my countenance, and follow the angel with a chearful step, while he leads me away from a world of sin, sorrow, and darkness, to the regions of life and joy.

O happy country, where sorrow and sin have no place, where my spirit in its inmost powers shall feel an eternal spring! While we dwell in this world, it is all winter with us: We behold the sun as afar off, and receive but feeble influences. But in the world on high, all things around us are full of life and love: There are no gloomy hours, no chilling blasts, no cold and cloudy seasons. There no damp shall hang upon the wing of my devout affections, no waters shall ever quench the fervor of them. There I shall be for ever ascending nearer to God the centre of my soul, and all my motions will be swifter too. Every power within me shall feel stronger influences of his love, when I am got so far within the divine attraction. Then I shall complain no longer of absence and distance, nor feel any more eclipse of the face of my God; but I shall be perpetually receiving a full efflux of light and love from the eternal Sun of grace and glory. I shall spend the ages of my endless existence in a rich variety of sublime duties, and sublime delights; such delights and such

duties as are, and must be unknown, till we put off these coarse and cumberous garments of flesh and blood, these veils that enwrap our souls in darkness. Happy shall I be indeed, when all the troublesome and disquieting influences of flesh and blood shall cease: All my painful and uneasy passions shall be for ever banished: Grief and fear, and anger shall vex my spirit no more. Animal nature must be buried in the dust, and all the ferments and emotions of it shall cease for ever.

But must I then lose all those kindly ferments of nature too, all those pleasing emotions, which in this present state, add fresh vigour and delight to the soul, in the exercise of its best affections, love and joy? If all these must be lost, who can inform me what shall come in the room of them? Surely love and joy are immortal things; they were made for heaven, and cannot die, nor shall their vigour be diminished in a world, that was built for happiness. What strange unknown powers then shall be given to separate spirits, whereby these divine affections shall be invigorated, and raised to nobler degrees of exercise? Or shall my separate spirit, when it is divested of every clog, and exulting in complete liberty, use all its own affectionate powers in a nobler and more perfect manner, when I shall see the divine objects of them face to face? Surely the holy souls that are dismissed from flesh, shall be richly furnished with all necessary faculties for their own felicity. Every saint in glory shall find full satisfaction, and intense delight, when all its best affections are united and employed on the most lovely and desirable objects; when they are all fixed on God, their supreme good, and on Jesus, the most perfect, and most divine image of the Father.

Jesus, together with the Father, shall be the object of our contemplation and love. And at the same time his holy soul, with all its pure affections, rejoicing in its own nearness to God, shall be the pattern of our heavenly joy. *I in them*, says our blessed Lord, *I in them, and thou in me, that they all may be made perfect in one*; John xvii. 23. And we are told,—*We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*; 1 John iii. 2.

These are the sweet notices of our future felicity, that he has given us to cheer our hearts in the present state of faith and labour: These are the bright, but distant glimpses of those entertainments, which are prepared for us in our Father's house. These are little prospects of those *rivers of pleasure*, that run between the hills of paradise, and *make glad* the new Jerusalem, *the city of our God*: Such joys as these await us on high. Do we not feel our hearts pant and point upward? These are the joys of divine love; the very faith and hope of this blessedness, the slight glimpses and foretastes of it here on earth, have something in them unspeakable and full of glory: But the complete relish and fruition of it is reserved for heaven, and for heavenly inhabi-

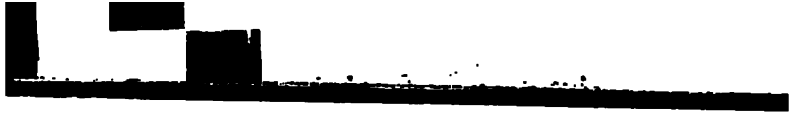
tants to know and enjoy. There, and there only are such immediate and rich profusions of divine love, as the heart of man in this mortal state, is neither pure enough to partake of, nor large enough to conceive. We must die, we must die out of this world, to learn perfectly what those pleasures, are : nor can we know them but by enjoyment. Missionary angels could not make us understand them, nor a visit from departed saints. Earthly languages were not made to express the fulness of these celestial sensations : The ideas of paradise demand *unutterable words* ; nor are spirits dwelling in flesh, either fit or able to hear them. We must die then, to learn how these blessed ones love God, and how God loves the blessed. O when will the happy day arrive ? When will the hour shine upon us, and the bright moment appear ? It is coming, it is coming, as fast as time can roll away, and the sun and moon can finish their appointed periods.

Come, my soul, rouse thyself from thy dull and lethargic temper : shake off the dust of this earth, that hangs heavy upon thy better powers. Hast thou not been long weary of such cold and frozen devotion, as is practised in this earthly state ? Hast thou not long complained of loving thy God so little, and of tasting so little of his love ? Come raise thyself above these dull and despicable scenes of flesh and sense, above all that is not immortal. Lift up thy head with cheerfulness and eager hope ; look out with longing eyes, beyond the shadowy region of death, and salute the dawning of thy eternal day : Stretch out thy arms of intense desire, and send a flight of devout wishes across the dark valley, to meet the approaching joys of immortality.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.







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