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EXTRACTS FROM AND ABRIDGMENTS OF

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IN THIRTY VOLUMES:

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1750, IN FIFTY VOLUMES, DUODECIMO.



BY JOHN WESLEY, M. A.

LATE FELLOW OF LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD.



VOL. XIV.



LONDON:

PRINTED BY T. CORDEUX, FOR T. BLANSHARD, 14, CITY-ROAD, AND
66, PATERNOSTER-ROW.



1822.

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EXTRACTS

FROM

T H E W O R K S

OF

MR. JOSEPH ALLEIN:

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE.

VOL XIV.

B

THE
L I F E
OF
MR. JOSEPH ALLEIN.

JOSEPH ALLEIN was born at Devizes, in Wiltshire, in the year 1633. In his childhood he showed a singular sweetness of disposition, and a remarkable diligence in every thing. When he was about eleven years old he was very constant in private prayer; and so serious and intent in it, that he would not be taken off by any person coming accidentally into the places of his retirement. From this time the whole course of his youth was an even-spun thread of wise conversation, which was rendered more amiable by his sweet and pleasant deportment towards all with whom he conversed.

About this time, his brother, (MR. EDWARD ALLEIN,) a worthy minister of the gospel, died; upon which Joseph earnestly desired that he might be trained up to succeed him in the work of the ministry. This request was readily complied with by his father, who accordingly sent him to school: and such was his industry there, that the time allotted to recreation was by him spent at his book; insomuch that, in the space of about four years, he attained to such a knowledge in the Latin and Greek tongues, that he was judged by his master to be fit for the University. He now abode for some time with his father; and a worthy minister of the place read Logic to him.

When he was about sixteen years old, he went to the University, and was placed in Lincoln College in Oxford; where he had not been long, before a Wiltshire place becoming void in Corpus Christi College, he was chosen scholar of that house.

Being settled there, he gave early and excellent proofs of close attention to his studies, accounting it his great happiness that he had gained this opportunity of improving his learning. And indeed he spared no labour by day or night; he thought no pains too great which he employed for that end. By his own good will he would have done nothing else but pray and study; and if friends came to visit him at such times, (though otherwise of a very social disposition,) they were sure to find him within, but not sure of being admitted to see him. He usually rose at four in the morning, though sometimes he retired not to rest till about one.

So covetous was he of time, that as he could scarcely spare any for sleep, so neither for food; and it was usual for him to give away his *commons* at least once a day, that he might gain the more time to his study.

By this diligence in his studies he advanced (through God's blessing) so greatly in learning, that his profiting appeared to all. He would often say, that he chiefly affected *rational* learning; valuing skill in the *languages* only for the sake of things, and those things chiefly, which were most likely to improve his judgment. And the truth of this was sufficiently evident; for all that were acquainted with him knew him to be, not only a good *linguist*, but an acute *disputant*, and an excellent *philosopher*. When he performed any academical exercises, either in the hall or in the schools, he always came off with applause.

His early accomplishments were so much noticed, that no sooner had he taken his degree of Bachelor of Arts, but he was also compelled to become a tutor, and presently was intrusted with as great a number of pupils as any in the house. Some of his scholars were *Graduates* in Divinity, singular ornaments to that society, and

profitable instruments in the church of CHRIST. During his abode there, a Chaplain's place falling void, he chose that before a Fellowship, which, he knew, in a little time would fall to him of course; and of this choice he never repented, but often reflected upon it with great comfort; for he had always an ardent affection for prayer, inso-much that he seldom parted with a friend, without first praying with him: what a pleasure then was it to him, twice a day, to engage a whole society in so beloved an exercise! And well was it for the College that he so esteemed it; for it was hardly possible that any one could have performed that office better. He did not trouble them with great noise, vain tautologies, crude effusions, unintelligible sense, or mysterious nonsense, instead of prayer: his spirit was serious, his gesture reverent, his words few, but premeditated and well weighed, pithy, solid, and fully expressive of his truly humble and earnest desires. He hated that irreverence, which some call *holy boldness*, and drew near to GOD, not as if he had been going to play, but as became a creature over-awed with the majesty of his great CREATOR: he prayed with the spirit and with the understanding also: he confessed sin with real grief, and inward hatred and detestation of it: he craved mercies like one that felt the want and worth of what he begged, with faith, fervency, and humble importunity; his affections working, but working rationally as well as strongly.

And this, as doubtless it prevailed with GOD, so on the hearers it had the more powerful influence, because they found it to be not merely an occasional excitement, but exactly agreeable to the habitual disposition of the speaker. There are too many, who, whilst praying and preaching, appear very devout, but when out of the pulpit, are as light as others. But it was far otherwise with MR. ALLEIN: he was always composed, serious, and grave, above his age: he set GOD always before him; and, wherever he was, he still laboured to walk as in his presence. It was his care to make religion his business, and his great

endeavour to walk by rule: his main design in all his ways was, to approve himself to his heavenly FATHER, from whom nothing is hid; and his exercise was, “to keep a conscience void of offence, both towards GOD and towards man.”

As for the pleasures of sin, he utterly abhorred them; and as for lawful pleasures, his heart was little taken with them. His conversation being in heaven, his sweetest comforts, and most divine refreshments, were holy and heavenly: his soul took many a delightful prospect of eternity, and he enjoyed a comfortable persuasion, that, ere long, he should inherit those glorious mansions; and this raised him above earthly glory, or the poor, empty delights of sense.

He was of a sweet disposition, and of as highly refined a conversation, as a man subject to the common frailties of human nature could be. He had scarcely a gesture which did not seem to speak, and, by a powerful and charming rhetoric, affect all with whom he conversed. Besides other moral perfections that he was endued with, it might be truly said of him, as the historian said of the Emperor, that he was *totus ex comitate*, made up entirely of courtesy and affability.

He was a true and faithful friend to those who had interest in his friendship, and as pleasant as a serious Christian could wish: he was not rash in choosing, but having chosen he loved entirely. There was but one thing which he thought too much for any, for whom he thought not his love too good; he could not sin for any friend he had on earth: he was a friend *usque ad aras*; so far as lawfully and conscientiously he might do any thing, he held back from nothing, wherein he might serve those whom he loved.

Yet whilst to his friends he showed himself friendly, good nature, as well as Christianity, obliged him to be kind to all, and, according to his ability, bountiful. He was too careful to misplace his charity, yet not so covetous as to withhold it when he met with fit objects. He did

not think the little he had so much his own, as that his necessitous brethren might not claim a part in it; and therefore he gave to them as if he had been paying a debt, and not bestowing an alms. But, above all, his love and affection to the souls of others was most admirable, to whom he desired and endeavoured to do all the good possible, insomuch that some thought they should never have found the way to eternal life, if he had lived to himself. His charity to the poor Prisoners in Oxford Gaol was very eminent, amongst whom, (as MR. PERKINS did at Cambridge,) of his own accord, he began to preach, and continued regularly whilst he remained in the town, once a fortnight, for above the space of twelve months; encouraging them to attend upon his ministry, by a considerable allowance of bread, bestowed at his own expense. He used also, at other times, frequently to visit others, who in the world were but mean and low: his main design, together with the relief of their temporal wants, being to assist their souls in the way to heaven. Indeed, in all his conversation, wherever he came, he was like fire, warming, refreshing, and quickening all that were about him; kindling in them the like zeal for God and goodness, which he had in himself. None came to visit or to be acquainted with him, but (if the fault were not in themselves) they were able to get much good by him; indeed so much as to be for ever the better for him. It was hardly possible to be in his company, and not to hear from him such things, as, if well weighed, might have been enough to make one out of conceit with sin, and in love with virtue. He thought that day wholly lost wherein no one had obtained good by him; and he lived as if he had been quickened by the saying of TERTULLIAN, "To what purpose is it to live, and not to live to some good purpose?" His ardent love to souls hastened his removal into the country, where his opportunities of doing good might be increased.

MR. RICHARD ALLEIN, one of his near relations, has given him the following character:—

“ As a man, he was of quick natural talents, and of great acquired abilities ; of a grave, composed, and serious temper and behaviour ; not *morose*, but full of *candour* ; free, affable, cheerful, and courteous.

“ As a Christian, he was in holiness, heavenly-mindedness, and exemplariness of life, much elevated above ordinary Christians. He had much delightful communion with God : his soul was much exercised in divine contemplation ; and to provoke others to the like exercise, he would often speak what ineffable sweetness his soul had found in his stated meditations upon the divine attributes. In prayer he was not engaged so much in confessing of sin, and complaining of corruption and infirmities, (though he expressed a due sense of these,) as in admiring and praising God in his infinite and glorious perfections, and in the mention of his wonderful works, particularly of the wonders of his love in JESUS CHRIST.

“ His whole life also was adorned with the admirable lustre of particular personal graces :—as,

“ First. He was made up of Love. His sweet, amiable, and courteous carriage was such as made him the delight of his acquaintance, and it made way for the entertainment, both of his serious counsels, and severe reproofs. His compassion to those in distress ; his bounty to those in want ; his forbearance in case of offences ; his affectionate language and deportment ; and his readiness to every obliging office of love to all with whom he conversed, showed evidently how he loved them. Especially, his love was more fully shown to the congregation among whom he exercised his ministry. His ardent longings after their spiritual welfare ; his rejoicings in the prosperity of their souls ; his bleedings and heart-breakings for their falls and infirmities ; his incessant labours among them, both publicly, and from house to house ; his frequent and affectionate letters to them when he was absent ; and his earnest desire to live, to die, and to be buried among them, all show what a great place they had in his heart.

“ Secondly. He was a man of Courage : he feared no danger in the way of his duty, knowing that “ he that walks uprightly, walks surely.” In doubtful cases he was inquisitive ; but when once resolved, he was fearless. He feared not the faces of men, but, where occasion was, would boldly admonish, and faithfully reprove what he saw amiss ; which unpleasant duty he managed with so much prudence, and with such expressions of love, as found a way into their hearts, and made his work the more successful.

“ Thirdly. He was a son of Peace ; a zealous peacemaker among brethren ; a man of sober and peaceful principles ; and of a healing spirit, as to factions upon the account of religion. He had a reverent esteem of magistrates, abhorring all provoking and insolent expressions, or mutinous actions against them.

“ Fourthly. He was a great lover of Truth and Righteousness in his own practice, and strongly enforced them upon others ; especially upon professors of religion, whom he exhorted to be just in their dealings, and true in their words, wary in promising, and punctual in performing. Often did he bewail, and sharply reprove, promise-breaking and deceitful dealing.

“ Fifthly. His Patience was very exemplary ; not only in his sufferings from men, but in the time of his long and great weakness, which lay upon him for some years ; yet all that while he had a constant calmness and serenity of spirit, and was so far from murmuring, or discontent, that he was still blessing God for dealing so gently and tenderly with him.

“ Sixthly, He was eminent in Liberality : he not only did, but devised liberal things. He studied and considered both how he might himself give, and how he might induce others to give, relief to those that were in want. He daily gave much to the poor, both in the place where he lived, and wherever he came. When collections were made for pious or charitable uses, he stirred up others, both by his exhortations and example ;

and sometimes made addition in secret to what he had given publicly. He was very bountiful to many of his relations who were fallen into decay ; yet his income was not above eighty pounds a year ; only his wife, for several years, kept a Boarding-School, which considerably enlarged his estate. He took great pains in visiting gentlemen, and other rich men, to procure a standing maintenance for ministers that were in want.

“ Seventhly. He was of an active spirit : he went about doing good. And as he was incessant in his labours in the congregation where he lived, so wherever he came, he would be scattering some good seed, not only among those of riper years, but among the children, asking them questions, and giving them counsel, which sometimes he left in writing among them. Especially in his own family, among his wife’s scholars, he so deported himself, that many of them had towards him the awe and love of children to their father.

“ Whilst he lay ill at Bath, he sent for many poor persons, both aged and children, and gave them Catechisms, engaging them to learn, and to give him an account of their proficiency therein ; and they came cheerfully to him, being encouraged thereto by his winning carriage, and by his giving them money and food.

“ Eighthly. He was very humble. Though God had highly exalted him in the judgments of others, yet was he low in his own eyes. His whole deportment savoured of humility, and he used great condescension to the weakest and the meanest.

“ As a Minister, besides his labours in that great congregation where the LORD had placed him, the care of many other churches lay daily upon him. He went frequently into other parishes about the country, amongst poor ignorant people that lived in the dark corners, having none to take care of their souls, preached to them himself, and stirred up many of his brethren to do the like. He felt a concern for the poor *Welsh*, and had an influence in sending some Ministers among them,

intending also to have spent some time among them himself, and was hardly withheld from it by all the persuasions of his friends, who told him of his inability to travel on account of his ill health and bodily weakness."

The reading of this so inflamed the zeal of the REV. THOMAS GOUGE, that he was restless in his spirit, till, having settled his affairs about London, he had opportunity to prosecute this design. He accordingly made many journeys both into South and North Wales, where he did much good, and by the assistance of several of his reverend brethren, and others, placed out many hundreds of poor children to school to learn English, and gave them Catechisms, and other good books, besides Bibles and New Testaments in Welsh; and procured the printing of Welsh Bibles, of which there were very few to be had, of the "Practice of Piety," and of other works, to be distributed among them.

MR. GEORGE NEWTON, Minister of Taunton, has also given a similar testimony of MR. JOSEPH ALLEIN, who was his assistant. MR. JOSEPH ALLEIN (says he) came to my assistance in the year 1655, being then about one-and-twenty years old. He was a young man of singular accomplishments, both natural and acquired: his understanding was solid, his memory strong, his affections lively, his learning much beyond the ordinary degree; and above all, his holiness was eminent, his conversation exemplary: in short, he had a good head, and a better heart.

Much of his time he spent in private converse with God and his own soul: he greatly delighted to perform secret devotions in the sight of heaven, and in the open air, when his opportunities served. At other times he kept alone, and then he would retire to a solitary house, probably, that he might freely use his voice as his affections led him, which he could not have done where there were inhabitants, and that he might converse with God without distraction.

His society with others was always mingled with holy and heavenly discourses. He took all opportunities to instruct, exhort, and reprove, which he never failed to do, when he judged it necessary, whatever the event might prove: and his reproofs were accompanied with such humility, tenderness, and compassion, that they seldom failed to carry due conviction.

In the houses where he sojourned, he comforted the souls of many. God freely poured grace into his lips, and he freely poured it out to others. No one could live quietly in any open sin under his inspection. When he came to abide in any house, he brought a blessing with him; and when he departed, he left a blessing behind him. When he was transplanting himself from one family to another, as his occasions sometimes required, he would call all the people, one by one, into his chamber, from whence, it was observed, that scarcely any one returned without tears.

In the duties of the first table he was very exemplary and severe: his righteousness exceeded even that of the Pharisees. Yet was he as exact in the duties of the second table; a man of morals, never spotted with any unjust or uncharitable act. The failing of many professors, in this respect, drew from him many prayers, tears, complaints, and lamentations.

He had an eminently free and bountiful heart, to his power, yea, and beyond his power. He did "good to all, especially to the household of faith." He was full of holy projects, for the advancement of both the spiritual and temporal good of others, which he so vigorously and prudently prosecuted, that they seldom failed.

He was a man of extraordinary condescension to the infirmities of weaker brethren, and used to deal with them in so humble, loving, and sweet a way, as "considering himself, lest he also might be tempted." In their confessed failings he was not supercilious and censorious, but laboured to "restore them with the spirit of meekness:" and when he deeply condemned the action, he

would not judge of the state of the person. But though he was mild in his judgment of others, yet was he severe in his judgment of himself.

In matters doubtful and disputable, he was not peremptory: he laid not more stress upon mere opinions in religion than belonged to them. He was not like many, who are so confident in their determinations that they will hardly hold communion, nay, scarce so much as a pleasing conversation, with any man who cannot think, and speak, and act as they do in every thing. He would freely and familiarly converse with those of all persuasions, who were sound in the faith, as to the fundamentals of religion, and holy in their lives.

His ministerial employments were easier to him than to many others, being of a quick apprehension; of a ready, strong, and faithful memory; of a free and nervous expression; and, above all, having a holy heart, that was always boiling up with good matter. He was always ready to preach and pray, and willing on every occasion to lay out himself in such work: though his warning sometimes was very short, he confidently cast himself upon the LORD'S assistance, who had never failed him; and thus he went freely about his work.

He began upon a very considerable stock of learning, having gifts, both ministerial and personal, much beyond the proportion of his years, and grew exceedingly in his abilities and graces in a little time; and he became very rich in heavenly treasure, by GOD'S blessing on a diligent hand, so that he "was behind in no good gift." GOD blessed him with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things, and he returned all to heaven again. He served with all his might, and with all his strength: he was "abundant in the work of the LORD." He did not go, but ran the ways of GOD'S commandments: he "ran," and was "not weary;" he "walked," and was "not faint." He pressed hard towards the mark till he attained it: his race was swift and short, and his end glorious.

He was greatly desirous of the conversion of souls, in

which he had much success in the course of his ministry: and to promote this end, he poured out his very heart in prayer and preaching. He imparted, not the gospel only, but his own soul to his hearers. His supplications and exhortations were many times so affectionate, so full of holy zeal and life, that they quite overcame his auditors. He so melted over them, that he thawed, mollified, and sometimes dissolved the hardest hearts; but while he melted others, he wasted, and at last consumed himself.

He was not satisfied with these his public employments, but constantly went from house to house, conversing with masters, children, and servants; instructing those especially in the fundamentals, both of the law and gospel, whom he found to be ignorant; gently reproofing where he found any thing amiss; and exhorting them to diligence, both in their general and particular callings.

He inspected, as far as he could, the state of every particular person, and reproofed, comforted, and encouraged, as he found occasion; yet with so much tenderness, humility, and self-denial, that he gained upon the affections of all that entertained him, insomuch that those who were not visited at first, at length came forth, and called upon him to come and help them also.

Thus did he wear out himself, to give light and heat unto others. He allowed himself too little sleep to recruit those spirits which he had wasted with labour and watching. He rose constantly at four o'clock in the morning at farthest, that, having had communion with God, he might be the earlier at his other studies and employments.

He was a very grave, strict, serious, composed young man, yet not rigid in his principles: his moderation was known to all around him. He held, that separation in a church was many times necessary, from the known corruptions of it; but allowed not separation from a church, where active compliance with some sinful evil was not made the condition of communion.

When he catechised in public, he began with prayer

for a blessing upon that duty. Then having propounded some questions out of the Catechism, his care was, not only to make them perfect in rehearsing the answers there set down, but also to bring them to a clear understanding of the meaning of the answers, and of the phrases in which they were expressed, and to draw some practical inferences from the same. He farther instructed them, by proposing several other questions besides those in the Catechism, which himself had before drawn up.

In the evening of each LORD'S day, he used to repeat his sermon in the church, to which many people resorted; and when he had done, some young persons were called forth, who gave him an account of all the heads of it from their memories.

When he went from house to house, he used to give them notice the day before, desiring that they would have their whole family together when he came; which being done, he instructed the younger sort in the principles of religion, by asking questions out of the Catechism, and explaining the answers. He was accustomed also to inquire of them about their spiritual state, labouring to make them sensible of the evil and danger of sin, the corruption of our natures, and the misery of an unconverted state; provoking them to look after the true remedy, to turn from all their sins to GOD, to close with Christ upon his own terms, to follow after holiness, to watch over their hearts and lives, to mortify their lusts, to redeem their time, and to prepare for eternity. These things he explained to their understandings, and pressed upon their consciences with the most forcible arguments and considerations; showing what great privileges they enjoyed, the many gospel-sermons they did or might hear, the many talents they were entrusted with, and the great account they were to give to GOD of the same. Besides, he left with them several counsels and directions, to be carefully remembered and practised for the good of their souls.

Such as were serious and religious he helped forward in holiness, by answering their doubts, and encouraging

them against their difficulties and discouragements; and before he left them, he used to converse with the masters of families, and with such as were grown up to the years of discretion, singly, in order that he might know the condition of each particular person, and the better apply himself to each of them. If he found them living in the neglect of family worship, he used to press upon them to begin the exercise of that important duty, and to accompany it with the reading of the word of God; exhorting them also to the practice of private prayer. He also persuaded mistresses of families to give their children and servants time for private duties, and to encourage them therein. If the family where he came was ignorant, he would insist the longer in instructing and catechising; if worldly, in reproofing and convincing; if godly, in encouraging and directing.

He was accustomed to spend five afternoons every week in these exercises, from one or two o'clock till seven; in which space he usually visited three or four families, sometimes more, as they were greater or less. Thus he went through the whole town, and then shortly afterwards began again; often blessing God for the great success he found in these exercises, and saying, that God made him hereby as instrumental to the good of souls as by his public ministry.

He was a faithful reproof of the failures of professors, whether high or low, ministers or private Christians; even though they were ever so dear to him, or ever so obliging in their conduct, and whatever the event might prove. He was humble, courteous, and affable, condescending to discourse with the poorest and meanest, as soon as with the highest and richest. He was full of holy projects by what means he might most effectually promote the honour of CHRIST, and the salvation of souls; and what he judged to be conducive to these ends, he prosecuted with so much wisdom and resolution, that he seldom failed to accomplish it.

Considering how much conscientious and frequent

self-examination might tend to the weakening of sin, and to the furtherance of holiness both in heart and life, he earnestly pressed this practice in his public ministry, directing his hearers for the performance of it. He conversed also with them in private about it, and drew a promise from most of them, that they would every night, before they went to sleep, spend some time in secret, to call themselves to an account how they had spent that day, by proposing several questions to their own hearts, which he had drawn up in writing, and given to them under several heads; and many confessed that this practice had been very advantageous to them in their christian walk.

Before the Act of Uniformity came forth, he was very earnest with God, day and night, to make his way plain unto him, that he might not be deprived of his present advantages of saving souls, by any scruple upon his conscience. But when he saw those clauses of assent and consent, he was fully satisfied against it; whereas before he was so doubtful, that his intimate friends thought he would have conformed, saying, he would not leave his ministry for small and dubious matters: yet though he was obliged to quit his station, he judged that the ejection of ministers did not take away from them the obligation of preaching to their people; and though upon that black Sabbath he took leave of his beloved people, yet he firmly resolved to go on with his work of preaching in private, and visiting from house to house, till he should be sent to prison, or into banishment.

He went also frequently into the villages, and places about the town, whence most of the ministers were fled; and wherever he came, the Lord was pleased to give him great success: many were converted, and his hearers in general encouraged to cleave closely to the Lord.

This much increased the rage of some neighbouring Justices, who threatened and often sought for him: but it pleased God to preserve him out of their hands longer than he expected. His usual saying was, that if it pleased

the LORD to grant him three months' liberty before he went to prison, he should account it a great favour, and should more willingly submit to it when he had done some work. He next sold his goods, the better to prepare for a gaol or banishment; only he was desirous that his wife should accompany him, which was also her own desire, it being more grievous to her to think of being absent from him, than to suffer with him.

The LORD was pleased so far to indulge him, that he went on in this course from August, in one year, till the end of May in the year following, being often threatened, yet never interrupted; though many, both of town and country, came flocking to his meetings, whenever they were held. He seldom missed preaching twice on the sabbath, and often in the week. Sometimes he preached fourteen times in eight days; often ten, and usually six or seven, either at home or abroad, during all this time, besides his frequent discoursings with such as came to him. That he might have the more leisure for this, he laid aside all his other studies, expecting that his time and liberty would be but short; and indeed the LORD did more than usually assist him, as was remarked by himself and all who heard him.

At length, on a Saturday evening, about six o'clock, he was arrested by an officer of Taunton, who professed that he had rather have been otherwise employed, but that he was urged to a speedy execution of the warrant, by one who was sent on purpose to see it executed, because it was feared that no one in the town would do it.

The warrant was signed by three Justices, who required his immediate appearance at one of their houses, about two miles from Taunton. He desired liberty to stay and sup with his family, expecting but hard entertainment whither he was going; yet this small courtesy was denied him, till one of the chief men of the town was bound for his appearance. At supper he ate heartily, and was very cheerful, yet full of holy and gracious discourse, suitable to the

time and company that were with him. After supper, having prayed with his family and friends, he went with the officer, and two or three friends that accompanied him, to the appointed place, where they charged him with breaking the Act of Uniformity, by his frequent preaching since it took place: this he denied, saying, that he had neither preached in church, chapel, nor in any other place of public worship since that time; and that what he did was in his own family, and with such friends as came to hear him.

They then charged him for being at a riotous assembly. He answered, that at their meetings were used no threats, no dangerous words, no staves or weapons, neither were any put in fear, their only employment being prayer and preaching. They next abused him with opprobrious names and scurrilous expressions; and in these not only the Justices themselves joined, but their ladies also, and other persons who had come to hear his examination. They endeavoured to make him become his own accuser, but without success; and at length drew out a *Mittimus* to send him to gaol on Monday morning, after they had detained him with them till twelve o'clock at night.

When he came home, which was about two o'clock in the morning, he lay down on his bed for two or three hours; and then rising, he remained in private communion with God till about eight o'clock. At this time several friends came to visit him, to whom he would have preached, if the officer, who had a strict charge to the contrary, would have allowed it. Yet he spent the day in discoursing with the several companies of his friends, who, out of the town and country, came to visit him; and as he could be permitted, he prayed often with them. All this while he was very cheerful, praising God for his mercies to him, and encouraging all that came to see him to be bold in the cause of God, and not to be discouraged by what befell him for their sakes. As for himself, he said, he was nothing moved by it, nor in the least repented of any thing he had done, but accounted himself happy, as

being under that promise which CHRIST makes to his followers, *Matt.* v. 10, &c. ; and that he should be doubly happy, now he was to suffer for his sake. He was also earnest with his brethren in the ministry that came to see him, that they should not at all desist from their labours when he was gone, and that there might not be one sermon the less in Taunton through his absence.

MR. ALLEIN was unwilling to depart, till he had left some exhortations with his people, and therefore requested them to come to him about one or two o'clock in the morning : and notwithstanding the unseasonableness of the time, many hundreds of old and young came to him, with whom he spent about three hours in prayer and preaching. And then, with much tenderness, they bade each other farewell.

On Monday morning, about nine o'clock, he, with two or three friends that desired to accompany him, set out for Ilchester. As he went, the streets of Taunton were crowded on both sides with people, and many followed him on foot some miles out of town, with great lamentations ; yet the LORD so strengthened him, that he went through them all with great courage and joy, endeavouring, both by his words and countenance, to encourage and cheer them.

He carried his *Mittimus* himself, having no officer with him ; and when he came thither, the Gaoler was not at home : he therefore embraced the opportunity of preaching before he went into prison, which his adversaries accounted a great addition to his former crimes. The Gaoler being come home, he gave him his *Mittimus*, and was by him put into the Bridewell-Chamber, where he found MR. JOHN NORMAN, late of Bridgewater, committed a few days before for the same cause,—a man of singular abilities, fervent in zeal and holy boldness for the cause of CHRIST ; constant to his principles in the most wavering times ; and one, who, for his exemplary conversation, was much esteemed among the people of God.

There were also five other Ministers, and fifty Quakers,

who all lodged in the same room, separated only by a mat, which they had hung up for a little retirement. Soon after, MR. COVEN, MR. POWEL, and eight more, were brought into the same place, being taken at meetings. This increased the straitness of their room; and it was so near the top of the prison, that they could touch the tiles as they lay in their beds. In addition to this, the sun lay upon the house all day; and there being so many of them together, besides the friends who came to see them, they were much in want of fresh air, and were obliged to take out the glass, and some of the tiles, for a little refreshment. In this room they were forced to lie, and to eat their meals, having no other place of retirement but a little garden, adjoining the place where all the common prisoners were. And in their chamber; also, they were molested with the noises of those poor wretches, the rattling of their chains, and the blaspheming of their tongues, together with their roaring and singing night and day. But the want of air was most offensive to MR. ALLEIN, who had accustomed himself, both in Oxford and in the country, to spend most of his private hours in the fields or woods.

AS SOON AS MR. ALLEIN came into prison, he prayed and preached, which he called the *consecration* of it. And after a day or two, he desired to have his wife with him, or near him in the town, to attend him, and to keep company with such friends as came to visit him. Having prevailed with the Keeper to be allowed one corner to himself, which was more retired than the rest, he here set up his bed; and about this he made a partition with some curtains, that he might be the more private. This was a great comfort to him; and after a few weeks, he procured leave of the Keeper to walk out a mile or more, morning and evening constantly, except the weather hindered him.

Their diet was good and sufficient, and sometimes abundant, by the kindness of their friends. Here they preached once a day constantly, sometimes twice; and

many came daily to hear them, eight or ten miles out of the country, besides multitudes who came to visit them. Their friends were indeed exceedingly kind to them, endeavouring, by their frequent visits and supplies, to take away the tediousness of their imprisonment. But MR. ALLEIN'S labours were only increased by this: spending all the day in conversation with his friends, he was compelled to take much of the night for his studies, and for secret communion with God.

Thus they continued for about four months, and were tossed from the sessions to the assizes. On the 14th of July following, MR. ALLEIN was brought to the sessions held at Taunton, and indicted for preaching on the 17th of May preceding; but the evidence was so slender, that the Grand Jury threw out the bill: and though, by the constant practice of the court, he ought to have been set at liberty, yet was he remanded to prison till the assizes. His reply on this occasion, to the friends who had hoped for his deliverance, was, "Let us bless God that his will is done, and not the wills of such worms as we are."

On the 24th of August, he was indicted at the assizes; and though the evidence was the very same with the former, yet now the Grand Jury found the bill. Upon this, he was brought to the bar, and his indictment read, which was to the following purport: "That he, upon the 17th day of May, 1663, together with twenty others, to the Jurors unknown, did riotously and seditiously assemble themselves together, contrary to the peace of our Sovereign Lord the King, and to the great terror of his subjects, and to the evil example of others." To this he answered, that as to praying and preaching, he was guilty, and judged them to be his duty; but as for riotous and seditious assemblies, he abhorred them from his heart. At last he was found guilty by the Petty Jury, and sentenced by the Judge to pay a hundred marks, and to continue in prison till they were paid. After sentence was pronounced, he only replied, that he was glad that he had appeared before his country; that whatever

was charged against him was nothing more than doing his duty; that all which did appear by the evidence was only that he had sung a psalm, and instructed his family, in his own house, others being present; and that, if nothing which had been urged would satisfy, he should, with all cheerfulness and thankfulness, accept whatsoever sentence his Lordship should pronounce upon him for so good and righteous a cause. From the assizes he was sent to prison again, where he continued a whole year, wanting but three days.

Winter coming on, which they feared would make this place as cold as it had been hot in summer, (the chamber having no chimney in it,) they endeavoured, and with some difficulty obtained, to be removed to the Ward, where they found more comfortable accommodations. Here they had large assemblies, both on week-days and sabbaths, and many days of humiliation and thanksgiving; and though they were much threatened by the Judges and Justices, to be sent beyond the sea, or carried to some island, where they should be kept close prisoners, yet the LORD prevented it, and so ordered the whole, that their imprisonment turned to his greater glory, and to the furtherance of the gospel, by their great labours, to which He added a greater blessing. In the mean while, MR. ALLEIN'S sufferings did not in the least abate his zeal and activity for GOD, but he embraced all opportunities of doing good. The Minister who was appointed to preach at certain times to the felons, being laid aside by illness, MR. ALLEIN freely supplied his place, as long as he was permitted; earnestly exhorting the prisoners, by repentance towards GOD, and faith in our LORD JESUS CHRIST, to secure the eternal welfare of their souls. He was very forward to promote the education of youth, both in the town of Ilchester, and in the country adjacent; freely bestowing Catechisms among many poor families, to instruct them in the principles of religion; exhorting the elder to teach, and encouraging the younger to learn. He was also a serious and faithful monitor to his fellow-

sufferers, if he saw in them any thing which became not the Gospel.

Here, as elsewhere, he was a careful redeemer of his time: his constant practice was, early to begin the day with God, rising about four o'clock, and spending a considerable part of the morning in meditation and prayer, and then falling close to his study in some corner of the prison where he could be most private. At times, he spent nearly the whole night in these exercises, only lying down for an hour or two, without undressing. Those who visited him, he did not entertain with frivolous discourses, but with such as were serious, profitable, and edifying; applying himself to his hearers according to their several capacities; exhorting them to those practices in which, by reason of their age or temper, calling or condition, he judged them to be most defective; and dehorting them from those evils to which he thought them most prone and liable.

He was a careful observer of that rule, (*Matt. v. 44*), "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you." He never exclaimed against those who were the chief instruments of his sufferings, but pitied them, and prayed with STEPHEN, "LORD, lay not this sin to their charge." His great wish respecting them was, that they might be converted, sanctified, and finally saved in the day of the LORD JESUS.

During the time of his imprisonment, no one could discern that his health was impaired, notwithstanding his incessant labours; yet probably, as the Physicians afterwards judged, the foundation of that weakness, which presently after surprised him, and occasioned his death, was then laid.

On his enlargement from prison, he was more earnest in his work than before; yet willing to preserve his liberty among his people, who had no minister that had the oversight of them, though some came and preached to them in his absence. And now such multitudes resorted

to him, that he judged it necessary to divide them into four parties, resolving to preach to them four times each Sabbath; but finding that to be beyond his strength, which was sensibly decaying, he was obliged to forbear, and preached only twice on the Sabbath, yet often on the week-days besides, at home or abroad. He pressed all that feared God, especially such as were of a timorous spirit, to be courageous and active for God, and to be frequent in conversing together, now their ministers were withdrawn; frequent in praises and thanksgivings to God, rejoicing in Him, denying themselves for Him, and resigning themselves and all they enjoyed to Him, that the world might see they could live comfortably on God alone, on his attributes and promises, though they should have nothing else left.

But it pleased the All-wise God to take him off from this eager pursuit of his work, by visiting him, in the latter end of August, with much weakness, within three months after he came out of prison. Being requested by a people, whose Minister was absent, to preach to them, and administer the Lord's Supper, the place being sixteen miles distant, he was so disabled by the journey, that he could not perform both duties; yet, because many of them came far, he forced himself to preach to them, though to his great injury; and after three or four days, with much difficulty, he returned home, and had the advice of the most able Physicians, who all agreed that his disorder proceeded from his abundant labours, and from his preaching too soon after his meals, which he did, when he preached four times a day. This had so abated the natural heat of his stomach, that no food would digest, nor often keep within him. He felt no pain, but had a constant discomposure in his stomach, and a failing of his appetite, so that for many weeks he could not bear the smell of meat, nor retain any liquors or broths, and consumed so fast, that his life seemed to draw to an end. But God was pleased so to bless the means, that in about two months, he recovered of this disorder, yet so lost the

use of his arms, from October till April, that he could neither dress nor undress himself, nor make any use of his pen. His Physicians and friends earnestly besought him to intermit his labours, but could not prevail; for he continued to preach once, and sometimes twice, every Sabbath, and to visit from house to house all that winter.

In the spring, God was pleased to restore the use of his arms, for which he was exceedingly thankful, and they had great hopes of his recovery: and in the summer following, by making use of some mineral waters, near Devizes, his strength was much increased. But trusting too much to that strength, his weakness returned upon him during the next winter, and more in the spring following; yet it continued not long at a time, so that he preached to his utmost strength, and even beyond, both at home and abroad; sometimes going into remote places, where there had been no meetings for about two years, since the removal of their ministers. And he engaged some of his brethren, also, to take their turns; which they did with great success.

He was at this time again much threatened, and warrants were often issued out against him, on which he rejoiced, that when he could do little for God, on account of his disorder, God would so far honour him, that he should suffer for him in a prison; and he would often say with much cheerfulness, that they could not do him a greater kindness. But the Lord, not seeing him fit for the inconveniences of a prison, was yet pleased to spare him.

The *Five-Mile Act* now taking place, he removed to a place called Wellington, five miles from Taunton, to a dyer's house, in a very obscure place, where he preached on the Lord's Days, as he was able. But his enemies soon found him out there, and resolved to remove him; and a warrant was put into the constable's hands to apprehend him: the dyer, also, was threatened to be sent to gaol for entertaining him. Upon this he returned to the house of Mr. JOHN MALLACK, a merchant, who had long solicited him to take up his residence there; but

many of his friends in Taunton were so earnest, that, to satisfy them, he went to their houses, and stayed with some a fortnight, with others three weeks or a month, yet still making MR. MALLACK'S house his home. And he went away from none without giving serious counsels, comforts, or reproofs, as the condition of each required.

He went from no family that was willing to part from him ; nor could he satisfy the requests of one-half of those who invited him to their houses ; so that he would often bless GOD, and say with holy MR. DOD, that he had a hundred houses for one that he had parted with ; and that though he had no goods, yet he wanted for nothing, his heavenly Father caring for him in every thing ; so that he lived a far more pleasant life than his enemies, who had turned him out of all. He was much affected with GOD'S goodness, in the bountiful entertainment given him by MR. MALLACK, whose house, gardens, and walks, were very delightful to him, and all accommodations within suitable thereto ; which made him often say, that he did (as DIVES) " fare sumptuously every day, " but he hoped to improve it better than he did ; and that GOD had inclined his heart to care for many poor, and for several of his brethren in the ministry, and that now GOD rewarded him, not suffering him to be at any expense for himself or his wife.

He was a great observer of each day's Providences, and would every night, before he went to sleep, reckon them up to his wife, to raise his own and her heart to praise the LORD, and to trust Him, of whose care and goodness they had so many constant proofs.

The time for his going to the waters being come, he desired to keep a day of thanksgiving for all GOD'S mercies to him and his friends ; and accordingly, on the 10th of July, 1665, several of his brethren in the ministry, and of his friends in Taunton, met at MR. MALLACK'S house, about a mile from the town, to which, after they had been a while together, came two justices, with their attendants armed with swords, and brake open the doors by force,

though they might have unlatched them if they had pleased. Then, after much derision and threatening, they took their names, and committed them to some constables, charging them to bring their prisoners the next day to the Castle Tavern in Taunton, before the justices of peace there. The next day, the prisoners were brought forth, and answered to their names as they were called; and after two days' tedious attendance, were all convicted for keeping a conventicle, and sentenced to pay three pounds a piece, or be committed to prison for sixty days; but few of them either paid their fines, or suffered their friends to do it for them. Whereupon Mr. ALLEIN and seven ministers more, and forty private persons, were committed to Ilchester gaol. When Mr. ALLEIN came to the prison, his deportment and conversation there were every way as exemplary as in his former confinement; and notwithstanding his great bodily weakness, yet he constantly took his turn with the other ministers in preaching, which they performed in general twice a day, besides other acts of religious duty.

And although many of his flock were imprisoned with him, by which means he had the fairer opportunity of instructing and watching over them, yet he was not forgetful of those who were at liberty, but wrote many letters to them, from which they might reap no small benefit, whilst they were deprived of his bodily presence. He was also very solicitous for those that were with him, that they might be the better for their bonds, walking worthy of the many and great mercies they had enjoyed during their imprisonment; that when they returned to their houses, they might speak and live forth the praises of God, carrying themselves in every respect as became the Gospel for which they had suffered: and his anxiety in this respect was further manifested by the parting counsel which he gave them, on the morning in which they were set at liberty.

His last imprisonment prevented his going to the waters, in consequence of which his disorders increased

upon him all the winter following, and more in the spring ; yet not so as to take him wholly from his work, for he frequently preached, and administered the LORD'S Supper. But going to the waters in July, 1667, they had a contrary effect upon him to what they had at first ; for after three days' taking them, he fell into a fever, which seized on his spirits, and his strength decayed so exceedingly, that he seemed to be near death. But the LORD was pleased to spare him, and so far to restore him, that at six weeks' end he returned to his people ; yet then feeling a great loss of strength, he was willing to go to Dorchester, to advise with DR. LOSE, an able Physician, from whom he had received many medicines, but never had any conversation with him.

The Doctor, soon perceiving his weakness, desired him to stay there for a fortnight or three weeks, that he might the better advise him, and alter his remedies as he should see occasion, to which he readily assented. He had not been there above five days, before the use of his limbs was suddenly taken from him ; first that of his arms, then that of his legs, so that he could neither go nor stand, nor even turn in his bed. All means failing, he was given over by physicians and friends, who saw him for some weeks lying in cold sweats night and day ; and often, for some hours, half his body was so cold, that to their apprehensions the time of his death seemed nearly present.

Thus he lay from September 28th, to November 16th, before any amendment appeared : all which time he was very cheerful, praising and admiring GOD for his mercies ; but his spirits were so low that he spake seldom, and very softly. He was free from pain ; and when his friends admired his patience, he replied, that GOD had not tried him in any thing, but in laying him aside from his work, and keeping him out of heaven. Being asked how it was with his soul in all his bodily weakness, his answer was, that he had not those ravishing joys which he expected ; but he had a sweet serenity of heart and conscience, and

a confidence in God, grounded upon the promises of the Gospel.

The Ministers and Christians of that place were very compassionate to him, visiting and praying with and for him often: and DR. LOE visited him twice a day, for about a quarter of a year together, and yet would never take from him any fees. The gentry also, in and about the town, sent whatever they imagined might be agreeable to him; so that he neither wanted food nor physic: and he much delighted in the consideration of the LORD'S kindness to him, in the love which he received from them, and would often say, "I was a stranger, and mercy took me in; in prison, and it came to me; sick, and it visited me!" There were also fourteen young women who took their turns in attending and watching with him.

In this condition he kept his bed till the 18th of December, and then, beyond hope, in the depth of winter, he began a little to recover; yet could he neither go nor stand, nor move a finger, having feeling in his limbs, but not the least motion. It pleased God, however, that by degrees his strength increased, so that he could, with help, walk a turn in his chamber; and when, after a time, he could do it without help, he was wonderfully affected with the LORD'S mercy to him. By February, with a little help, he was able to walk in the streets. Being asked how he could be so well contented to lie so long under such weakness, he answered, "What! is God my Father, JESUS CHRIST my Saviour, and the SPIRIT my Comforter and Sanctifier, and heaven my inheritance; and shall I not be content without limbs and health? Through grace I am fully satisfied with my Father's good pleasure." To another, who asked him the same question, he answered, "I have chosen God, and he is mine, and I know with whom I have trusted myself; which is enough. He is an unreasonable wretch that cannot be content with God, though he hath nothing else. My interest in God is all my joy."

Some of his friends of Taunton coming to Dorchester

to see him, he was much revived; and ordering the curtains to be drawn aside, he desired them to stand round the bed: then causing his wife to hold forth his hand to them, that they might shake him by it, as well as he was able, he spake thus to them: "O how it rejoices my heart to see your faces and hear your voices, though I cannot as heretofore speak to you. Methinks I am now like old JACOB, with all his sons about him. Now you see my weak estate: thus I have been for many weeks, since I departed from Taunton; but GOD has been with me, and I hope with you. Your prayers for me have been answered in many ways; the LORD return them into your own bosoms! My friends, life is mine, death is mine; in that covenant which I preached to you is all my salvation, and all my desire: although my body do not prosper, I hope my soul doth. I have lived a sweet life by the promises, and I hope, through grace, I can die by a promise. The promises of GOD are everlasting, and will stand by us: nothing but GOD in them will stand us in stead in a day of affliction. My dear friends, I feel upon my heart the power of those doctrines which I preached to you; the doctrines of faith, of repentance, of self-denial. O that you would live them over, now I cannot preach to you. It is a shame for a believer to be cast down under afflictions, who has so many glorious privileges,—justification, sanctification, and eternal glory. We shall be as the angels of GOD within a little while; nay, to say the truth, believers are, as it were, angels already, that live in the power of faith. O my friends! live like believers: trample this world under your feet; be not taken with its comforts, nor disquieted with its crosses: you will be gone out of it shortly."

When they came to take their leave of him, he prayed with them as his weak state would suffer him; and blessed them in the same words which he used after the LORD's Supper: "The LORD bless you, and keep you: the LORD cause his face to shine upon you, and give you peace: and 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, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight, through JESUS CHRIST; to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen." Adding, "Farewell, farewell, my dear friends: remember me to all in Taunton. I beseech you and them, if I never see your faces more, go home, and live over what I have preached to you; and the LORD provide for you when I am gone. O let not all my labours and sufferings, let not my wasted strength, my useless limbs, rise up in judgment against you at the great day of the LORD."

At another time, some friends coming to visit him, he spake thus: "O my friends, let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of CHRIST: whether I am present or absent, live what I have spoken to you in the name of the LORD. Now I cannot preach to you, let my wasted strength, and useless limbs, be a sermon to you. Behold me! I cannot move a finger: all this is come upon me for your sakes, and the gospel's; it is for CHRIST and you that I have thus spent myself. I am afraid lest some of you, after all that I have spoken, should be lost in the world. There are many professors who can pray well, and talk well, whom yet we shall find at the left hand of CHRIST another day. You have your trades, your estates, your relations; be not taken with these, but with GOD. O live on Him. For the LORD's sake, go home, and beware of the world, of worldly cares, worldly comforts, worldly friends." And then he added; "The LORD having given authority to his ministers to bless his people, I accordingly bless you:" and so he did in the words formerly recited. And thus he was accustomed to converse with all that came to visit him, as well as he was able, looking always cheerful upon them, and never in the least complaining of his afflictions.

In February, he was very desirous to return among his people, which the doctor assented to, fearing that the air

of Dorchester would be too sharp for him in March, and judging that it might conduce to his cure to have his mind satisfied. At his return he was much pleased with the sight of the place and of his people, who came flocking about him; and he so increased in strength that, within a week after he came home, he was able to feed himself. But to prevent any harm which might arise from the frequent visits of friends, he removed to Mr. MALLACK's house, where he again found most kind entertainment.

There he increased in strength, till the beginning of April; and then he began to decline again, and was soon after afflicted by convulsion-fits, of which he had several the first day and night. But in the use of means, through God's blessing, he was freed from them for about three weeks; and then, being alone in his chamber, he was seized by a fit, in which he fell to the ground and hurt his face, and bled much. It was the opinion of the Physicians that this fall saved his life; for, probably, had not that corrupt blood come from his head, he would have died in that fit. After this he went to bed, and slept so well during the night, that he awoke in the morning much refreshed, and full of the praises of God for his mercies to him.

Henceforth he constantly lived in the expectation of death, saying often, "It is but a puff, and I am gone:" and therefore every night, after prayer, he used to bid all the family farewell, telling them he might be dead before morning. Whilst he was undressing he continued to discourse of spiritual things, and when he lay down to rest, he used to say to his wife, "We shall shortly be in another bed. Farewell, my dear heart, the LORD bless thee." His first speeches in the morning usually were, "Now we have one day more; here is one more for God; now let us live well, work hard for our souls, and lay up much treasure in heaven this day, for we have but a few to live."

His strength was now so much repaired, that his friends

had no fear of a relapse. But about the 6th of May, he began to find weakness in his stomach, which in a few days greatly increased, and he lost the use of his limbs again. On the 12th of May, having lain some days and nights in cold sweats, as formerly, he was again seized by convulsions; and having continued in a trance about four hours, his friends weeping about him, he at last said to them, "Weep not for me, my work is done," and immediately fell into a violent convulsion, which held him two hours, and presently after into another, in which he rattled and was cold, so that they thought every breath would be his last. The Physicians said, that his pulse was gone, and that he would be dead in a few minutes: but God showed his power in reviving him beyond all expectation; yet he was not able to speak a word to them till the next day, nor did he perfectly recover from this attack till four days after. Thus he continued very weak until July, mostly confined to his bed, yet cheerful, and free to discourse with any who came to visit him.

His wife suggested to the Doctors, that a visit to Bath might be of use to him. Some were for it, others against it; but he himself was very eager for it. And a horse-litter being provided for him, though he had not for many days been out of his bed, yet the Lord so strengthened him that in two days after he went almost forty miles to Bath. The Doctors there wondered to see such an object, and marvelled that he came such a journey alive, and were very doubtful about his bathing; but against their judgments he resolved to venture himself.

At his first appearing in Bath, he was such a skeleton, that the ladies were affrighted to see him, as if death had come among them, and they could not endure to look upon him. When he went first into the bath, he was able to stay but a little while, yet found himself much refreshed by it, and had no symptoms of his fits, as had been previously feared. By God's blessing upon this means, and drinking goat's milk, in three weeks' time he was able to walk about his chamber and feed himself: his appetite

came again, and his strength increased; and thus he continued till his death drew near.

During this time he grew exceedingly in grace, to the joy of those about him. He had much communion with **GOD**, and such ravishments of spirit from the consolations of the **HOLY GHOST**, that they were sometimes more than he could express, or his bodily strength could bear. He was more cheerful than formerly, and exceedingly affectionate to his wife, and to all friends, especially to such as were most heavenly. And the **LORD** was pleased to order it so by his providence, that many such came to make use of the bath, both from Taunton and other places, who were a great comfort to him.

Here he had many visitors, both friends and strangers, who came to see and discourse with him, having heard what a monument of mercy he was; and to all of them he so enlarged on **GOD**'s dealings with him, as gave great content to all who heard him, and much affected many, who were strangers to **GOD** and religion as well as to him. He found much favour even among the worst, both gentry and others: such as would make a scoff at religion in others, would hearken to him, even though he faithfully reproved them for their oaths, excess in drinking, and wanton behaviour. And there was none of them but did most thankfully accept it from him, and showed him more respect after than they had done before; in which he observed much of **GOD**'s goodness to him, and would often say, "O how good it is to be faithful to **GOD**." One of the vilest of these persons said of him, that he never spake with such a man in his life.

His reproofs were managed with so much respect to their persons and places, that they said, they could not but take them well, though they were close and plain. And his manner was, before he intended to reprove them, often at the bath to talk with them of such things as were pleasing to them, whereby he so engaged their affections that they delighted to converse with him. He was furnished with matter of discourse for any company,

though he always endeavoured to make use of it for spiritual ends ; by which means he caught the souls of many.

Here, though he had much to occupy his time, by constantly bathing every day, and frequent visits, besides his weakness, yet he kept his regular seasons, four times a day, for his holy retirements ; first, in the morning from five o'clock till seven, at which time he was carried to the bath ; and again before dinner, but then he spent less time ; and about half an hour before two, just before he went abroad. He appointed his chairmen, who carried him to the bath, to fetch him about three o'clock, and to take him to the schools and alms-houses, and to the godly poor, especially the widows, to whom he gave money, and with whom he used to pray and converse concerning their spiritual states, engaging the teachers and governors to teach them the catechism, of which he bought and gave away many dozens for the use of their scholars, with other small books, such as he judged useful for them ; and about a week or a fortnight after he would visit them again, to see what progress they had made. He also engaged several persons to send their children once a week to him to be catechised ; and he had about sixty or seventy children that came to him every LORD'S day, who profited much by his instructions, till some took such offence at it, that he was obliged to desist, and the schoolmaster was threatened to be brought into the Bishop's Court at Wells for it. He also sent for all the godly poor he could hear of in the city, whom he entertained at his chamber, and gave them money according to his ability, as a thank-offering unto God for his mercy to him, and procured two ministers to assist him in keeping a day of thanksgiving for the same. Though his sickness had been long, and his expenses great, yet he thought he could never do enough for him from whom he had received all. He constantly gave money or fruit to all the children who came to be catechised by him, besides what he gave to their teachers and the poor ; and having made provision for his wife,

he resolved to lay up the rest in heaven; often saying, that having no children of his own, God's children should have his estate.

His next work was to send letters to all his relations and intimate friends, whom he exhorted to observe his counsel, for it was like to be his last. He had a great desire to go to Mr. JOSEPH BERNARD'S, which was about five miles from Bath, to promote the exercise of catechising in Somerset and Wiltshire. Mr. BERNARD having had a great deliverance as well as himself, MR. ALLEIN proposed to him, that by way of thank-offering unto God, they should engage to join in printing six thousand of the Assembly's Catechisms, and to raise some money among other friends to send to every minister in those counties that would engage in the work, and also to give to the children for their encouragement in learning it. This proposal was carried into effect by MR. BERNARD, after MR. ALLEIN'S decease.

MR. ALLEIN finding himself again decline, judged that it proceeded from want of bathing, and therefore returned to Bath again, where (by the advice of the Doctor) he made use of the hot bath, the cross bath being now too cold for him, and for four days seemed to be refreshed by it; but upon the 3d of November there appeared a great change in his countenance, and he found a great alteration in himself; and some friends coming to visit him, he desired them to pray for him, for his time was very short.

After they had dined, he was in a more than ordinary manner transported with affection to his wife, whom he thanked for all her care and pains about him, offering up most affectionate petitions to God for her; and the like also he did after supper.

After this, he called for a "Practice of Piety," and turning from his wife, he read to himself the Meditation about Death; which his wife taking notice of, asked him if he judged his end to be near? He answered that he knew not, but within a few days she would see.

Then he desired her to read two chapters to him, as she usually did every night, and so he hasted to bed, not being able to pray with them. As soon as he was in bed, he complained of a stoppage in his head, and had something given him to prevent his fits ; yet within a quarter of an hour he had a strong convulsion, and GOD was pleased to deny success, notwithstanding all means used to remove it : these fits continued for two days and nights without an hour's intermission.

His fits were very terrible to behold ; but prayer being made, that if the LORD saw fit, He would so far mitigate his hand upon him, that he might speak his mind to them before his departure, the LORD was pleased to return a gracious answer : for although he had not spoken from Tuesday night before, yet on Friday morning, about three o'clock, he called for his wife, speaking very intelligibly, at times, all that day ; and the same night he spake with an audible voice. This continued, with some little intermission, till Saturday evening, when he departed.

About three that afternoon, he had, as those about him conceived, some conflicts with SATAN ; for he uttered these words, " Away, thou foul fiend, thou enemy of all mankind, thou subtle sophister ! art thou come now to molest me, now that I am just going, now that I am so weak, and when death is upon me ? Trouble me not, for I am none of thine : I am the LORD's ; CHRIST is mine, and I am his ; his by covenant : I have sworn myself to be the LORD's, and his I will be : therefore be gone." Which words he repeated often, " Be gone, be gone."

Previous to his last illness, he spent most of the time in heavenly and profitable discourses ; speaking much of the place to which he was going, and his desire to be gone. " I was thinking," (said he, as he was one day dressing,) " of my marriage-day ; it will be shortly : O what a joyful day will that be !" On another occasion, having some broth brought him, he said, " Blessed be the LORD for these refreshments in the way home : but O how sweet

will heaven be !” And at another time he said, “ I hope to be shortly where I shall neither need meat, nor drink, nor clothes.”

When he looked upon his weak and consumed hands, he said, “ These shall be changed ; this vile body shall be made like unto CHRIST’S glorious body. O what a glorious day will the day of the resurrection be ! Methinks I see it by faith. How will the saints then lift up their heads and rejoice ; and how sadly will the wicked world look then ! O come, let us make haste ! Our LORD will come shortly, let us prepare for him. If we long to be in heaven, let us hasten with our work ; for when that is done, we shall be fetched away. O this vain, foolish world ! I wonder how reasonable creatures can so dote upon it ! What is in it worth the looking after ? I desire not to be in it longer than my Master hath doing or suffering work for me ; were that done, then farewell to earth.”

He said much in commending the love of CHRIST, and, from that, exciting himself and others to obedience to CHRIST ; often speaking of his sufferings and of his glory, of his life, death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming ; with the thoughts of which he was much transported.

He was accustomed to reckon up the choice tokens which CHRIST had sent him : First, the pardon of sin ; secondly, a patent for heaven ; thirdly, the gift of the Spirit ; fourthly, the robe of CHRIST’S righteousness ; lastly, the guard of his angels : and with this last he frequently comforted himself, in the times of imprisonment, and elsewhere ; and would say to his wife, “ Though we have not such attendants and servants as the great ones of the world have, yet we have GOD’S blessed angels still to wait upon us, to minister to us, to watch over us while we are sleeping, to go along with us in our journeys, and still to preserve us from the rage of men and devils.”

He was exceedingly affected with the last three chapters

of St. JOHN'S Gospel, especially with CHRIST'S parting words and prayer for his disciples. In short, his heart, his lips, his life, were filled with grace, which shone forth both in health and sickness, in prosperity and adversity, in his own house and in GOD'S house; so that all who conversed with him acknowledged how much they gained by him.

At MR. ALLEIN'S first coming to Taunton, he abode with MR. NEWTON, and, after his ordination, administered all ordinances jointly with him, though he were but an assistant; being highly esteemed and dearly loved by him. At this time he carried on the acquaintance with her whom he afterwards married; and MR. NEWTON observing his restless spirit, which put him upon many tedious journeys, every fortnight, of twenty-five miles, to pay her a visit, he persuaded them to consummate their marriage, which they did accordingly, October 4th, 1655; after which they lived with Mr. NEWTON almost two years, and were very kindly entertained by him.

At the end of this time, conceiving they might be more useful by becoming housekeepers, they took a house; and MRS. ALLEIN set up a boarding-school, and had many boarders and scholars. Their family was seldom less than twenty, sometimes thirty; and her school usually contained fifty or sixty, many coming out of the town and neighbourhood, besides the boarders. And the LORD was pleased exceedingly to bless their labours; so that in a few years many of them were converted, who before were strangers to GOD. All the scholars called MR. ALLEIN *Father*; and indeed he had far more care of them than most of their natural parents had.

His practice in his family was twice a day to read the Scriptures, to sing a psalm, and to pray; except when he catechised, which was constantly once, if not twice a week. Of every chapter that was read he expected an account, and also of every sermon. He conversed with his servants frequently, together and apart, about the spiritual welfare of their souls, pressing them to perform

all duties, both of the first and second table: he also gave them sundry books suitable to their capacities and conditions, of which they gave a weekly account how they had profited.

His LORD'S-day work was very great; for though he preached but once in Taunton, yet he was constantly employed the other part of the day, either in assisting some of his brethren, or at other places where a minister was wanting. In his public repetitions, and his catechising, his own family, both scholars and servants, gave the answers when their turn came, as well as others.

He was a holy and tenderly affectionate husband. He expressed his love for his wife, by his great care for her both in sickness and in health; by his provision for her after his decease; and by his delight in her company, saying often that it was irksome to him to make a meal without her. He used to impart to her the knowledge of all his concerns, as far as he judged it proper for her to know them, and to consult with her about them: he spared not to reprove her faithfully for whatsoever he judged amiss: and if himself had at any time given her offence, he would desire her to forgive it, saying, that he was restless in his spirit till she had so done.

He was frequent in keeping days of humiliation, especially before the LORD'S Supper. He was a strict observer of the Sabbath, the duties of which he performed with such joy and alacrity of spirit, both in public and private, as tended much to the edification of those who joined with him; and the same practice he pressed much upon Christians, that they should spend the Sabbaths more in praises and thanksgivings, as being days of holy rejoicing in CHRIST our REDEEMER.

He was much concerned if he heard any persons at work in their trades before he was in his duties with GOD, saying, "O how this noise shames me! Doth not my Master deserve more than theirs?" From four o'clock till eight he spent in prayer, meditation, and singing of psalms, in which he much delighted, and daily practised,

alone as well as in company. Having refreshed himself about half an hour, he went to family duties, and after that to his study till eleven or twelve o'clock. Having refreshed himself a while after dinner, he retired into his study to secret prayer, and then went abroad amongst those families which he had appointed to visit; going out about two o'clock, and seldom returning before seven. He would often say, "Give me that Christian that accounts his time more precious than gold." He catechised once a week in public, and on every Tuesday evening repeated the sermon which he had preached on the previous LORD's day.

In his visiting from house to house he found much difficulty, because it had not been practised before; yet after he had preached in public the duty of ministers to the people, and that of the people to receive them when they come to promote the good of their souls, he speedily set upon the work. His custom was, to make out a list of the names of all the families in each street; and a day or two before he intended to visit them, he used to send them word, that they might be at home, and that he might know whether they were willing to receive him or not. Such as sent slight excuses, or refused to admit him, he would notwithstanding visit; and if they shut their doors against him, as some did, he would speak some few affectionate words to them, and then depart: and shortly after he would write to them with words so full of love, and such expressions of his great desire of doing good to their souls, as often melted and overcame their hearts, so that many of them afterwards entertained him readily. And in the practice of this duty he visited the poor as well as the rich, not hesitating to enter the noisome abodes of poverty and disease; but though his labours were so abundant, yet for nine years together he was not under the least disorder for one quarter of an hour. His wife, suspecting that his extraordinary labours would undermine his strength, laboured to persuade him somewhat to diminish them; but his answer was, "What have I

strength for, but to spend it for GOD? Thou art like PETER, still crying, Spare thyself; but I must not hearken unto thee no more than my Master did to him.”

He was very temperate in his diet, and though he had a sharp appetite, yet he would moderate it, knowing how much this conduced to his health. His conversation at meals was very profitable and pleasant; whether he was at home or abroad, he took opportunities of saying something for the edification of others.

He greatly adored the mercies of GOD in every meal, and was still so pleased in the provision that was made for him, that he would often say, he lived far better than the great ones of the world, whose tables were better furnished; for he enjoyed GOD in all, and saw his love and bounty in what he received from him at every meal: whence, speaking to his wife, he would say, “O wife, I live a voluptuous life: but, blessed be GOD, it is upon spiritual dainties, such as the world neither knows nor tastes of.”

He greatly considered the poor that were in want of all things, often wondering that GOD should make such a difference between him and them, both for this world, and for that to come: and his charity was almost beyond his estate. There were but few, if any, poor families, but he knew their necessities, and either by himself or by his friends relieved them; so that his house was seldom free from such as came to make their complaints to him. He used to buy pease and fitches of bacon, and distribute them twice a year in the cold and hard seasons. He kept several children at school upon his own cost, bought many books and catechisms, and had many thousands of prayers printed, which he gave away among the poor. And when his brethren of the ministry were cast out of their places, he himself gave four pounds, yearly, towards making a public stock for them, by which he excited many others to do the same. Upon other occasions, which frequently happened, he was so liberal that he gave offence to his friends; so that many in the town

grudged to give him what they had agreed for, because he gave away so much. Besides all this, the necessities of his father, and of many other relations, were still calling for help, and he ministered unto them without grudging. And when he had received a more than ordinary mercy, he would set apart some portion of his estate, which he dedicated to the LORD as a thank-offering, to be employed in pious and charitable uses.

When his wife would have moderated him in these expenses, his answer was, that he was laying up for God, and God would repay him ; that by liberal things he should stand, when others that censured him for it should fall ; and that if he sowed sparingly, he should reap sparingly,—if bountifully, he should reap bountifully. And notwithstanding all that he did in his life-time in this way, yet, when he came to die, he had something left to dispose of to his relations, and to his brethren of the ministry, besides the comfortable provision that he had made for his wife.

In short, his whole life was a continual sermon, holding forth the doctrines which he preached, by humility, self-denial, patience, meekness, contentment, faith, love to God, his church, and people;—the blessed fruit of all which he now reaps in heaven, where he is singing praises to God and the LAMB, which was his great delight whilst here on earth.



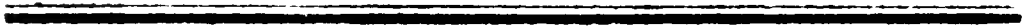
AN

A L A R M

TO

UNCONVERTED SINNERS.

BY JOSEPH ALLEIN.



AN
EARNEST INVITATION TO SINNERS
TO
TURN TO GOD.

DEARLY beloved and longed for! I gladly acknowledge myself a debtor to you all, and am concerned, as I would be found a good steward to the household of GOD, to give to every one his portion. But the physician is most solicitous for those patients whose case is most doubtful and hazardous; and the father's bowels are especially turned towards his dying child. The numbers of unconverted souls call for my most earnest compassion, and hasty diligence, to pluck them out of the burning; and therefore to these first I shall apply myself.

But whence shall I fetch my arguments, or how shall I choose my words? LORD, wherewith shall I woo them? Wherewith shall I win them? O that I could but tell! I would write unto them in tears; I would weep out every argument; I would empty my veins for ink; I would petition them on my knees; verily, were I able, I would. O how thankful should I be, if they would be prevailed with to repent and turn!

How long have I travailed in birth with you? How frequently have I made suit to you? How often would I have gathered you? How instant have I been with you? For this I have prayed and studied, many years, that I might bring you to GOD; O that I might but do it! Will you yet be entreated? O what a happy man might you

yet make me, if you would but hearken to me, and suffer me to carry you over to **JESUS CHRIST**.

But, **LORD**, how insufficient am I for this work! I have been many a year wooing for thee, but the damsel would not go with me. **LORD**, what a task hast thou set me to do! Alas! wherewith shall I pierce the scales of leviathan, or make the heart to feel that is hard as a stone; hard as a piece of the nether millstone! Shall I go and lay my mouth to the grave, and look when the dead will obey me, and come forth? Shall I make an oration to the rocks, or declaim to the mountains, and think to move them with arguments? Shall I give the blind to see? From the beginning of the world was it not heard that a man opened the eyes of the blind. But thou, **O LORD**, canst pierce the scales and prick the heart of the sinner. I can but draw the bow at a venture, and do thou direct the arrow between the joints of the harness, and kill the sin, and save the soul of the sinner.

Ah, my beloved! refresh my bowels in the **LORD**. "If there be any consolation in **CHRIST**, any comfort of love, any fellowship of the **SPIRIT**, any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy." Now give yourselves unto the **LORD**: now set yourselves to seek him: now set up the **LORD JESUS** in your hearts, and set him up in your houses: now come in, and kiss the **SON**, and embrace the tenders of mercy. Touch his sceptre and live; why will you die? I beg not for myself; but fain I would make you happy: this is the prize I run for, and the point I aim at. "My soul's desire and prayer for you is, that you may be saved."

Dearly beloved, would you rejoice the heart of your Minister? Then embrace the counsels of the **LORD** by me: forego your sins: begin to pray: set up the worship of **GOD** in your families: keep at a distance from the corruptions of the times. What greater joy to a Minister, than to hear of souls born unto **CHRIST** by him, and that his children walk in the truth.

Brethren, I beseech you suffer friendly plainness and

freedom with you in your most important concerns. I am not playing the orator, to make a learned speech to you. These lines are upon a weighty errand indeed, namely, to convince and convert you. I am not seeking your applause, but your souls. My work is not to please you, but to save you; nor is my business with your fancies, but your hearts. If I have not your hearts, I have nothing. If I were to please your ears, I would sing another song: if I were to preach myself, I would steer another course: I would then tell you a smoother tale. If I were to quiet a crying infant, I might rock him asleep: but when the child is fallen into the fire, the parent takes another course; she will not go to still him with a song. I know if we speed not with you, you are lost: if we cannot get your consent to arise, and come away, you perish for ever. No conversion, and no salvation!

But here the difficulty of my work recurs.—**LORD**, choose my stones out of the brook! I come in the name of the **LORD OF HOSTS**, the **GOD** of the armies of Israel. I come forth like the stripling to **GOLIATH**, to wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world. This day let the **LORD** smite the Philistine, and spoil the strong man of his armour, and give me to bring away the spoil out of his hand. **LORD**, choose my words, choose my weapons for me; and when I put my hand into the bag, and take thence a stone, do thou carry it to the mark, and make it sink, not into the forehead, but the heart of the unconverted sinner. Thou hast sent me, as **ABRAHAM** did **ELEAZAR**, to take a wife unto my Master thy Son, but my discouraged soul is ready to fear the woman will not be willing to follow me. O **LORD GOD** of my Master, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and send thine angel before me, and prosper my way, that I may take a wife unto thy Son.

But I turn unto you. Some of you do not know what I mean by *Conversion*, and in vain shall I persuade you to that which you do not understand; and therefore for your

sakes I shall show *what Conversion is*. Others cherish secret hopes of mercy; though they continue as they now are, and to them I must show *the Necessity of Conversion*. Others are like to harden themselves with a vain conceit, that they are converted already; unto them I must show *the Marks of the Unconverted*. Others, because they feel no harm, fear none, and so sleep securely; to them I shall show *the Misery of the Unconverted*. Others sit still, because they see not their way out; to them I shall show *the Means of Conversion*. And, finally, for the quickening of all, I shall close with *the Motives of Conversion*.

AN
ALARM
TO
UNCONVERTED SINNERS.

CHAP. I.

Showing what Conversion is not, and correcting some mistakes about it.

LET the blind Samaritans worship they know not what ; let the heathen Athenians superscribe their altar unto the unknown GOD ; let the guileful Papists commend the mother of destruction for the mother of devotion ; they that know the nature of the reasonable soul, cannot but know that, the understanding having the empire in the soul, he that will go rationally to work must labour to let in the light here : and therefore, that you may not mistake me, I shall show you what I mean by the Conversion I persuade you to endeavour after.

The Devil has made many counterfeits of this Conversion, and cheats one with this, and another with that ; and such artifice he has, in this mystery of deceits, that, if it were possible, he would deceive the very elect. Now, that I may cure the damnable mistakes of some, who think they are converted when they are not, as well as remove the fears of others, who think they are not converted when they are, I shall show you the Nature of Conversion ; both negatively, or what it is not ; and positively, or what it is.

We will begin with the negative.

1. *It is not the taking on us the profession of Christianity.* Doubtless, Christianity is more than a name: it lies not in word, but in power. If to cease to be Jews and Pagans, and to put on the christian profession, had been true conversion, (as this is all that some would have understood by it,) who were better Christians than they of Sardis and Laodicea? These were all Christians by profession, and had a name to live; but because they had but a name, they are condemned by CHRIST. Are there not many who name the name of the LORD JESUS, and yet depart not from iniquity; who profess that they know GOD, but in works deny him? And will GOD receive these for true converts? What! converts from sin, when yet they live in sin? It is a visible contradiction. Surely, if the lamp of profession would have served the turn, the foolish virgins had never been shut out. We find not only professors, but preachers of CHRIST, and wonder-workers turned off, because evil-workers. (*Matt. vii. 22, 23.*)

2. *It is not the being washed in the laver of regeneration, or putting on the badge of CHRIST in baptism.* Many wear the livery of CHRIST, that yet never follow their Leader. How fondly do many mistake here, deceiving, and being deceived; dreaming that effectual grace is necessarily tied to the external administration of baptism. Hence men fancy that, being regenerated already, when baptized, they need no farther work.

Were this true, we need look no farther to see our names written in heaven, than only to search the register, and see whether we were baptized. Then I would keep the certificate of my baptism, as my fairest evidence for heaven. Then men would do well to carry but a certificate of their baptism when they died, (as the Philosopher would be buried with the Bishop's bond in his hand, which he had given him for receiving his alms in another world,) and upon sight of this there would be no doubt of their admission into heaven.

In short, if there be nothing more necessary to conversion than to be baptized, we will no longer say, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way:" for if all that were baptized are saved, wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth unto life; if this be true, whole parishes, yea, whole countries, and whole kingdoms may go in a-breast, and we will no more teach, that the righteous is scarcely saved, or that there is need of taking the kingdom of heaven by violence, and striving to enter in. If the way be so easy, it is more ado than needs, to put ourselves to such running, and seeking, and knocking, and fighting, and wrestling. If this be true, we will no more say, "Few there be that find it;" but we will rather say, "Few there be that miss it." We will no more say, that of the many that are called, "but few are chosen;" and that even of the professing Israel, "but a remnant shall be saved." If this doctrine be true, we will not say any more with the disciples, "Who then shall be saved?" but rather, "Who then shall not be saved?"

Be it more or less that is received in baptism, if, when men come to years, they are evidently unsanctified, they must be renewed again, by a thorough and powerful change, or else they cannot escape the damnation of hell. Friends and brethren, be not deceived; God is not mocked. Whether it be your baptism, or whatever else that you pretend, I tell you from the living God, that if any of you be prayerless persons, or unclean, or malicious, or covetous, or riotous, or a scoffer, or a lover of evil company,—in a word, if you are not holy, strict, and self-denying Christians, you cannot be saved, except you be transformed by a further work upon you, and renewed again by repentance.

3. *It lies not in a merely moral righteousness.* This exceeds not the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and therefore cannot bring us to the kingdom of God. ST. PAUL was, while unconverted, touching the righteousness which is of the law, blameless. The Pharisee could say, "I am no extortioner, adulterer, unjust," &c. (*Luke* xviii. 11.)

Thou must have something more than all this to show, or else, however thou mayest justify thyself, God will condemn thee. I condemn not morality, but warn you not to rest here. Piety includes morality, as Christianity includes humanity, and grace includes reason: but we must not divide the tables.

4. *It consists not in external conformity to the rules of piety.* It is too manifest, that men may have a form of godliness, without the power. Men may pray long, and fast often, and hear gladly, and be very forward in the service of God, though costly and expensive, and yet be strangers to conversion. They must have more to plead for themselves, than that they keep to their church, and give alms, and make use of prayer, to prove themselves sound converts: a hypocrite may perform every outward service, even to the giving of all his goods to the poor, and his members to the fire.

5. *It lies not in the chaining up of corruption, by education, human laws, or the force of incumbent affliction.* It is too common to mistake education for grace; but if this were enough, who was a better man than JEHOASH? While JEHOIADA his uncle lived, he was very forward in God's service, and called upon him to repair the house of the LORD: (2 Kings xii. 2:) but here was nothing more than good education all this while; for when his good tutor was taken out of the way, he appears to have been but a wolf chained up.

6. In short, *it consists not in conviction, in a superficial change, or partial reformation.* An apostate may be a man enlightened, and a FELIX tremble under convictions, and a HEROD amend many things. It is one thing to have sin alarmed only by convictions, and another to have it crucified by converting grace. Many, because they have been troubled in conscience for their sins, think well of their case, miserably mistaking conviction for conversion. Others think, that because they have left off their riotous courses, and are reduced to sobriety and civility, they are real converts; forgetting that there is a

vast difference between being sanctified and civilized, and that many seek to enter into the kingdom of heaven, and are not far from it, and arrive to the *almost* of Christianity, and yet fall short at last. While conscience holds the whip over them, many will pray, hear, read, and refrain from their delightful sins; but no sooner is this lion asleep, but they are at their vomit again.

You may cast the lead out of the rude mass into the more comely proportion of a plant, and then into the shape of a beast, and thence into the form and features of a man; but all the while it is but lead still. So a man may pass through divers changes, from ignorance to knowledge, from profaneness to civility, and thence to a form of religion; and all this while he is but unregenerate, while his nature remains unchanged.

Hear then, O sinners, hear, as you would live! Why would you so wilfully deceive yourselves, or build your hopes upon the sand? I know he shall find hard work of it, that goes to pluck away your hopes. It cannot but be ungrateful to you; and truly it is not pleasing to me. I set about it as a surgeon, when he is to cut off a putrefied member from his well-beloved friend, which of necessity he must do, but with an aching heart, and a trembling hand. But understand me, brethren, I am only taking down the ruinous house, (which will otherwise speedily fall of itself, and bury you in the rubbish,) that I may build fair, and strong, and firm for ever. “The hope of the wicked shall perish,” if God be true; and will it not be better, O sinner, to let the Word convince thee now in time, than for death to open thine eyes too late? I should be a faithless shepherd, if I did not tell you, that you, who have built your hopes upon no better grounds than these before-mentioned, are yet in your sins. Let your conscience speak: what is it that you have to plead for yourselves? Is it that you wear CHRIST’S livery? that you bear his name? that you are of the visible church? that you have knowledge in the points of religion, are

civilized, perform religious duties, are just in your dealings, have been troubled in conscience for your sins? I tell you, from the LORD, these pleas will never be accepted at GOD's bar. All this, though good in itself, will not prove you converted; and therefore will not suffice to your salvation. O look about you, and bethink yourselves of turning to GOD speedily and soundly. Begin to pray, and read, and search your own hearts: rest not, till GOD hath made thorough work with you; for you must be different men, or else you are lost men.

But if these be short of conversion, what shall I say of the profane sinner? It may be, he will scarcely cast his eyes, or lend his ears to this discourse; but if there be any such reader, he must know from the LORD that made him, that he is far from the kingdom of GOD. May a man be civilized, and not converted? Where, then, shall the drunkard and glutton appear? May a man keep company with the wise virgins, and yet be shut out? Shall not a companion of fools much more be destroyed? May a man be true and just in his dealing, and yet not be justified of GOD? What then will become of thee, O wretched man, whose conscience tells thee that thou art false in thy trade, and false in thy word, and makest thy advantage by a lying tongue? If men may be enlightened, and brought to the performance of holy duties, and yet go down to perdition for resting in them, and sitting down on this side of conversion, what will become of you, O miserable families, that live without GOD in the world, and of you, O wretched sinners, with whom GOD is scarcely in all your thoughts,—who are so ignorant, that you cannot, or so careless, that you will not pray? O repent and be converted; break off your sins by righteousness; go to CHRIST for pardoning and renewing grace; give up yourselves to him, to walk with Him in holiness, or else you shall never see GOD! O that you would take the warnings of GOD! In his name I once more admonish you. Turn you at my reproof. Forsake

the foolish, and live: be sober, righteous, godly: wash your hands, ye sinners; purify your hearts, ye double-minded: cease to do evil; learn to do well: but if you will go on, you must die.

CHAP. II.

Showing, positively, what Conversion is.

I MAY not leave you with your eyes half open, as he that saw men as trees walking. The word is profitable for doctrine, as well as reproof. And therefore, having thus far conducted you by the rocks and sands of so many dangerous mistakes, I would guide you at length, into the harbour of truth.

Conversion, then, in short, lies in the thorough change both of the heart and life. I shall briefly describe it in its nature and causes.

I. *The Author of it is the SPIRIT of GOD*; and therefore it is called “the sanctification of the SPIRIT,” and “the renewing of the HOLY GHOST.” This does not exclude the other persons in the Trinity; for the Apostle teaches us to “bless the Father of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, for that he hath begotten us again:” and CHRIST is said to give repentance to Israel; and is called “the everlasting FATHER,” and we his seed, and the children which GOD hath given him. Yet is this work principally ascribed to the HOLY GHOST, and so we are said to be “born of the SPIRIT.”

So then it is a work above man’s power. “We are born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of GOD.” Never think thou canst convert thyself: if ever thou wouldst be savingly converted, thou must despair of doing it in thine own strength: it is a resurrection from the dead, a new creation, a work of absolute omnipotency. Are these out of the reach of human power? If thou hast no more than thou hadst by thy

first birth, a good nature, or a meek and chaste temper, thou art a stranger to true conversion: this is a supernatural work.

II. *The moving Cause is internal, or external.*

1. *The internal mover is only free Grace.* “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of his own mercy he saved us,—by the renewing of the HOLY GHOST:” “of his own will begat he us.” GOD finds nothing in a man to deserve converting grace; enough to provoke his loathing, nothing to provoke his love. Look back upon thyself, O Christian; look upon thyself in thy blood: O reflect upon thy swinish nature, thy once beloved mire. Open thy sepulchre: art thou struck almost dead with the damp? Behold thy putrid soul, thy loathsome members: O stench insufferable, if thou dost but scent thy own putrefaction! Behold thy ghastly visage, thy crawling lusts, thy slime and corruption! Do not thine own clothes abhor thee? How then should holiness and purity love thee? Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and be moved, O earth! Who but must needs cry, “Grace! Grace!” Hear, you children of the Most High, and blush, O you unthankful generation, that free grace is no more in your mouths, and in your thoughts; no more adored, admired, commended by you! One would think you would do nothing but praise and admire GOD, wherever you are. How can you forget such grace, or pass it over with a slight and rare mention? What, but free grace, should move GOD to love you, unless enmity or deformity could do it, unless vomit or rottenness could do it? How affectionately does PETER lift up his hands; “Blessed be the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who of his abundant mercy hath begotten us again.” How feelingly does PAUL magnify the free mercy of GOD in it; “GOD, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith He loved us, hath quickened us together with CHRIST: by grace ye are saved.”

2. *The external mover is the Merit and Intercession of the blessed JESUS.* He hath obtained gifts for the rebellious;

and through him it is, that GOD worketh in us that which is well pleasing in his sight. Through him are all spiritual blessings bestowed upon us in heavenly things. He intercedeth for them that believe not : every convert is the fruit of his travail. O never was infant born into the world with that difficulty which CHRIST endured for us ! How emphatically he groaned in his travail ! All the pains that he suffered on his cross were our birth-pains, the throes which CHRIST endured. It is nothing, then, but the merit and intercession of CHRIST, that prevails with GOD to bestow on us converting grace. If thou art a new creature, thou knowest to whom thou owest it ; to CHRIST's pangs and prayers. Hence the natural affection of a believer to CHRIST. Whither else shouldest thou go ? If any in the world can show that right to thy heart, that CHRIST can, let him carry it. Doth SATAN put in a claim ? Doth the world court thee ? Doth sin sue for thy heart ? Why, were these crucified for thee ? O Christian, love and serve the LORD while thou hast a being. Do not even the publicans love those that love them, and show kindness to those who are kind to them ?

III. *The Instrument is either personal or real.*

1. *The personal instrument is the Ministry.* “ I have begotten you in CHRIST, through the Gospel.” CHRIST's Ministers are they that are sent “ to open men's eyes, and to turn them to GOD.”—O unthankful world ! little do you know what you are doing, while you are persecuting the messengers of the LORD. These are they whose business is (under CHRIST) to save you. Whom have you reproached and blasphemed ? Against whom have you exalted your voice, and lifted your eyes on high ? Those are the servants of the Most High God, that show unto you the way of salvation ; and do you thus requite them, O foolish and unwise ? O sons of ingratitude, against whom do you sport yourselves ? against whom make you a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue ? These are the instruments which GOD uses to convert and

save you ; and do you spit in the face of your Physicians? Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do !

2. *The real Instrument is the Word.* We were begotten by the Word of Truth. This it is which enlightens the eyes ; which converts the soul ; which makes wise unto salvation. This is the incorruptible seed by which we are born again. If we are washed it is by the word ; if we are sanctified it is through the truth.—O ye Christians, how ought ye to love the word? for by this you have been converted : O ye sinners, how should you ply the word? for by this you must be converted : there is no other ordinary means but this. You that have felt its renewing power, make much of it while you live ; be for ever thankful for it. Tie it about your necks, write it upon your hands, lay it in your bosoms. When you go, let it lead you ; when you sleep, let it keep you ; when you wake, let it talk with you : say with DAVID, “ I will never forget thy precepts ; for by them thou hast quickened me.” You that are unconverted, read the word with diligence ; flock to it, where it is powerfully preached ; fill the porches, as the multitude of the impotent, blind, halt, and withered, “ waited for the moving of the water.” Pray for the coming of the SPIRIT in the Word. Come from thy knees to the Sermon, and come to thy knees from the Sermon : the seed does not prosper, because not watered by prayers and tears, nor covered by meditation.

IV. *The Final Cause is Man's Salvation, and God's Glory.* We are chosen through Sanctification to Salvation ; called, that we might be glorified ; but especially, that GOD might be glorified ; that we should show forth his praises, and be fruitful in good works. O Christian, do not forget the end of thy calling ; let thy light shine ; let thy lamp burn ; let thy fruits be good, and many, and in season : let all thy designs fall in with GOD's, that he may be magnified in thee.

V. *The Subject is the Sinner, in all his parts and powers, members and mind.* This change of conversion passes throughout the whole subject. A carnal person may have

some shreds of good morality, but he is never good throughout the whole body of holiness. Conversion is no repairing of the old building; but it takes all down, and erects a new structure: it is not the putting on a patch of holiness; but with the true convert, holiness is woven into all his powers, principles, and practice. The sincere Christian is quite a new fabric; from the foundation to the top-stone, all quite new: he is a new man, a new creature; all things are become new. Conversion is a deep work, a heart-work: it turns all upside-down, and makes a man to be in a new world. It goes throughout with men; throughout the mind, throughout the members, throughout the motions of the whole life.

1. *Throughout the Mind.* It makes an universal change within.

First, *It turns the balance of the Judgment*, so that GOD and his glory weigh down all worldly interest. It opens the eye of the mind, and makes the scales of its native ignorance to fall off, and turns men from darkness to light. The man that before saw no danger in his condition, now concludes himself lost, and for ever undone, except renewed by the power of grace. He that formerly thought there was little hurt in sin, now comes to see it to be the chief of evils; he sees the unreasonableness, the unrighteousness, the deformity that is in sin: so that he is affrighted with it, loathes it, dreads it, flees from it, and even abhors himself for it. He that could see little sin in himself, now sees the rottenness of his heart, and the desperate pollution of his whole nature: he cries, "Unclean, unclean; LORD, purge me with hyssop, wash me thoroughly, create in me a new heart." He sees himself become altogether filthy and corrupt, both root and branch: he writes unclean upon all his parts, and powers, and performances. He discovers the blasphemy, and theft, and murder, and adultery that are in his heart, of which, before, he was ignorant. Heretofore he saw no form nor comeliness in CHRIST; no beauty, that he should desire him: but now he

finds the hid treasure, and will sell all to buy this field.—Now, the man is of another mind, another judgment, than he was before : now GOD is all with him ; he has none in heaven, nor in earth, like him. He prefers him before all the world ; his favour is his life ; the light of his countenance is more than corn, or wine, or oil,—the good that formerly he inquired after, and set his heart upon. Now let all the world be set on one side, and GOD alone on the other ;—let the harlot put on her paint and gallantry, and present herself to the soul (as when Satan would have tempted our Saviour with her) in all the glory of her kingdoms, yet the soul will not fall down and worship her, but will prefer a naked, yea, a crucified, persecuted CHRIST before her. This is the convert's voice : “ The LORD is my portion : whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth, that I desire besides thee. GOD is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.”

Secondly, *It turns the bias of the will, both as to means and end.*

(1.) *The Intention of the Will is altered.* Now the man hath new ends and designs : now he intends GOD above all, and desires and designs nothing in all the world so much, as that CHRIST may be magnified in him. He accounts himself more happy in this, than in all that the earth could yield, that he may be serviceable to CHRIST, and bring him glory in his generation. This is the mark he aims at, that the name of JESUS may be great in the world.—Reader, dost thou view this, and never ask thyself whether it be thus with thee ? Pause a while, and meditate on this great concernment.

(2.) *The Election also is changed,* so that he chooseth another way. He fixeth upon GOD, as his blessedness ; and upon CHRIST, as the principal, and holiness, as the subordinate means to bring him to GOD. He chooseth JESUS for his LORD. He is not merely forced into CHRIST by the storm, nor doth he take CHRIST from bare necessity,

—as the man begged from the gallows when he takes the wife rather than the halter; but he comes freely to the choice. This match is not made in a fright, as by a dying sinner, that will seemingly do any thing for CHRIST, but doth only take CHRIST rather than hell; but he deliberately resolves that CHRIST is his best choice, and would rather have him than all the good of this world, might he enjoy it while he would. Again, he takes holiness for his path: he doth not of mere necessity submit to it, but he likes and loves it: “I have chosen the way of thy precepts.” He takes GOD’S testimonies, not as his bondage, but as his heritage; yea, his heritage for ever. He counts them not his hurthen, but his bliss; not his cords, but his cordials. He doth not only bear, but take up CHRIST’S yoke: he takes not holiness as the stomach does the loathed potion, (which it will receive rather than die) but as hungry man doth his beloved food. No time passeth so sweetly with him as that which he spends in the exercises of holiness; these are both the desire of his eyes, and the joy of his heart.—Put thy conscience to it as thou goest, whether thou art the man. O happy man, if this be thy case! but see that thou be impartial in the search.

Thirdly, *It turns the bent of the Affections.* These run all in a new channel: *Jordan* is now driven back, and the waters run upward against their natural course.

CHRIST is his hope: this is his prize; here his eye is; here his heart is. He is contented to cast all over-board, (as the merchant in the storm,) so he may but keep his jewel.

The first of his desires is not after gold, but grace. He hungers after it, he seeks it as silver, he digs for it as for hid treasure; he had rather be gracious than be great; he had rather be the holiest man on earth, than the most learned, the most famous, most prosperous. Once he said, Oh, if I were but in great esteem, and rolled in wealth, and swimmèd in pleasure, if my debts were paid, and I and mine provided for, then I were a happy man! But now he says, Oh, if I had but my corruptions subdued,

if I had but large measures of grace, and much fellowship with GOD, though I were poor and despised, I should not care, I should account myself a blessed man!—Reader! is this the language of thy soul?

His joys are changed. He rejoiceth in the way of GOD's testimonies as much as in all riches. He delights in the law of the LORD, whereof once he had little savour. He hath no such joy, as in the thoughts of CHRIST, the fruition of his company, the prosperity of his people.

His cares are quite altered. He was once set upon the world, and any scrap of by-time was enough for his soul. Now he gives over caring for the asses, and sets his heart on the kingdom. Now all the cry is, "What shall I do to be saved?" His great solicitude is, how to secure his soul. Oh, how would he bless you, if you could but put him out of doubt about this!

His fears are not so much of suffering, as of sinning. Once he was afraid of nothing so much as the loss of his estate or esteem, the displeasure of friends, and the frowns of the great: nothing sounded so terrible to him as pain, or poverty, or disgrace. Now these are little to him, in comparison of GOD's dishonour or displeasure. How warily doth he walk, lest he should tread on a snare? He feareth alway; he looks before and behind; he hath set his eye upon his heart, and is often looking over his shoulder, lest he should be overtaken by sin. It kills his heart to think of losing GOD's favour; this he dreads as his only undoing. No thought in the world doth pinch him, and pain him so much, as to think of parting with CHRIST.

His love runs in a new course. "My love was crucified," (said holy IGNATIUS,) that is, my CHRIST. "This is my beloved," saith the Spouse. How doth AUGUSTINE often express his love to CHRIST? He can find no words sweet enough.—"Let me see thee, O light of mine eyes. Come, O thou joy of my spirit: let me behold thee, O the gladness of my heart: let me love thee, O life of my soul. Appear unto me, O my

great delight, my sweet comfort, O my God, my life, and the whole glory of my soul. Let me find thee, O desire of my heart : let me hold thee, O love of my soul : let me embrace thee, O heavenly bridegroom : let me possess thee ! ”

His sorrows have now a new vent. The view of his sins, the sight of CHRIST crucified, which would scarcely stir him before, how much now do they affect his heart !

Commune then with thine own heart, and attend the general current of thine affections, whether it be towards GOD in CHRIST, above all other concernments. The inquiry is, whether the judgment and will be determined for GOD, above all other good, real or apparent ; and if the affections do sincerely follow their choice and conduct, though it be not so strongly and sensibly as is to be desired, there is no doubt but the change is saving.

2. Throughout the Members. Those that were before the instruments of sin, are now become utensils of CHRIST'S living temple. He that before abused his body, now possesseth his vessel in sanctification and honour, in temperance, chastity, and sobriety, dedicated to the LORD.

The eye that was once a wandering eye, a wanton eye, a haughty, or a covetous eye, is now employed, as MARY, in weeping over sin, in beholding God in his works, in reading his word, in looking up and down for objects of mercy, and opportunities for his service.

The ear that was once open to Satan's call, and that (like a vitiated palate) did relish nothing so much as filthy, or, at least, frothy talk, and the fool's laughter, is now bored to the door of CHRIST'S house, and open to his discipline: it says, “Speak LORD, for thy servant heareth:” it waits for his words as the rain, and relishes them more than honey and the honey-comb.

The head, that was the shop of worldly designs, is now set on God's will. The thoughts and cares that fill it, are, principally, how he may please God, and flee from sin.

His heart, which was a sty of filthy lusts, is now become an altar of incense, where the fire of divine love is ever

kept burning, and whence the daily sacrifice of prayer and praise, and the sweet incense of holy desires and ejaculations, are continually ascending.

His mouth is become a well of life, his tongue as choice silver, and his lips feed many: now the salt of grace hath seasoned his speech, and eaten out the corruption, and cleansed the mouth from filthy communication, flattery, boasting, railing, lying, swearing, backbiting. The throat, that was once an open sepulchre, now sends forth the sweet breath of prayer, and holy discourse; and the man speaks in another tongue, and is never so well, as when talking of GOD and CHRIST, and the matters of another world. His mouth bringeth forth wisdom, his tongue is become the trumpet of his Maker's praise, his glory, and the best member that he hath.

3. *Throughout the Life and Practice.* The new man takes a new course. His conversation is in heaven. When GOD hath written his law in his mind, he forthwith walks in his statutes, and keeps his judgments.

Though sin may dwell (GOD knows a wearisome and unwelcome guest) in him, yet it hath no more dominion over him. He hath his fruit unto holiness, and hath an unfeigned respect unto GOD's commandments. He makes conscience even of little sins, and little duties. His very infirmities, which he cannot help, are his soul's burthen, and are like the dust in a man's eye, which, though but little, yet are not a little troublesome. [O man! dost thou read this, and never turn in upon thy soul by self-examination?] The sincere convert is not one man at church, and another at home; he is not a saint on his knees, and a cheat in his shop; he doth not pretend to piety, and neglect morality; but he turns from all his sins, and keeps all GOD's statutes sincerely, not allowing himself in the breach of any. Now he delights in the word, and sets himself to prayer, and opens his hand, (if able,) and draws out his soul to the hungry. He breaks off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, and hath a good conscience, willing

in all things to live honestly, and to be without offence towards God and men. And thus much for the subject of conversion.

VI. The *terms* are either from which or to which.

1. *The terms from which we turn in Conversion are, Sin, Satan, the World, and our own Righteousness.*

(1.) *Sin.* When a man is converted, he is for ever out with sin; yea, with all sin, but most of all with his own sin, and especially with his bosom sin. If God should give him his choice, he would choose any affliction, so he might be rid of sin.

When a man is savingly changed, he is deeply convinced, not only of the danger, but also of the defilement of sin; and, O, how earnest he is with God to be purified! He loathes himself for his sins. He runs to CHRIST, and casts himself into the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. If he fall, what a stir is there to get all clean again! He flies to the word, and washes, and rubs, and rinses, labouring to cleanse himself from all filthiness, both of flesh and spirit.

He can forgive his other enemies, but here he is implacable, here he is set upon revenge: he hunteth, as it were, for the precious life; his eye shall not pity, his hand shall not spare, though it be a right hand, or a right eye.

Reader, hath conscience been at work, while thou hast been looking over these lines? Hast thou pondered these things in thine heart? Hast thou searched the Book within, to see if these things be so? If not, read it again, and make thy conscience speak whether or no it be thus with thee. Hast thou crucified thy flesh with its affections and desires, and not only confessed but forsaken thy sins; all sin in fervent desires, and the practice of every deliberate sin in thy life? If not, thou art yet unconverted. Doth not conscience fly in thy face, and tell thee that thou livest in a way of lying for thy advantage, that thou usest deceit in thy calling, that there is some way of secret wantonness that thou livest in? Why, then, do

not deceive thyself; “thou art in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity.”

Doth not thy unbridled tongue, thy intemperance, thy wicked company, thy neglect of prayer, of hearing, or of reading the word, now witness against thee, and say, “We are thy works, and we will follow thee?” Or if I have not hit thee right, doth not one within tell thee, there is such or such a way, which thou knowest to be evil, and which yet thou dost tolerate thyself in, and art willing to spare? If this be thy case, thou art to this day unregenerate, and must be changed or condemned.

(2.) *Satan.* Conversion binds the strong man, spoils his armour, casts out his goods, turns men from the power of Satan unto God. Before, the Devil could no sooner hold up his finger to the sinner, to call him to his sinful delights, but presently he followed, like an ox to the slaughter, and a fool to the correction of the stocks: as the bird that hasteth to the prey, and knoweth not that it is for his life. No sooner could Satan bid him lie, but presently he had it upon the top of his tongue; no sooner could Satan offer a wanton object, but he was stung with lust. But now he serves another Master, and takes quite another course; he goes and comes at CHRIST’S beck. Satan may sometimes catch his foot in a trap, but he will no longer be a willing captive: he watches against his snares and baits, and studies to be acquainted with his devices: he is very suspicious of his plots, and is very jealous in what happens to him, lest his adversary should have some design upon him. He entertains the messengers of Satan as men do the messenger of death: he keeps his eye upon his enemy, and watches in his duties, lest Satan should put in his foot.

(3.) *The World.* Before he obtains a sound faith, a man is overcome of the world; either he bows down to Mammon, or idolises his reputation, or is a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God. Here is the root of man’s misery by the fall; he is turned aside to the creature, instead of God, and gives that esteem, confidence, or affection to the creature, that is due to Him alone.

O miserable man! What a deformed monster hath sin made thee? GOD made thee little lower than the angels; sin little better than the devils,—a monster, that hath his head and heart where his feet should be, his feet kicking against heaven, and every thing out of place. The world, that was formed to serve thee, now rules thee; and the deceitful harlot hath bewitched thee with her enchantments, and made thee bow down and serve her.

But grace sets all in order again, and puts GOD on the throne, and the world at his footstool; CHRIST in the heart, and the world under the feet. So PAUL says, “I am crucified to the world, and the world to me.” Before this change, all the cry was, “Who will shew us any (worldly) good?” But now it is, “LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me,” and take the corn and wine whoso will. Before, his heart’s delight was in the world; then the song was, “Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry; thou hast much goods laid up for many years:” but now all this is withered, and there is no comeliness that he should desire it. He hath written vanity and vexation upon all his worldly enjoyments, and loss and dung upon all human excellencies: he hath life and immortality now in chase: he trades for grace and glory, and hath a crown incorruptible in pursuit: his heart is set in him to seek the LORD: he first seeks the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof; and religion is no longer a matter by the bye with him, but the main of his care: all must stand by; he hates father, and mother, and life, and all, in comparison of CHRIST. Well then, pause a little, and look within: doth not this nearly concern thee? Thou pretendest to be for CHRIST, but doth not the world sway thee? Dost thou not take more real delight in the world, than in him? Dost thou not find thyself better at ease when the world goes according to thy mind, and thou art encompassed with carnal delights, than when retired for prayer and meditation in thy closet, or attending upon GOD’s word and worship? There is no surer evidence of an unconverted state, than

to have the things of the world uppermost in our aims, love, and estimation.

(4.) *Our own Righteousness.* Before conversion, man seeks to cover himself with his own fig-leaves, and to make himself whole with his own duties: he is apt to trust in himself, to set up his own righteousness, and not submit to the righteousness of GOD: but conversion changes his mind; now he casts away his filthy rags, and counts his own righteousness but an unclean thing. Now he begins to set a high price upon CHRIST's righteousness; he sees the need of CHRIST in every duty, to justify his person, and justify his performances; he cannot live without him, he cannot pray without him; CHRIST must go with him, or else he cannot come into the presence of GOD; he leans upon the hand of CHRIST, and so bows himself in the house of his GOD; he sets himself down for a lost, undone man, without him; his life is hid in CHRIST, as the roots of the tree spread in the earth, for stability and nutriment. Before, the news of CHRIST was a stale and sapless thing; but now how precious is CHRIST! The voice of the convert is, with the martyr, "*None but CHRIST.*"

2. *The terms to which we turn in Conversion, are either ultimate or subordinate.*

(1.) The *ultimate* is GOD the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, whom the true convert takes, as his all-sufficient and eternal blessedness. A man is never truly sanctified till his very heart be set upon GOD as his portion and chief good. These are the natural breathings of a believer's heart: "Thou art my portion; my soul shall make her boast in the LORD; my expectation is from him; he only is my rock, and my salvation; he is my defence, in GOD is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in GOD."

Wouldest thou put it to an issue whether thou be converted or not? Now let thy soul and all that is within thee attend.

Hast thou taken GOD for thy happiness? Where doth

the content of thy heart lie? Whence doth thy choicest comfort arise? Come then, and, with ABRAHAM, lift up thine eyes eastward, and westward, and northward, and southward, and think what is it thou wouldest have, in heaven or earth, to make thee happy. If GOD should give thee thy choice, as he did to SOLOMON, or should say to thee, as AHASUERUS to ESTHER, "What is thy petition, and what is thy request, and it shall be granted thee;" what wouldest thou ask? Go into the gardens of pleasure, and gather all the fragrant flowers from thence: would these content thee? Go to the treasures of Mammon; and suppose thou mightest load thyself while thou wouldest from thence. Go to the towers, and to the trophies of honour: what thinkest thou of being a man of renown, and having a name like the name of the great men of the earth? Would any of this, or would all this suffice thee, and make thee count thyself a happy man? If so, then certainly thou art unconverted. If not, go farther; wade into the divine excellencies, the store of his mercies, the hiding of his power, the depths unfathomable of his all-sufficiency; doth this suit thee best, and please thee most? Dost thou say, "It is good to be here; here will I pitch, here will I live and die?" Wilt thou let all the world go, rather than this? Then it is well between GOD and thee: happy art thou, O man! happy art thou that ever thou wast born: if GOD can make thee happy, thou must needs be happy; for thou hast avouched the LORD to be thy GOD. Dost thou say to CHRIST, "Thy FATHER shall be my FATHER, and thy GOD my GOD." Here is the turning point; an unsound professor never takes up his rest in GOD; but converting grace does the work, and so cures the fatal misery of the fall, by turning the heart from its idols to the living GOD. Now, the soul says, "LORD, whither should I go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Here he centres, here he settles: O, it is as the entrance of heaven to him, to see his interest in GOD. When he discovers this, he says, "Return unto

thy rest, O my soul, for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.

Man, is this thy case? Hast thou experienced this? Why then, blessed art thou of the LORD: GOD hath been at work with thee, he hath laid hold on thy heart by the power of converting grace, or else thou couldst never have done this.

(2.) The *mediate* term of conversion is either *principal*, or *less principal*.—The *principal* is CHRIST, the only mediator between GOD and man. His work is to bring us to GOD: He is the way to the Father; the only door by which we can enter. Conversion brings over the soul to Christ, to accept of him, as the only means of life, the only name given under heaven. He looks not for salvation in any other but him, nor in any other with him; but throws himself on CHRIST alone, as one that should cast himself with spread arms upon the sea. “Here, (says the convinced sinner,) here I will venture, and if I perish, I perish; if I die, I will die here. But, LORD, suffer me not to perish under the eyes of thy mercy. Entreat me not to leave thee, or to turn away from following after thee. Here I will throw myself: if thou kill me, I will not go from thy door.”

Thus the poor soul doth venture on CHRIST, and resolutely adhere to him. Before conversion, the man made light of CHRIST, and minded his farm, friends, or merchandise, more than CHRIST. Now CHRIST is to him as his necessary food, his daily bread, the life of his heart, the staff of his life. His great design is, that CHRIST may be magnified in him. His heart once said, as they to the Spouse, in the *Canticles*, “What is thy beloved more than another?” He found more sweetness in his merry company, or earthly delights, than in CHRIST. He took religion for an idle dream. But now, to him to live is CHRIST. He sets light by all that he counted precious, for the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST.

All belonging to CHRIST is accepted by the sincere convert: he loves not only the wages, but the work of

CHRIST, not only the benefits, but the burden of CHRIST : he is willing not only to tread out the corn, but to draw under the yoke : he takes up the commands of CHRIST.

The unsound closes with CHRIST by halves : he is eager for the salvation of CHRIST, but not for sanctification : he divides the offices and benefits of CHRIST. This is an error in the foundation : whoso loveth life let him beware here ; it is an undoing mistake, of which you have been often warned, and yet none is more common. JESUS is a sweet name, but men love not the LORD JESUS in sincerity. They will not have him as GOD offers, “ to be a Prince and a Saviour.” They divide what GOD hath joined, the King and the Priest : yea, they will not accept the salvation of CHRIST, as he intends it ; they divide it here. Every man’s vote is for salvation from suffering, but they desire not to be saved from sinning : they would have their lives saved, but withal, they would have their lusts. Yea, many divide here again ; they would be content to have some of their sins destroyed, but they cannot leave the lap of DELILAH, or divorce the beloved HERODIAS. They cannot be cruel to the right eye, or right hand ; the LORD must “ pardon them in this thing.” O ! be infinitely tender here ; your souls depend upon it. The sound convert takes a whole CHRIST, and takes him for all intents and purposes ; without exceptions, without limitations, without reserves. He is willing to have CHRIST upon his own terms, upon any terms : he sends a blank to CHRIST, to set down his own conditions.

The *less principal* term of conversion, is the laws, ordinances, and ways of CHRIST. The heart that was once set against these, and could not endure the strictness of them, now falls in love with them, and chooses them as its rule and guide for ever.

Four things, I observe, GOD doth work in every sound convert, with reference to the law and ways of CHRIST, by which you may know your state ; therefore keep your eyes upon your heart as you go along.

1. *The judgment is brought to approve of them, as*

most righteous and most reasonable. The mind is brought to like the ways of GOD; and the prejudices that were against them, as unreasonable and intolerable, are now removed. The understanding assents to them all, as holy, just, and good. How is DAVID taken up with these excellencies of GOD's laws? How doth he expatiate in their praises, both on account of their inherent qualities and of their admirable effects. See *Psal.* xix.

A godly man's judgment is for the ways of GOD; he thinks them not only best in general, but best for him. He looks upon the rules of religion, not only as tolerable, but desirable, "more desirable than gold, than fine gold, yea, than much fine gold."

2. *The desire of the heart is to know the whole mind of CHRIST.* He would not have one sin undiscovered, nor be ignorant of one duty required. The natural and earnest breathing of a sanctified heart, is, "LORD, if there be any way of wickedness in me, do thou discover it. What I know not, teach thou me; and if I have done iniquity, I will do it no more." He is willing to know the whole latitude and compass of his Maker's law. He receives with all acceptation the word that convinces him of any duty that he knew not, or minded not before, or discovereth any sin that lay hid before.

3. *The will is determined for the ways of CHRIST, in preference to all the pleasures of sin, and the prosperities of the world.* His consent is not extorted by some extremity of anguish, nor is it only a sudden and hasty resolve, but he is deliberately purposed, and comes freely to the choice. True, the flesh will rebel, yet his will is for CHRIST's laws and government; so that he takes them not up as his toil and burden, but as his bliss, and counts CHRIST's law his liberty. He had rather (if he might have his choice) live a strict and holy life, than the most prosperous and flourishing life in the world. Fear hath its use; but this is not the main spring of motion with a sanctified heart. CHRIST constrains not his subjects by force, but is King of a willing people. They are (through

his grace) freely resolved for his service, and engage in it out of choice, not as slaves, but as sons, from a principle of love, and a loyal mind. In a word, the laws of CHRIST are the convert's love, desire, delight, and continual study.

4. *The bent of his course is directed to keep GOD's statutes.* It is the daily care of his life to walk with GOD. He seeks great things, he hath noble designs. He aims at nothing less than perfection ; he desires it ; he reaches after it ; he would not rest in any height of grace, till he were quite rid of sin, and had perfected holiness.

The sound convert desires holiness for holiness' sake, and not only for heaven's sake. He would not be satisfied with so much as might save him from hell, but desires the highest measure. Yet desires are not enough. What is thy way, and what is thy course ? Is the drift, the scope of thy life altered ? Is holiness thy trade, and religion thy business ? If not, thou art short of sound conversion.

And is this, which we have described, the Conversion, that is of absolute necessity to salvation ? Then be informed, 1. That " strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto life : " 2. That " there be few that find it : " 3. That there is need of a divine power, savingly to convert a sinner to JESUS CHRIST.

Again, then, be exhorted, O man that readest, to turn in upon thine own self. Is this thy judgment, and this thy choice, and this thy way, that we have described ? If so, then it is well. But doth not thy heart condemn thee, and tell thee, there is such a sin, in which thou livest, against thy conscience ? Doth it not tell thee, that there is such and such a secret way of wickedness,—such or such a duty, of which thou makest no conscience ?

Doth not conscience carry thee to thy closet, and tell thee how seldom prayer and reading are performed there ? Doth it not carry thee to thy family, and show the charge of GOD, and the souls of thy children and servants, that are neglected there ? Doth not conscience lead thee to thy shop, or thy trade, and tell thee of some mystery of iniquity there ? Doth it not carry thee to the ale-house,

or to the tavern, and reprove thee for the loose company thou keepest there, for the precious time thou mispendest there, for the talents of GOD which thou throwest down this sink? Doth it not carry thee into thy secret chamber, and read thee a curtain-lecture?

O Conscience, do thy duty: in the name of the living GOD, I command thee, discharge thine office: lay hold upon this sinner; fall upon him, arrest him, apprehend him, undeceive him. What! wilt thou flatter and sooth him, while he lives in his sins? Awake, O Conscience! What meanest thou, O sleeper? What! hast thou never a reproof in thy mouth? What! shall this soul die in his careless neglect of GOD and eternity, and thou altogether hold thy peace? Shall he go on still in his trespasses, and yet have peace? Oh! rouse up thyself, and do thy work. Now let the preacher in the bosom speak: cry aloud, and spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet: let not the blood of this soul be required at thy hands!

CHAP. III.

Of the Necessity of Conversion.

IT may be, you are ready to say, What means this stir? You are apt to wonder why I follow you with such earnestness, still ringing one lesson in your ears, *that you should repent and be converted*. But I must say unto you, as RUTH to NAOMI, "Intreat me not to leave you, nor to turn aside from following after you." Were it a matter of indifference, I would never make so much ado. If you might be saved as you are, I would gladly let you alone. But would you not have me solicitous for you, when I see you ready to perish? As the LORD liveth, before whom I am, I have not the least hopes of seeing one of your faces in heaven, except you be converted: I utterly despair of your salvation, except you will be prevailed with to turn thoroughly, and give yourselves to

God in holiness and newness of life. Hath God said, "Except you be born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God;"—and yet do you wonder why your Ministers travail in birth with you? Think it not strange, that I am in earnest with you to follow after holiness: never did, nor shall, any one enter heaven by any other way. The Conversion described is not a high attainment of some Christians, but every soul that is saved experiences this universal change.

What is it that thou dost account necessary? Is thy bread necessary? Is thy breath necessary? Then thy Conversion is much more necessary. Indeed this is the one thing necessary. Thine estate is not necessary; thou mayest sell all for the pearl of great price, and yet be a gainer by the purchase. Thy life is not necessary, thou mayest part with it for CHRIST, to infinite advantage. Thine honour is not necessary, thou mayest be reproached for the name of CHRIST, and yet be happy; yea, much more happy in reproach than in repute. But thy Conversion is necessary; thy damnation will be the consequence of neglecting it. And is it not needful in so important a case to look about thee? Upon this one point depends thy making, or marring, to all eternity.

But I shall more particularly show the necessity of Conversion in five things: Without this,

I. *Thy being is in vain.* Is it not a pity, that thou shouldest be good for nothing, an unprofitable burden of the earth, a wen in the body of the universe? Thus thou art, whilst unconverted; for thou canst not answer the end of thy being. Is it not for the divine pleasure that thou art, and wert created? Did he not make thee for Himself? Art thou a man, and hast thou reason? Then bethink thyself, why and whence thy being is. Behold God's workmanship in thy body, and ask thyself, for what end did God rear this fabrick? Consider the noble faculties of thy heaven-born soul: for what end did God bestow these excellencies? for no other, than that thou shouldest please thyself, and gratify thy senses? Did God send

men, like the swallows, into the world, only to gather a few sticks and dirt, and build their nests, and bring up their young, and then go away? The very heathens could see farther than this. Art thou so fearfully and wonderfully made, and dost thou not yet think with thyself, that surely it was for some noble end?

O Man! set thy reason a little in the chair. Is it not a pity, that such a goodly fabric should be raised in vain? Verily thou art in vain, except thou art for GOD: better thou hadst no being, than not to be for him. Wouldest thou serve the end of thy creation? Thou must repent, and be converted. Without this, thou art to no purpose; yea, to a bad purpose.

1. *To no purpose.* Man unconverted is like a choice instrument, every string of which is broken, or out of tune: the SPIRIT of the living GOD must repair and tune it by regeneration, and sweetly move it by the power of grace, or else thy prayers will be but howlings, and all thy services will make no music in the ears of the Most HOLY. All thy powers and faculties are so corrupt in thy natural state, that except thou be purged from dead works, thou canst not serve the living GOD.—An un-sanctified man cannot work the work of GOD. For, (1.) *He hath no skill in it.* He is altogether as unskilful in the work, as in the word of righteousness. There are great mysteries, as well in the practices as in the principles of godliness. Now the unregenerate knows not the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. You may as well expect him that never learnt the alphabet, to read; or look for music from one that never set his hand to an instrument, as, that a natural man should do any service pleasing to the LORD. He must first be taught of GOD; taught to pray, taught to profit, taught to go; or else he will be utterly at a loss. (2.) *He hath no strength for it.* How weak is his heart? He is presently tired. The Sabbath, what a weariness is it? He is without strength, yea, dead in sin. (3.) *He hath no mind to it.* He desires not the knowledge of GOD's ways: he doth not know

them, and he doth not care to know them. He knows not, neither will he understand. (4.) *He hath neither due instruments nor materials for it.* A man may as well hew the marble without tools, or paint without colours, or build without materials, as perform any acceptable service without the graces of the SPIRIT. Alms-giving is not a service of GOD, but of vain glory, till performed by the hand of divine love. What is the prayer of the lips, without grace in the heart, but the carcass without the life? What are all our confessions, unless they be exercises of godly sorrow and unfeigned repentance? What our petitions, unless animated with holy desires, and with faith in the divine attributes and promises? What our praises and thanksgivings, unless they spring from holy gratitude, and a sense of GOD's mercies in the heart?—So that a man may as well expect that the trees should speak, or look for motion from the dead, as for any service holy and acceptable to GOD from the unconverted. When the tree is evil, how can the fruit be good?

2. *To bad purpose.* The unconverted soul is a very cage of unclean birds; a sepulchre full of corruption and rottenness; a loathsome carcass, full of crawling worms, and sending forth a noisome savour in the nostrils of GOD. O dreadful case! Dost thou not yet see a change to be needful? Would it not have grieved one, to have seen the consecrated vessels of GOD's temple turned into bowls of drunkenness, and polluted with the idol's service? Was it such an abomination to the JEWS, when ANTIOCHUS set up the picture of a swine at the entrance of the temple? How much more abominable would it have been, to have had the temple itself turned into a stable, and the Holy of Holies served like a house of BAAL; turned into a draught-house? This is the very case of the unregenerate: all thy members are turned into instruments of unrighteousness, and servants of SATAN; and thy inmost powers into receptacles of uncleanness. You may see the godly guests within, by what comes out; "For out of the heart proceed evil

thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." These discover what a hell there is within.

O abuse insufferable!—to see a heaven-born soul abased to the filthiest drudgery; to see the glory of GOD's creation, the chief of the ways of GOD, the lord of the universe, feeding with the prodigal at the trough, or devouring with greediness the loathsome vomit. Was it such a lamentation, to see those who did feed delicately, sitting desolate in the streets, and the precious sons of ZION, comparable to fine gold, esteemed as earthen pitchers? And is it not much more fearful to see the only thing in this world that hath immortality, and carries the stamp of GOD, become as a vessel wherein there is no pleasure? O indignity intolerable! better thou wert dashed in a thousand pieces, than continue to be abused to so filthy a service as that of sin!

II. *Not only Man, but the whole visible Creation is in vain without this.* Beloved, GOD hath made all the visible creatures in heaven and earth for the service of man, and man only is the spokesman for all the rest. Man is in the universe, like the tongue in the body, which speaks for all the members. The other creatures cannot praise their Maker but by dumb signs to man, that he should speak for them. Man is, as it were, the High-Priest of GOD's Creation, to offer the sacrifice of praise for all his fellow-creatures. The LORD GOD expecteth a tribute of praise from all his works. Now all the rest bring in their tribute to man, and pay it in by his hand; so then, if man be false and faithless, GOD is wronged of all the glory from his works.

O dreadful thought! that GOD should build such a world as this, and lay out such infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness thereon, and all in vain; and that man should be guilty of robbing and spoiling him of the glory of all. O, think of this! While thou art unconverted, all the offices of the creatures to thee are in vain: thy meat nourishes thee in vain: the sun holds forth his light to

thee in vain; the stars that serve thee in their courses, by their powerful, though hidden influence, do it in vain; thy clothes warm thee in vain; thy beast carries thee in vain: in a word, the unwearied labour and continued travail of the whole creation, as to thee, is in vain. The service of all the creatures which yield forth their strength unto thee, (that wherewith thou shouldst serve their Maker,) is all but lost labour. Hence the whole creation groaneth under the abuse of this unsanctified world, which perverts them to the service of sin, quite contrary to the very end of their being.

III. *Without this, thy Religion is in vain.* All thy religious performances will be lost; for they can neither please God, nor save thy soul, which are the very ends of Religion. Be thy services ever so specious, yet God hath no pleasure in them. Is not that man's case dreadful, whose sacrifices are as murder, and whose prayers are abomination? Many, under convictions, think they will set about mending themselves, and that a few prayers and psalms will salve all again. But, alas! while your hearts remain unsanctified, your duties will not pass. How punctual was JEHU; and yet all was rejected, because his heart was not upright. How blameless was PAUL; and yet being unconverted, all was but loss. Men think they do much in attending God's service, and are ready to tell him of it, and set him down their debtors for so much; whereas, their persons being unsanctified, their duties cannot be accepted.

O Soul, do not think, when thy sins pursue thee, that a little prayer and reformation of thy course, will pacify God. Thou must begin with thine heart; if that be not renewed, thou canst no more please God, than one who has unspeakably offended thee, having fallen into the mire, would be able with his loathed embraces, while in that defiled condition, to reconcile thee to himself.

It is great misery to labour in the fire. The poets could not invent a worse hell for Sisyphus, than that he should be getting the stone up the hill, and then that it should

presently fall down again, and so perpetually renew his labour. GOD threatens it as the greatest of temporal judgments, that they should build and not inhabit, plant and not gather, and have their labours eaten up by strangers. Is it so great a misery to lose our common labours, to sow in vain, and build in vain? How much more, to lose our pains in religion; to pray, and hear, and fast in vain? This is eternal loss. Be not deceived; if thou goest on in thy sinful state, though thou shouldst spread forth thine hands, GOD will hide his eyes; though thou make many prayers, he will not hear. If a man without skill set about our work, and mar it in the doing, though he take much pains, we give him but small thanks. GOD will be worshipped after the due order. If a servant do our work, but in a way quite contrary to our order, he shall have rather stripes than praise. GOD's work must be done according to GOD's mind, or he will not be pleased; and this cannot be, except it be done with a holy heart. (2 Chron. xxv. 2.)

IV. *Without this thy hopes are in vain.*—“The LORD hath rejected thy confidence.” (Jer. ii. 37.)

1. *Thy hopes of comfort here are in vain.* It is not only necessary to the safety, but to the comfort of your condition, that you be converted. Without this, you shall not know peace. (Isa. lix. 8.) Without the fear of GOD, you cannot have the comforts of the HOLY GHOST. (Acts ix. 31.) GOD speaks peace only to his people, and to his saints. (Psal. lxxxv. 8.) If you have a false peace, continuing in your sins, it is not of GOD's speaking; and then you may guess the author. Sin is a real sickness, yea, the worst of sicknesses; it is a leprosy in the head; it is a plague in the heart; it is brokenness in the bones; it pierceth, it woundeth, it racketh, it tormenteth. A man may as well expect ease, when his diseases are in their strength, or his bones out of joint, as true comfort while in his sins.

O wretched man, that canst have no ease in this case, but what comes from the deadliness of the disease! You

shall hear the poor sick man saying, in his delirium, he is well, when you see death in his face. He will be up, and about his business, when the very next step is like to be into the grave. The unsanctified often think themselves whole, but this shows the danger of their case.

Sin doth naturally produce disturbances in the soul. What a continual tempest is there in a discontented mind? What a corroding evil is in inordinate care? What is passion, but a very fever in the mind? What is sinful desire, but a fire in the bones? What is pride, but a deadly tympany; or covetousness, but an insatiable and insufferable thirst; or malice and envy, but venom in the heart; or carnal security, but a mortal lethargy? And how can that soul have true comfort, that is under so many diseases? But converting grace cures, and so eases the mind; and prepares the soul for a settled, standing, immortal peace. "Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." They are the ways of wisdom that afford pleasure and peace. DAVID had infinitely more pleasure in the word of GOD, than in all the delights of his court. The conscience cannot be truly pacified, till soundly purified. Cursed is that peace, that is maintained in a way of sin. Two sorts of peace are more to be dreaded than all the troubles in the world; peace with sin, and peace in sin.

2. *Thy hopes of salvation are in vain*; yea, worse than in vain; they are most injurious to GOD, most pernicious to thyself. There is death, despair, blasphemy, in the bowels of such hope. (1.) *There is death in it*. "Thy confidence shall be rooted out of thy tabernacles;" (GOD will destroy it root and branch;) "it shall bring thee to the King of Terrors." Though thou mayest lean upon such a house, it will not stand, but will prove like a ruinous building, which, when one trusts to it, falls down about his ears. (2.) *There is despair in it*. "Where is the hope of a hypocrite, when GOD takes away his soul?" Then there is an end for ever of this hope.

Indeed the hope of the righteous hath an end ; but then it is not a destructive, but a perfect end ; his hope ends in fruition, that of others in frustration. The godly must say at death, “ It is finished ;” but the wicked, “ It is perished,”—in too sad earnest bemoaning himself, (as JOB in mistake did,) and saying “ Where now is my hope? he hath destroyed me ; I am gone ; and my hope is removed like a tree.”—But “ the righteous hath hope in his death.” When nature is dying, his hopes are living ; when his body is languishing, his hopes are flourishing ; his hope is a living hope, but that of others is a dying, yea, a damning hope. “ When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish, and the hope of unjust men perisheth. It shall be cut off, and prove like the spider’s web,” which he spins out of his own bowels, but then comes death, and takes down all ; and so there is an eternal end of his confidence, wherein he trusted ; “ for the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.” When death strikes his dart through the body, it will let out thy soul and thy hopes together. •(3.) *There is blasphemy in it.* To hope we shall be saved, though continuing unconverted, is to hope we shall prove GOD a liar. He hath told you, that merciful as he is, he will never save you, if you go on in ignorance or unrighteousness. He hath told you, that whatever you be, or do, nothing shall avail you to salvation, unless you become new creatures. Now, to say that GOD is merciful, and we hope will save us nevertheless, is to say, in effect, that we hope GOD will not do as he saith. We may not set GOD’s attributes at variance : GOD is resolved to glorify mercy, but not to the prejudice of truth,—as the presumptuous sinner will find, to his everlasting sorrow.

But some say, “ We hope in JESUS CHRIST ; we put our whole trust in GOD ; and therefore we doubt not but we shall be saved.”

I answer, (1.) *This is not to hope in CHRIST, but against CHRIST.* To hope to see the Kingdom of GOD, without

being born again,—to hope to find eternal life in the broad way,—is to hope that CHRIST will prove a false prophet. DAVID'S plea was, “ I hope in thy word ;” but this hope is against the word. Show me a word of CHRIST, which warrants thy hopes that he will save thee in thine ignorance, or in thy neglect of his service, and I will never attempt to shake thy confidence.

(2.) *God doth with abhorrence reject this hope.* Those condemned by the Prophet of old, went on in their sins ; yet (saith the text) “ they will lean upon the LORD.” GOD will not endure to be made a prop to men in their sins. The LORD rejected those presumptuous sinners that went on still in their trespasses, and yet would stay themselves upon the GOD of Israel, as a man would shake off the briars that clave to his garment.

(3.) *If thy hope be any thing worth, it will purify thee from thy sins ;* but cursed is that hope which doth encourage men in their sins.

It may be said, “ Would you have us, then, to despair ?”

I answer, You must despair of ever coming to heaven as you are ; that is, while you remain unconverted. You must despair ever to see the face of GOD, without holiness. But you must by no means despair of finding mercy, upon your thorough repentance and conversion ; neither may you despair of attaining to repentance and conversion in the use of GOD'S means.

V. *Without this, all that CHRIST hath done and suffered will be (as to you) in vain :* it will in no way avail to your salvation. Many urge this as a sufficient ground for their hopes, that CHRIST died for sinners : but I must tell you, that CHRIST'S death will never save sinners who continue impenitent. A great divine was wont, in his private dealings with souls, to ask two questions : (1.) What hath CHRIST done for you ? (2.) What hath CHRIST wrought in you ? Without the application of the SPIRIT in regeneration, we can have no saving interest in the benefits of redemption. I tell you from the LORD,

CHRIST himself cannot save you, if you go on in this state. For,

1. It would be *against his trust*. The Mediator is the servant of the FATHER ; shows his commission from Him ; acts in his name ; and pleads his command : GOD hath committed all things to him, and entrusted with him his own glory, and the salvation of believers. Accordingly, CHRIST gave to his FATHER an account of both parts of his trust, before he left the world. Now CHRIST would quite oppose his FATHER'S glory, his greatest trust, if he should save men in their sins ; for this were to overturn all his counsels, and to offer violence to all his attributes.—First, *It would overturn all his counsels ;* of which, this is the order :—That men should be brought through sanctification to salvation. “ He hath chosen them, that they should be holy.” If thou canst repeal the law of GOD'S immutable counsel, or bribe Him, whom the FATHER hath sealed, to go directly against his commission, then, and not otherwise, mayest thou get to heaven in an unconverted condition. To hope that CHRIST will save thee, in that state, is to hope that CHRIST will falsify his trust.—Secondly, *It would offer violence to all his attributes ;* (1.) *To his Justice*. For the righteousness of GOD'S judgment lies in rendering to all according to their works. Now should men “ sow to the flesh,” and yet “ reap everlasting life,” where would be the glory of divine justice ? That would be giving to the wicked according to the work of the righteous. (2.) *To his Holiness*. If GOD should not only save sinners, but save them in their sins, his immaculate holiness would be exceedingly defaced. They cannot stand in his judgment, they cannot abide in his presence. If holy DAVID would not endure such in his house, no, nor in his sight, shall we think that GOD will ? (3.) *To his Veracity*. For GOD hath declared from heaven, that “ If any shall say, he shall have peace, though he go on in the imagination of his heart, his wrath shall smoke against that man ;”—that they only who “ confess and forsake their

sins, shall find mercy ;” and that they who “ ascend his holy hill, must be of clean hands and a pure heart.” Where were God’s truth, if, notwithstanding all this, he should bring men to salvation, without conversion? O desperate sinner, who darest to hope that CHRIST will put the lie upon his FATHER, and nullify his word to save thee! (4.) *To his Wisdom*: For this were to throw away the choicest mercies on men who would not value them, nor are at all suited to them.—First, they would not value them. The unsanctified sinner puts but little price upon God’s great salvation. He no more esteems CHRIST, than “ the whole ” esteem the physician. He prizes not his balm, values not his cure, tramples upon his blood. Now, would it be consistent with wisdom, to force pardon and life upon those who would give him no thanks for them? Will the all-wise God, when he hath forbidden us to do it, “ cast his holy things to dogs, and his pearls to swine,” who would, as it were, but “ turn again and rend him?” This would indeed make mercy to be despised.—Secondly, They are not at all suited to them. The divine wisdom is seen in suiting things to each other; as the means to the end, and the quality of the gift to the capacity of the receiver. Now, if CHRIST should bring the unregenerate sinner to heaven, he could no more enjoy felicity there, than a beast which should be brought into a beautiful room, could enjoy the society of learned men, and a well-furnished table;—the poor animal had much rather be grazing with his fellow brutes. Alas! what should an unsanctified creature do in heaven? He could take no content there, because nothing suits him. The place doth not suit him: he would be quite out of his element, as a fish out of water. The company doth not suit him: what communion hath darkness with light, or corruption with perfection? The employment doth not suit him: the anthems of heaven fit not his mouth, please not his ear. Canst thou charm thy beast with music? Or wilt thou bring him to the organ, and expect that he should make thee melody, or

keep time with the choir? Had he skill, he would have no will; and so could find no pleasure. Alas! if the carnal man think a sermon long, and say of a sabbath, "what a weariness is it?" how miserable would he think it, to be so employed to all eternity? (5.) *To his Immutability, to his Omniscience, and to his Omnipotence.* For this is enacted in heaven, and enrolled in the decrees of the court above, that none but "the pure in heart" shall ever "see God." This is laid up with him, and sealed among his treasures. Now, if CHRIST yet bring any to heaven unconverted, either he must get them in without his FATHER'S knowledge;—and then where is his Omniscience? or against his will;—and then, where is his Omnipotence?—or, he must change his will;—and then, where is his Immutability?

Sinner! wilt thou not yet give up thy vain hope of being saved in this condition? As Bildad saith, "Shall all the earth be forsaken for thee, or the rocks moved out of their place?" Shall the laws of heaven be reversed, or the everlasting foundations be overturned, for thee? Shall CHRIST put out the eye of his FATHER'S omniscience, or shorten the arm of his eternal power, for thee? Shall divine justice be violated, or the brightness of the glory of his holiness be blemished, for thee? O the impossibility, absurdity, blasphemy, that is in such a confidence! To think that CHRIST will ever save thee in this condition, is to make thy SAVIOUR become a sinner; and to do more wrong to the infinite Majesty, than all the wicked on earth, or devils in hell ever did, or could: and yet wilt thou not give up such a blasphemous hope?

2. To save men without conversion would be *against his word.* We need not say, "Who shall ascend into heaven, to bring down CHRIST from above; or who shall descend into the deep, to bring CHRIST up from beneath? The word is nigh us." Are you agreed that CHRIST shall end the controversy? Hear, then, his words: "Except you be converted, you shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. You must be born again. Repent,

or perish.” One word, one would think, were enough from CHRIST; but how often and how earnestly doth he reiterate it? “Verily, verily, except a man be born again, he shall not see the kingdom of God.” Yea, he not only asserts, but proves the necessity of the New Birth; viz. from the fleshliness and corruption of man’s first birth; by reason of which, man is no more fit for heaven, than the beast is for the chamber of the king’s presence. And wilt thou yet believe thine own presumptuous confidence, directly against CHRIST’s words? He must go quite against the laws of his kingdom, and the settled rule of his judgment, to save thee in this state.

3. It would be *against his oath*. He hath lifted up his hand to heaven, and sworn, that those who remain in unbelief, and know not his ways, (that is, are ignorant of them, or refuse to walk in them,) “shall not enter into his rest.” And wilt thou not yet believe, O sinner, that he is in earnest? Canst thou hope that he will be forsworn for thee? The covenant of grace is confirmed by an oath, and sealed by blood; but all must be made void, and another way to heaven found out, if thou be saved, living and dying unsanctified. GOD is come to his lowest and last terms with man: but men cannot be saved, while unconverted, except they could get another covenant made, and the whole frame of the gospel (which was established for ever, with such solemnities,) quite altered. And is it not madness to hope for such a thing?

4. It would be *against his honour*. GOD will so show his love to the sinner, as withal to show his hatred to sin; therefore, he that “names the name of JESUS” must “depart from iniquity,” and “deny all ungodliness:” and he that hath “hope” of life by CHRIST, must “purify himself as he is pure;” otherwise, CHRIST would be a favourer of sin. The LORD JESUS would have all the world to know, that though he pardon sin, he will not protect it.

5. It would be *against his offices*. GOD hath exalted him to be “a Prince and a Saviour.” He would act

against both offices, should he save men in their sins.— It is the office of a King, to be “a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well.” He is “a minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath on him that doth evil.” Now, should CHRIST favour the ungodly, (so continuing,) and take those to reign with him, that would not that he should reign over them, this would be quite against his office. He reigns for this purpose, that he may put his enemies under his feet. Now, should he lay them in his bosom, he would defeat the very end of his regal power. What king would take rebels, in open hostility, into his court? What were this, but to betray life, kingdom, government, and all together? If CHRIST be a King, he must have homage, honour, subjection. Now, to save men while in their natural enmity, were to obscure his dignity, lose his authority, bring contempt on his government, and sell his dear-bought rights for nought.— Again, as CHRIST would not act like a Prince, so neither would he be a Saviour, if he should do this: For his salvation is spiritual: he is called JESUS, because “he saves his people from their sins:” so that should he save them in their sins, he would be neither LORD nor JESUS. To save men from the punishment, and not from the power of sin, were to do this work by halves, and to be an imperfect saviour. His office, as “the Deliverer,” is, to “turn away ungodliness from JACOB.” He is “sent to bless men, in turning them from their iniquities,” and to “make an end of sin:” so that he would destroy his own designs, and nullify his offices, by saving men who abide in their unconverted state.

Arise, then! What meanest thou, O sleeper? Awake, O secure sinner, lest thou be consumed in thine iniquities. Say, as the lepers of old, “If we sit here, we shall die.” Verily, it is not more certain that thou art now out of hell, than that thou shalt speedily be in it, except thou repent, and be converted. There is but this one door by which thou canst escape. Arise, then, O sluggard, and shake off thine excuses: how long wilt thou slumber, and fold thine

hands to sleep? Wilt thou lie down in the midst of the sea, or sleep on the top of the mast? There is no remedy; but thou must either turn or burn. There is an unchangeable necessity for a change of thy condition, unless thou art resolved to abide the worst, and contest the matter with the Almighty. If thou lovest thy life, O man, arise, and come away. Methinks I see the LORD JESUS laying the merciful hands of a holy violence upon thee. Methinks he acts as the angels did to Lot: "Then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, lest thou be consumed: and while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, the LORD being merciful unto him, and they brought him without the city, and said, Escape for thy life, tarry not in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."

O how wilful will thy destruction be, if thou shouldst yet harden thyself in thy sinful state! None of you can say, that you have not had fair warning. Yet I cannot tell how to leave you so: it is not enough to me to have delivered my own soul. What! Shall I go away without my errand? Will none of you arise, and follow me? Have I been all this while speaking to the wind? Have I been charming the deaf adder, or allaying the tumbling ocean with arguments? Do I speak to the trees, or rocks, or to men? to the tombs and monuments of the dead, or to a living auditory? If you be men, and not senseless stocks, stand still, and consider whither you are going. If you have the reason and understanding of men, dare not to run into the flames, and fall into hell, with your eyes open; but bethink yourselves, and set about the work of repentance. What, are you *men*, and yet will you run into the pit, when the very beasts will not be forced in! What, endued with reason, and yet dally with death, and hell, and the vengeance of the ALMIGHTY! Are men herein distinguished from the brutes, that the latter have no foresight of, and care for, the things to come; and will you not hasten your escape from eternal torments? O, show yourselves men, and let reason

prevail with you: Is it a reasonable thing for you to contend against the LORD, your Maker, or to harden yourselves against his word, as though the Strength of Israel would lie? Is it reasonable that an understanding creature should lose and counteract the very end of his being, and be as a broken pitcher, only fit for the dung-hill? Is it tolerable, that the only thing in this world which GOD hath made capable of knowing his will, and of bringing him glory, should yet live in ignorance of his Maker, and be unserviceable to his use; yea, should be engaged against him, and spit his venom in the face of his Creator? Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! Let the creatures without sense be judges if this be reason, that man, when GOD hath nourished and brought him up, should rebel against Him. Judge your own selves: is it a reasonable undertaking, for briars and thorns to set themselves in battle against the devouring fire, or for “the potsherd of the earth to strive with his Maker?” If you will say that this is reason, surely the eye of reason is quite put out.

What shall I say? I could spend myself in this argument. O that you would but hearken to me! that you would presently set upon a new course! “Will you not be made clean? When shall it once be?” What! will nobody be persuaded? Reader, shall I prevail with thee, for one? Wilt thou sit down, and consider the above-mentioned arguments, and debate it with thyself, whether it be not best to turn? “Come, and let us reason together.” Is it good for thee to be here? Wilt thou sit still, till the tide come in upon thee? Is it good for thee to try whether GOD will be so good as his word; and to harden thyself in a conceit that all is well with thee, while thou remainest unsanctified?

But I know you will not be persuaded! The greatest part will be as they have been, and do as they have done. I know the drunkard will “return to his vomit again;” the deceiver will go to his deceit again; and the wanton to his sinful dalliance again. Alas! that I must leave

you where you were, in your ignorance or carelessness, or in your lifeless formality, and merely customary devotions! —However, I will sit down, and bemoan my fruitless labours, and spend some sighs over my perishing hearers!

O distracted sinners! What will their end be! What will they do in the day of visitation; whither will they flee for help; where will they leave their glory? How powerfully hath sin bewitched them; how effectually hath the God of this World blinded them; how strong is their delusion; how uncircumcised their ears; how obdurate their hearts! SATAN hath them at his beck: but how long may I call, and get no answer! I may dispute with them year after year, and they will give me the hearing, and that is all. They must and will have their sins, say what I will. Though I tell them there is death in the cup, yet they will take it up. Though I tell them it is the broad way, and endeth in destruction, yet they will go on in it. I warn them, yet cannot win them. Sometimes I think that the mercies of GOD will melt them, and his winning invitations overcome them; but I find them as they were: sometimes I hope that the terror of the LORD will persuade them; yet neither will this do it. They will approve the word, like the sermon, and commend the preacher; but they will still live as they did. They will not deny me; and yet they will not obey me. They will flock to the word of GOD, and sit before me as his people, and hear my words; but they will not do them. They value, and will plead for ministers, and I am to them as the lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice; yet I cannot get them to come under CHRIST'S yoke. They love me, and are ready to say, they will do any thing for me; but I cannot persuade them to leave their sins, to forego their evil company, their intemperance, their unjust gains. I cannot prevail with them to set up prayer in their families and closets; yet they will promise me, like the forward son, that said, "I go, sir," but "went not." I cannot persuade them to learn the principles of religion; though else they will "die without knowledge." I tell them their misery; but they will not believe but that all is well

enough. If I tell them particularly, that, for such and such reasons, I fear their state is bad, they will judge me censorious; or, if they be a little awakened, they are quickly lulled asleep by SATAN, and so lose all sense again!

Alas for my poor hearers! Must they perish at last by hundreds, when ministers would so fain save them? What course shall I use with them that I have not tried? What shall I do "for the daughter of my people?" O LORD GOD, help! Alas! shall I leave them thus? If they will not hear me, yet do thou hear me: O that they might yet live in thy sight! LORD, save them, or else they perish! My heart would melt to see their houses on fire around them, when they were fast asleep in their beds; and shall not my soul be moved within me, to see them falling into endless perdition! LORD, have compassion, and save them out of the burning: put forth thy divine power, and the work will be done!

CHAP. IV.

Showing the Marks of the Unconverted.

WHILE we keep aloof by dealing only in generals, there is little fruit to be expected. It is the hand-fight that does execution. DAVID was not awakened by the Prophet's hovering at a distance: he was forced to close with him, and tell him home, "Thou art the man!" Few will, in words, deny the necessity of the New Birth; but they have a self-deluding confidence, that the work is not now to be done. Because they know themselves to be free from gross hypocrisy, they are confident of their sincerity, and suspect not that more close hypocrisy, (where the greatest danger lies,) by which a man deceiveth his own soul. But man's deceitful heart is such a matchless cheat, that I know not whether be greater, the difficulty, or the necessity, of the *undeceiving work* upon which I am now entering. Alas, for my unconverted hearers! they must be undeceived, or undone! But how shall this be effected?

Help, O all-searching Light! and let thy discerning eye

discover the rotten foundation of the self-deceiver ; and lead me, O LORD GOD, as thou didst thy Prophet, into the chambers of imagery, and dig through the wall of sinners' hearts, and discover the hidden abominations that are lurking out of sight. O, send thine angel before me, to open the sundry wards of their hearts, as thou didst before PETER, and make even the iron gates to fly open of their own accord. Grant, O LORD, that when the poor deceived souls, with whom I have to do, shall cast their eyes upon these lines, their minds may be illuminated, and their consciences awakened ; that they may see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and be converted, and thou mayest heal them !

This must be premised, before we proceed to the discovery, that men may have a confident persuasion that their hearts and states are good, and yet be unsound. Men may be wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, and yet not know it ; yea, they may be confident that they are rich, and increased in grace. So that they are miserably deceived, who take a strong confidence for a sufficient evidence. They that have no better proof, than barely a strong persuasion that they are converted, are certainly as yet strangers to Conversion.

But to come more close : As it was said of the adherents of *Antichrist*, so here ; some of the unconverted carry their marks in their forehead, more openly ; and some in their hands, more covertly. The Apostle reckons up some, upon whom he writes the sentence of death ; as in these dreadful catalogues, to which I beseech you to attend with all diligence. “ For this you know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath an inheritance in the kingdom of CHRIST and of GOD. Let no man deceive you with vain words ; for because of these things cometh the wrath of GOD upon the children of disobedience. But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and

brimstone, which is the second death. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Woe to them that have their names written in these lists. Such may know, as certainly as if God had told them from heaven, that they are unsanctified, and under an impossibility of being saved in this condition.

There are then these several sorts of men, who, beyond all dispute, are unconverted; they carry their marks in their foreheads.

1. *The Unclean.* These are ever reckoned among the goats, and have their names in all the before-mentioned catalogues.

2. *The Covetous.* These are ever branded as idolaters; and the doors of the kingdom are shut against them by name.

3. *Drunkards:* not only such as drink away their reason, but such as are given to strong drink. The LORD fills his mouth with woes against these; and declares them to have no inheritance in the kingdom of God.

4. *Liars.* The GOD that cannot lie hath told them, that there is no place for them in his kingdom; but their portion is with the Father of Lies, (whose children they are,) in the lake of burnings.

5. *Swearers.* The end of these, without deep and speedy repentance, is swift destruction, unavoidable condemnation.

6. *Railers and Backbiters;* that love to take up a reproach against their neighbour, and fling dirt in his face, or wound him secretly behind his back.

7. *Thieves, Extortioners, Oppressors,* that grind the poor, or over-reach their brethren. These must know, that "GOD is the avenger of all such." Hear, O ye false, and purloining, and wasteful servants; hear, O ye deceitful tradesmen; hear your sentence! GOD will certainly

turn your treasures of unrighteousness into the treasures of wrath, and make your ill-gotten silver and gold to torment you, like burning metal in your bowels. (*James* v. 2, 3.)

8. *All that live in the neglect of GOD's worship; that hear not his word; that mind not their own, nor their families' souls; but live without GOD in the world.*

Sinner, consider diligently whether thou art not in one of these ranks; for if this be thy case, thou art in the bond of iniquity; for all these carry their marks in their foreheads, and are undoubtedly the sons of death.

And if so, the LORD pity our poor congregations. Oh, how little a number will remain when these are left out! Alas, on how many doors, on how many faces, must we write, "LORD, have mercy upon us!" Sirs, how can you contrive to keep up your confidence of the goodness of your state, when GOD from heaven declares against you, and pronounces you to be in a state of damnation? I would reason with you, as GOD did with some of old; "How canst thou say, I am not polluted? See thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done." Man! is not thy conscience privy to thy tricks of deceit, to thy chamber-pranks, to thy way of lying? Yea, are not thy friends, thy family, thy neighbours, witnesses to thy neglects of GOD's worship, to thy covetous practices, to thy envious or malicious carriage? May not they point at thee as thou goest, and say, "There goes a drunken *Nabal*, a companion of evil-doers; there goes a railer, or a scoffer, or a loose liver!" Beloved, GOD hath written it as with a sun-beam, in the book out of which you must be judged, that none such (except renewed) shall ever escape the damnation of hell.

O that such of you would now be persuaded to repent, and turn from all your transgressions; or else iniquity will prove your ruin! Alas for poor hardened sinners! Must I leave you at last where you were? Must I leave the wanton still at his dalliance, the malicious in his venom, and the drunkard at his vomit? However, you

must know, that you have been warned ; and that I am clear of your blood. And whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, I will leave these scriptures with them, either as thunderbolts to awaken them, or as searing-irons to harden them to a reprobate sense:—"God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses."—"He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."—"Because I have called, and ye have refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; I will mock at your calamity, when your destruction cometh as a whirlwind."

And now, I imagine, many will begin to bless themselves, and to think all is well, because they cannot be charged with the grosser evils above-mentioned. But I must further tell you, that there are another sort of unsanctified persons, who carry not their marks in their foreheads, but more secretly and covertly in their hands. These frequently deceive themselves and others, and pass for *good Christians*, when they are all the while unsound at bottom. Many pass undiscovered, till Death and Judgment bring all to light. These self-deceivers seem to come even to heaven's gate, with confidence of their admission, and yet are turned away at last. Brethren beloved, I beseech you deeply to lay to heart, and firmly to retain this awakening consideration; *that multitudes miscarry by the hand of some secret sin, which is not only hid from others, but (for want of observing their own hearts) even from themselves.* A man may be free from open pollutions, and yet die at last by the hand of some unobserved iniquity. And there are the following twelve hidden sins, by which souls go down by numbers into the chambers of death. These you must search carefully for, and take them as black marks, (wherever they be found,) discovering an unconverted state. And as you love your lives, read carefully, with a holy jealousy of yourselves, lest you should be the persons concerned.

1. *Gross Ignorance.* Oh, how many poor souls doth this sin kill in the dark, while they think that verily they are in the ready way to heaven! This is the murderer that dispatcheth thousands in a silent manner, when they suspect nothing, and see not the hand that injures them. You shall find, whatever excuses you have for ignorance, that it is a soul-destroying evil. Ah! would it not have pitied a man's heart to have seen that woeful spectacle, when the poor Protestants were shut up, a multitude together in a barn, and a butcher came, with his inhuman hands warm in human blood, and led them one by one, blindfold, to a block, where he slew them one after another by scores, in cool blood? But how much more should your hearts bleed to think of the hundreds in great congregations whom ignorance butchers in secret, and leads blindfold to the block. Beware that this be not your case: make no pleas for ignorance: if you spare that sin, know that it will not spare you. Will a man keep a murderer in his bosom?

2. *Secret Reserves in closing with CHRIST.* To forsake all for CHRIST, to hate father and mother, yea, and a man's own life for him; this is a hard saying. Some will do much, but they will not be of the religion that will undo them; they never come to be entirely devoted to CHRIST, nor fully to resign all to him; they must have the sweet sin; they mean to do themselves no harm; they have secret exceptions for life, liberty, or estate. Many take CHRIST thus, and never consider his self-denying terms, nor cast up the cost; and this error in the foundation mars all, and secretly ruins them for ever.

3. *Formality.* Many rest in the outside of religion, and in the external performances of holy duties: and this doth often most effectually deceive men; and more certainly ruins them than open profligacy. They hear, they fast, they pray, they give alms; and therefore will not believe but that their case is good: whereas, resting in the work done, and coming short of the heart-work, the inward power

and vitality of religion, they fall at last into the burning, from the confident persuasion of their being in the ready way to heaven. O dreadful case, when a man's religion serves only to harden him, and to delude and deceive his own soul!

4. *The prevalency of False-Ends in holy Duties.* This was the bane of the *Pharisees*. Oh, how many a poor soul is undone by this, and drops into hell before he discerns his mistake! He performs good duties, and so thinks all is well, and perceives not that he is actuated by carnal motives. It is too true, that even with the sanctified, many carnal ends will often creep in; but they are the matter of his hatred and humiliation, and never come to be habitually prevalent with him. But when the main thing that doth ordinarily carry a man to religious duties, shall be some carnal end, as to get the reputation of being religious, to show his gifts and parts, to avoid the reproach of being an irreligious person, or the like; this discovers an unsound heart. O Christians, if you would avoid self-deceit, see that you mind, not only your *acts*, but withal, yea, above all, your *ends*.

5. *Trusting in their own Righteousness.* This, also, is a soul-destroying mischief. When men trust in their own righteousness, they do indeed reject CHRIST'S. Beloved, you have need to be watchful on every hand; for not only your sins, but your duties, may undo you. It may be that you never thought of this: but so it is, that a man may as certainly miscarry by his seeming righteousness, as by gross sins; and that is, when a man doth trust to these for satisfying GOD'S justice, appeasing his wrath, procuring his favour, and obtaining his own pardon; for this is to put CHRIST out of office, and to make a saviour of our own duties and graces. Beware of this, O Professors; you are much in duties, but this one fly will spoil all the ointment. When you have done most and best, be sure to go out of yourselves to CHRIST; and reckon your own righteousness but rags, [in point of merit, or as any ground of dependance.]

6. *A secret Enmity against the Strictness of Religion.* Many moral persons, punctual in their formal devotions, have yet a bitter enmity against preciseness, and hate the life and power of religion. They like not this forwardness, nor that men should make such a stir in religion: they condemn the strictness of it, as singularity, indiscretion, and intemperate zeal: and with them, a lively preacher, or lively Christian, is accounted but a *heady fellow*. These men love not holiness, as holiness, (for then they would love the height of holiness,) and therefore are undoubtedly rotten at heart, whatever good opinion they have of themselves.

7. *The resting in a certain Pitch of Religion.* When they have so much as will save them, (as they suppose,) they look no farther; and so show themselves destitute of true grace, which will ever put men upon aspiring to perfection.

8. *The Love of the World.* This is the sure evidence of an unsanctified heart. But how closely doth this sin often lurk under a fair covert of forward profession? Yea, such a power of deceit is there in this sin, that in many instances, when every body else can see the man's worldliness and covetousness, he cannot see it himself; but hath so many colours, and excuses, and pretences for his eagerness about the world, that he doth blind his own eyes, and perish in his self-deceit. How many professors are there, who give more of their affections to the world, than to CHRIST? They mind earthly things, and thereby are evidently seen to be living after the flesh, and likely to end in destruction? Yet ask these men, and they will tell you confidently, that they prize CHRIST above all, and say, "God forbid it were otherwise!" They see not their own earthly-mindedness, for want of a narrow observation of the workings of their own hearts. Did they but carefully search, they would quickly find, that their greatest content is in the world, and their greatest care and endeavour to get and secure the world; which are the certain indications of an unconverted sinner. May the

professing part of the world take earnest heed, that they perish not by the hand of this sin! Men may be, and often are, kept out of CHRIST as effectually by the inordinate love of lawful comforts, as by the most unlawful courses.

9. *Malice and Envy against those that slight them, or do them injury.* O how do many, that seem to be religious, remember injuries, and carry grudges, and will “return men as good as they bring;”—wishing evil to them that wrong them; directly against the rule of the Gospel, the pattern of CHRIST, and the nature of GOD. Doubtless, where this evil is kept in the heart, and is not hated, resisted, and mortified, that person is in a state of death.

Reader, doth nothing of this touch thee? Art thou in none of the before-mentioned ranks? O search and search again; take thy heart solemnly to task. Woe unto thee, if after all thy profession, thou shouldst be found under the power of Ignorance, lost in Formality, drowned in Earthly-mindedness, envenomed with Malice, exalted in an opinion of thine own Righteousness, leavened with Hypocrisy and carnal ends in GOD’s service, or embittered against Strictness: this would be a sad proof, that all thy religion has been in vain. But I must proceed.

10. *Unmortified Pride.* When men love the praise of men more than the praise of GOD, and set their hearts upon esteem, applause, and approbation, it is most certain they are yet in their sins. When men see not, nor complain of, nor groan under, the pride of their own hearts, it is a sign they are stark dead in sin. Oh, how secretly doth this sin live and reign in many hearts, and they know it not, but are very strangers to themselves!

11. *The Love of Pleasure.* This, also, is a black mark. When men give the flesh the liberty that it craves, and pamper and please it, and do not deny and restrain it; when their great delight is in gratifying their bellies, and pleasing their senses; whatever appearance they may have of religion, all is unsound. A flesh-pleasing life

cannot be pleasing to God. "They that are CHRIST'S have crucified the flesh," and are careful to cross it, and keep it under as their enemy.

12. *Carnal Security*, or ungrounded confidence that their condition is already good. Many cry, "Peace," when sudden destruction is coming upon them. This was that which kept the foolish virgins sleeping, when they should have been working; upon their beds, when they should have been at the markets. They perceived not their want of oil, till the Bridegroom was come; and while they went to buy, the door was shut. O that those foolish virgins had no successors! But where is the place, yea, I might almost ask, where is the house, in which these do not dwell? Men are willing to cherish in themselves, upon the slightest grounds, a hope that their condition is good, and so look not out after a change, and by this means perish in their sins. Are you at peace? Show me upon what grounds your peace is maintained. Is it a scriptural peace? Can you show the distinguishing marks of a sound believer? Can you evidence that you have something more than any hypocrite in the world ever had? If not, fear this peace more than any trouble; and know, that a carnal peace doth commonly prove the most mortal enemy of the soul; and while it smiles and kisses, and speaks fair, doth fatally smite it, as it were, under the fifth rib.

By this time, methinks, I hear my reader crying out, with the disciples, "Who then shall be saved?" Take out, from among our congregations, all those ranks of the profane on the one hand, and take out these twelve sorts of self-deceiving hypocrites on the other; and tell me then, whether it be not a remnant that shall be saved? How few will be the sheep that shall be left, when all these shall be set among the goats? For my part, of all my numerous hearers, I have no hope to see any of them in heaven, that are to be found among these twenty classes which have been mentioned, except by *sound Conversion* they be brought into another condition.

And now, Conscience, do thine office ! Speak out, and speak home, to him that heareth or readeth these lines. If thou findest any of these marks upon him, thou must pronounce him utterly unclean. Take not up a lie into thy mouth. Speak not peace to him to whom God speaks no peace. Let not lust bribe thee, or self-love, or carnal prejudice, blind thee. Come, and give in evidence: I require thee, in the name of God, to go with me to the search of the suspected house. As thou wilt answer it at thy peril, give in a true report of the state and case of him that readeth this book. Wilt thou altogether hold thy peace at such a time as this ? I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us the truth. Is the man converted, or is he not ? Doth he allow himself in any way of sin, or doth he not ? Doth he truly love, and please, and prize, and delight in God above all other things, or not ? Come, bring it to an issue. How long shall this man live at uncertainties ? O Conscience, bring in thy verdict. Is this man a new man, or is he not ? Hath there passed a thorough and mighty change on him or no ? When was the time, where was the place, or what were the means by which this change was wrought in his soul ? Speak, Conscience ! or, if thou canst not tell time and place, canst thou show scriptural evidence that the work is done : hath the man been ever taken off from his false foundation, from the false hopes, and false peace, wherein once he trusted ? Hath he been deeply convinced of sin, and of his lost and undone condition, and brought out of himself, and off from his sins, to give up himself entirely to JESUS CHRIST ? Or, dost thou not find him, to this day, under the power of ignorance, or in the mire of profaneness ? Dost thou not find him a stranger to prayer, a neglecter of the Word, a lover of this present world ? Dost thou not often catch him in a lie ? Dost thou not find his heart fermented with malice, or burning with lust, or going after his covetousness ? Speak plainly to all the before-mentioned particulars : canst thou acquit this man, (or this woman,) from belonging to

any of the twenty sorts of people here described ? If he be found with any of them, set him aside ; his portion is not with the saints : he must be converted, and made a new creature, or else he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

Beloved, be not your own betrayers ; do not deceive your own hearts, nor set your hands to your own ruin, by a wilful blinding of yourselves. Set up a tribunal in your own breasts ; bring the Word and Conscience together : “ to the Law, and to the Testimony.” Hear what the Word concludes concerning your state. O follow the search, till you have found out how the case stands. Such is the treachery of the heart, the subtlety of the Tempter, and the deceitfulness of sin, that they all conspire to flatter and deceive the poor soul : and withal, so common and easy it is to be mistaken, that it is a thousand to one but you will be deceived, unless you be very careful and impartial in the inquiry into your spiritual condition. Therefore ply your work ; go to the bottom ; search as with candles ; bring your coin to the touchstone. A world of counterfeit coin is going ; happy is he that takes no counters for gold. SATAN is master of deceits ; he can draw to the life ; he is perfect in the trade ; there is nothing but he can imitate : you cannot wish for any grace, but he can fit you, to a hair, with a counterfeit. Trade warily ; look on every piece you take ; be jealous ; trust not so much as your own hearts. Run to GOD to search you, and try you ; to examine you, and prove your reins. If other helps suffice not to bring all to an issue, but you are still at a loss, open your cases faithfully to some godly and faithful Minister. Rest not, till you have put the business of your eternal welfare out of question. —O Searcher of hearts, put this soul upon, and help him in, the search here recommended !

CHAP. V.

Showing the Miseries of the Unconverted.

So unspeakably dreadful is the case of every unconverted soul, that I have sometimes thought, if we could but convince men that they are unregenerate, the work were done. But I sadly experience, that such a spirit of slumber possesses the unsanctified, that, though they be convinced they are unconverted, yet they often carelessly sit still; and, either through the avocation of sensual pleasures, or the hurry of worldly business, or the noise and clamour of earthly cares, and lusts, and affections, the voice of conscience is drowned, and men go no farther than some cold wishes, and general purposes of repenting and amending. It is therefore of high necessity, that I not only convince men they are unconverted, but also endeavour to bring them to a sense of the fearful Misery of this state.

But here I find myself a-ground at first putting forth. What tongue can sufficiently tell the heirs of hell their misery? Where is the ready writer, whose pen can decypher the misery of those who are without God in the world? This cannot fully be done, unless we know the infinite ocean of that bliss which is in God, from whom a state of sin doth exclude a man. "Who knoweth," saith MOSES, "the power of thine anger?" And how shall I tell men that which I do not know? Yet so much we know, as, one would think, would shake the heart of that man that had the least degree of spiritual life and sense.

But this is the difficulty; I am to speak to them that are without sense! Alas, this is not the least part of man's misery, that he is (by nature) dead, stark dead in trespasses and sins. Could I bring *Paradise* into view, or represent the Kingdom of Heaven to, as much advantage as the Tempter did the kingdoms of the world and the glory thereof; or could I uncover the face of the

deep, the devouring gulf of *Tophet* in all its terrors, and open the gates of the infernal furnace ;—alas, he hath no eyes to see it. Could I paint to the life the beauties of holiness, or the glory of the gospel, or could I display the more than diabolical deformity of sin, he can no more judge of the loveliness and beauty of the one, nor of the filthiness and hatefulness of the other, than the blind man of colours. He is “alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart.” He neither doth nor can “know the things of God, because they are spiritually discerned.” His eyes cannot be savingly opened, but by converting grace. He is a child of darkness, and walks in darkness : yea, the light in him is darkness.

Shall I read his sentence, or sound in his ear the terrible trump of God’s judgments, which one should think, would make both his ears to tingle, and throw him into *BEL-SHAZZAR*’s fit, so as even to loose his joints, and make his knees smite one against another ? Yet, alas ! he perceives me not, he hath no ears to hear. Or shall I call up the daughters of music, and sing the song of *MOSES* and of the *LAMB* ? Yet he will not be stirred. Shall I allure him with the joyful sound, and the lovely song, and the glad tidings of the Gospel ; with the most sweet and inviting calls, comforts, and cordials of the divine promises, so exceeding great and precious ? This will not affect him, unless I find him ears, as well as tell him the news. Shall I set before him the feast of fat things, the wine of wisdom, the bread of God, the tree of life, “the hidden manna ?” He hath no appetite for them, no mind to them. Shall I press the choicest grapes, the heavenly clusters of God’s privileges, or set before him the delicious honey-comb of God’s testimonies ? He hath no taste to discern them.—Should I invite the dead to arise, and eat the banquet of their funerals ? No more can the dead in sin relish the holy food, wherewith the *LORD OF LIFE* hath spread his table.

What then shall I do ? Shall I burn the brimstone of

hell at his nostrils? Or shall I open the “box of spike-nard, very precious,” that filleth the whole house of this universe with its perfume, and hope that the savour of CHRIST’s ointments, and the smell of his garments, will attract him? Alas! dead sinners are like the dumb idols; “they have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not; they have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not; neither speak they through their throat.” They are destitute of all spiritual sense and motion.

But let me try the sense that doth last leave us, and draw the sword of the Word: yet strike him while I will, yea, though I choose mine arrows out of GOD’s quiver, and direct them to the heart, nevertheless he feeleth it not. For how should he, “being past feeling?” (*Ephes. iv. 19.*) So that though the wrath of GOD abideth on him, and he lie under the mountainous weight of so many thousands of sins, yet he goes up and down as light as if nothing ailed him. In a word, he carries a dead soul in a living body; and his flesh is but the walking coffin of a corrupted mind, that is “twice dead,” rotting in the slime and putrefaction of noisome lusts.

In what way, then, shall I come at the miserable objects with whom I have to deal? Who shall make the heart of stone to relent, or the lifeless carcase to feel and move? That GOD, who is able of stones to raise up children unto ABRAHAM; who raiseth the dead, and melteth the mountains, and striketh water out of the flints; who loves to work like himself, beyond the hopes and belief of man; who peopleth his church with dry bones, and planteth his orchard with dry sticks; He is able to do this. Therefore I bow my knee to the MOST HIGH GOD; and as our SAVIOUR prayed at the sepulchre of LAZARUS, or as the *Shunamite* ran to the Man of GOD for her dead child, so doth your mourning Minister kneel about your graves, and carry you, in the arms of prayer, to that GOD in whom your help is found.

O THOU all-powerful JEHOVAH, who workest, and none can hinder thee, and who hast the keys of hell and of death, pity the dead souls that lie here entombed, and roll away the stone, and say, as to LAZARUS, Come forth! Lighten Thou this darkness, O inaccessible Light; and let the day-spring from on high visit the darksome regions of the dead, to whom I speak: for Thou canst open the eyes that death itself hath closed; Thou that formedst the ear, canst restore the hearing. Say Thou to these ears, “*Ephphatha,*” and they shall be opened. Give Thou eyes to see thine excellencies, a taste that may relish thy sweetness, a scent that may savour thine ointments, a feeling of thy wrath, and of the intolerable weight of unpardoned sin. Give thy servants command to prophesy to the dry bones; and let the effects of this prophecy be, as those of the Prophet of old, when he prophesied the valley of dry bones into a living army exceeding great!

But I must proceed, as I am able, to unfold that misery, which no tongue can adequately unfold, no heart sufficiently comprehend.—Know, therefore, that while thou art unconverted,

I. *The infinite God is engaged against thee.*—It is no small part of thy misery, that thou art “without God.” Thou mayest say of GOD, as SHEBA of DAVID, “We have no part in DAVID, neither have we inheritance in the Son of JESSE.” How piercing a moan is that of SAUL, in his extremity; “The *Philistines* are upon me, and God is departed from me!” Sinners! what will you do in the days of your visitation? Whither will you flee for help? What will you do when the *Philistines* are upon you; when the world shall take its eternal leave of you; when you must bid your friends, houses, and lands, farewell for evermore? What will you do then, I say, who have not GOD to go to? Will you call on Him? Will you cry to Him for help? Alas! He will not own you, He will not take any knowledge of you; but send you away with, “I never knew you.” They who know what it is to have a GOD to go to, a GOD to live upon, they

know a little, what a fearful misery it would be, to be without GOD. This made a holy man cry out, "Let me have GOD, or nothing : Let me know Him, and his will, and what will please Him, and how I may come to enjoy Him ; or I would I had never had an understanding to know any thing !"

But thou art not only without GOD ; but GOD *is against thee*. O ! if GOD would but stand neuter, though he did not own nor help the poor sinner, his case would not be so deeply miserable. Though GOD should give up the poor creature to the will of all his enemies, to do their worst with him ; though he should deliver him over to the tormentors, so that devils might tear and torture him to their utmost power and skill ; yet this were not half so fearful. But GOD will set himself against the sinner ; and, believe it, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living GOD." There is no friend like Him, no enemy like Him. As much as heaven is above the earth, so much more horrible is it to fall into the hands of the living GOD, than into the paws of bears or lions, yea, of furies or devils. Thy destruction shall come "from the presence of the LORD."—"Tophet is deep and large ; and the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it." (*Isa. xxx. 33.*) If GOD be against thee, who shall be for thee ? "If one man sin against another, the Judge shall judge him : but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall entreat for him ?" (*1 Sam. ii. 25.*) "Thou, even thou, art to be feared : and who shall stand in thy sight, when thou art angry ?"

Sinner, methinks this should go like a dagger to thine heart, to know that GOD is thine enemy. Oh, whither wilt thou go : where wilt thou shelter thyself ? There is no hope for thee, unless thou lay down thy weapons, and sue out thy pardon, and get CHRIST to stand thy friend, and make thy peace. If it were not for this, thou mightest go into some howling wilderness, and there pine in sorrow, and run mad for anguish of heart and horrible despair. But in CHRIST there is mercy for thee ; yea, a proffer of mercy to thee ; so that thou mayest have GOD to be more

for thee, than he is now against thee. But if thou wilt not forsake thy sins, nor turn thoroughly unto God, the wrath of God abideth on thee, and he proclaims himself to be against thee, as in the Prophet, (*Ezek. v. 8.*) “Therefore, thus saith the LORD God, Behold I, even I, am against thee.” For,

1. *His Face is against thee.* “The Face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them.” Woe unto them whom God shall set his face against. When he did but look upon the host of the *Egyptians*, how terrible was the consequence! (*Ezek. xiv. 8.*) “I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.”

2. *His Heart is against thee.* He “hateth all the workers of iniquity.” Man! doth not thine heart tremble to think of thy being an object of God’s hatred: “Though *MOSES* and *SAMUEL* stood before me, yet my mind could not be towards this people: my soul loathed them, and their souls also abhorred me.”

3. *His Hand is against thee.* All his attributes are against thee.

(1.) His Justice is like a flaming sword unsheathed against thee. “If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine adversaries, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood.” So exact is his justice, that it will by no means clear the guilty. God will not discharge thee; “He will not hold thee guiltless;” but will require the whole debt in person of thee, unless thou canst make a scriptural claim to *CHRIST* and his satisfaction. When the enlightened sinner looks on Justice, and sees the balance in which he must be weighed, and the sword by which he must be executed, he feels an earthquake in his breast. The Justice of God, to an unpardoned sinner, who hath a sense of his misery, is more terrible than the sight of the Judge to the robber, or of the irons and gibbet

to the guilty murderer. When Justice sits upon life and death, O what dreadful work doth it make with the wretched sinner! “Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth: Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire:”—this is the terrible sentence that Justice pronounces. Why, sinner, by this severe Justice must thou be tried; and, as GOD liveth, this killing sentence shalt thou hear, unless thou repent and be converted.

(2.) The Holiness of GOD is against thee. He is not only angry with thee; but he hath a fixed and rooted displeasure against thee; he loaths thee. GOD’S nature is infinitely contrary to sin; and so he cannot but hate a sinner out of CHRIST.

O what a misery is this, to be out of the favour, yea, and under the hatred of GOD; so that GOD can as easily cease to be GOD, as not be contrary to thee, and detest thee, except thou be changed by grace. O sinner, how darest thou think upon the beauties, the glory of Holiness, that are in GOD! “The stars are not pure in his sight. He humbleth himself to behold things that are done in heaven.” O those eyes of his! what do they espy in thee? And then thou hast no interest in CHRIST, that he should plead for thee. Methinks thou shouldest cry out astonished, with the *Bethshemites*, “Who is able to stand before this holy LORD GOD?” (1 *Sam.* vi. 20.)

(3.) The Power of GOD is against thee. The glory of GOD’S power is to be displayed in the destruction of them that obey not the Gospel. He will “make his power known in them.” O man, art thou able to make thy party good with thy Maker? No more than a feeble reed could stand against the cedars of GOD, or a little cock-boat against the tumbling ocean!

Sinner, “The Power of GOD’S Anger” is against thee; (*Psal.* xc. 11;) and Power and Anger together make fearful work. It were better thou hadst all the world in arms against thee, than to have the Power of GOD against thee. There is no escaping from his hands, no breaking

out of his prison. “The thunder of his Power who can understand?” Unhappy man, that shall understand it by feeling it! “If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand. He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and prospered? Which removeth the mountains, and they know it not; which overturneth them in his anger; which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble; which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and sealeth up the stars. Behold, he taketh away; who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou? If GOD will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him,” (*Job ix. 3—6, &c.*) And art thou a fit match for such an antagonist? O, “consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you!”

(4.) The Wisdom of GOD is against thee. He hath ordained his arrows, and prepared the instruments of death, and made all things ready. His counsels are against thee, to contrive thy destruction; “he seeth that the day is coming.” He sees how thou wilt come down mightily in a moment; how thou wilt wring thine hands, and tear thine hair, and eat thy flesh, and gnash thy teeth, for anguish and astonishment of heart, when thou seest that thou art fallen remedilessly into the pit of destruction.

(5.) The Truth of GOD is against thee. If He be true and faithful, thou must perish if thou goest on. Unless He be false to his word, thou must die, except thou repent. “If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; he cannot deny Himself:” That is, He is faithful to his threatenings, as well as promises; and will show his faithfulness to our confusion, if we believe not. GOD hath told thee, as plainly as it can be spoken, that “except thou be converted, thou shalt in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven;” and He cannot deny Himself. Beloved, as the immutable faithfulness of GOD in his promise affords to believers strong consolation, so it is to unbelievers ground for strong consternation and confusion.

O sinner, tell me what dost thou think of all the threatenings of GOD'S Word, that stand upon record against thee? Dost thou believe they are truth, or not? If not, thou art a wretched infidel; therefore give up the name of a Christian. But if thou dost believe them, how canst thou walk up and down in quiet, when the truth and faithfulness of GOD are engaged to destroy thee! If GOD Almighty can do it, thou shalt surely perish, and be damned. Why Man! the whole Book of GOD doth testify against thee, while thou remainest unsanctified: it condemns thee in every leaf; and is to thee, like EZEKIEL'S Roll, written within and without with lamentation, and mourning, and woe. And all this shall surely come upon thee, and overtake thee, except thou repent. "Heaven and Earth shall pass away; but this Word shall never pass away."

Now put all this together; and tell me if the case of the Unconverted be not deplorably miserable? As we read of some persons, that they had bound themselves in an oath and in a curse to kill PAUL; so thou must know, that all the attributes of the infinite GOD are bound in an oath to destroy thee. O Man! what wilt thou do? Whither wilt thou flee? If GOD'S omniscience can find thee, thou shalt not escape: if the true and faithful GOD will save his oath, perish thou must, except thou believe and repent: if the Almighty hath power to torment thee, thou shalt be perfectly miserable in soul and body, to all eternity, unless it be prevented by thy speedy Conversion.

II. *The whole Creation of GOD is against thee.* "The whole Creation," saith PAUL, "groaneth and travaileth in pain." But what is it that the Creation groaneth under? Why, the fearful abuse to which it is subject in serving the lusts of unsanctified men. And what is it that the Creation groaneth for? Why, for freedom from this abuse; for "the creature is unwillingly subject to this bondage." If the unreasonable and inanimate creatures had speech and reason, they would cry out under

it, as bondage insufferable, to be abused by the ungodly, contrary to their natures, and to the ends for which the great Creator made them. It is said by an eminent Divine, that "if GOD should open the mouths of the creatures, as he did that of BALAAM'S ASS, the proud man's garments on his back would groan against him. There is not a creature which would not, if it had reason to know how it is abused, till a man be converted, groan against him. The land would groan to bear him; the air would groan to give him breathing; his house would groan to lodge him; his bed would groan to ease him, his food to nourish him, his clothes to cover him; and the creatures, generally, would groan to give him any help and comfort, so long as he lives in sin against God." Methinks this should be a terror to an unconverted soul, to think that he is a burden to the Creation. "Cut it down, why *cumbereth it the ground?*" If the poor inanimate creatures could but speak, they would say to the ungodly, as MOSES to *Israel*, "Must we fetch you water out of the rock, ye rebels?" (*Numb. ii. 10.*) Thy food would say, "LORD, must I nourish such a wretch as this, and yield forth my strength for him to dishonour thee withal?" The very air would say, "LORD, must I give this man breath, to set his tongue against heaven, and scorn thy people, and vent his pride, and wrath, and filthy communication, and belch out oaths and blasphemy against thee?" A wicked man the earth groans under, and hell groans for; till death satisfies both, and unburdens the earth, and stops the mouth of hell with him. While the LORD OF HOSTS is against him, be sure that the Hosts of the LORD are against him; and all the creatures, as it were, are up in arms, till the controversy being ended between GOD and him, he makes a covenant of peace with the creatures for him.

III. *The roaring Lion hath his full power upon thee.* Thou art in the paw of that Lion that is greedy to devour; "in the snare of the DEVIL; led captive by him at his will." This is "the Spirit that worketh in the children

of disobedience." His drudges they are, and his lust they do. He is "the ruler of the darkness of this world;" that is, of ignorant sinners that live in darkness. You pity the poor *Indians*, who worship the *Devil* for their GOD, but little think that it is your own case. Why, it is the common misery of all the unsanctified, that the DEVIL is their GOD. Not that they intend to do him homage; they will be ready to defy him, and all that should say so of them; but all this while they serve him, and come and go at his beck, and live under his government. "His servants you are, to whom ye yield yourselves to obey." O how many then will be found the real servants of the DEVIL, that take themselves for the children of GOD? He can no sooner offer a sinful delight, or an opportunity for unlawful advantage, but you embrace it. If he suggest a lie, or prompt you to revenge, you obey; if he forbid you to read or pray, you hearken to him; and therefore his servants you are. Indeed he lies behind the curtain, he acts in the dark, and sinners see not who setteth them on work; but all the while he leads them as in a string. Doubtless the liar intends not a service to SATAN, but his own advantage; yet it is he that stands in the corner unobserved, and putteth the things into his heart. Questionless, JUDAS, when he sold his Master for money, and the *Chaldeans* and *Sabeans*, when they plundered *Job*, intended not to do the DEVIL a pleasure, but to satisfy their own covetous thirst; yet it was he who actuated them in their wickedness. Men may be very slaves, and common drudges for the DEVIL, and never know it; nay, they may please themselves with the thoughts of their liberty.

Art thou yet in ignorance, and not turned from darkness to light? Thou art under the power of SATAN. Dost thou live in the practice of any known sin? Know that thou art "of the DEVIL." Dost thou live in strife, or envy, or malice? Verily, he is thy "Father." O dreadful case! However SATAN may provide his slaves with divers pleasures, yet it is but to allure them into endless

perdition. He that is now thy tempter, will be one day thy tormentor. Oh, that I could but give thee to see how black a master thou servest, how merciless a tyrant thou gratifiest; all whose pleasure is, to set thee at work to make thy damnation sure, and to heat the furnace hotter and hotter, in which thou must burn for millions of millions of ages!

IV. *The guilt of all thy sins lies like a mountain upon thee.* Poor soul, thou feelest it not, but this is that which seals thy misery upon thee. None of thy sins are blotted out; they are all upon the score against thee. Regeneration and remission are never separated; the un-sanctified are unjustified and unpardoned. Beloved, it is a fearful thing to be in debt, but above all in God's debt; for there is no arrest so formidable as his, no prison so horrible as his. Look upon an enlightened sinner, who feels the weight of his own guilt: how frightful are his looks, how fearful his complaints! His comforts are turned into wormwood, and his moisture into drought, and sleep has departed from his eyes. He is a terror to himself, and all that are about him; and is ready to envy the very stones that lie in the street, because they are senseless, and feel not his misery; and to wish he had been a dog, a toad, or a serpent, rather than a man, because then death had put an end to his misery, whereas now it will be but the beginning of that which will know no end.

How light soever you may make of it now, you will one day find the guilt of unpardoned sin to be a heavy burden. This is a millstone, which whosoever falleth upon shall be broken; but upon whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. What work did it make with our Saviour? It pressed the very blood out of his veins, and broke all his bones. And if it did this in the green tree, what will it do in the dry?

O think of thy case in time. Canst thou think of that threat without trembling, "Ye shall die in your sins?" Better were it for thee to die in a gaol, in a ditch, in a

dungeon, than die in thy sins. If death, as it will take away all thy comforts, would take away thy sins too, it were some mitigation; but thy sins will follow thee, when thy friends leave thee, and all worldly enjoyments shake hands with thee: thy sins will not die with thee, as a prisoner's other debts will; but they will go to judgment with thee, there to be thine accusers! and they will go to hell with thee, there to be thy tormentors! Better to have so many fiends and furies about thee, than thy sins to fall upon thee and fasten in thee. O the work that these will make thee! O look over thy debts in time! How much stands against thee in the book of every one of God's laws? how is every one of God's commandments ready to arrest thee, and take thee by the throat, for innumerable bonds that it hath upon thee? What wilt thou do then, when they shall all together lay sin against thee? Hold open the eyes of conscience to consider this, that thou mayest despair of thyself, and be driven to CHRIST, and flee for refuge to lay hold upon the hope that is set before thee.

V. *Thy raging Lusts do miserably enslave thee.* Thou art a very servant to sin; it reigns over thee, and holds thee under its dominion, till thou art brought within the bonds of God's covenant. Now there is no such tyrant as sin! O the filthy and fearful work that it doth engage its servants in! Would it not pierce a man's heart to see a company of poor creatures drudging and toiling, and all to carry together faggots and fuel for their own burning? Why, this is the employment of sin's drudges: even while they bless themselves in their unrighteous gains, while they sing in pleasures, they are but treasuring up wrath and vengeance for their eternal burnings; they are but adding to the pile of Tophet, and flinging in oil to make the flame rage the more fiercely.

What a woeful spectacle was that poor wretch who was possessed with the legion? Would it not have pitied thine heart to have seen him among the tombs, cutting and wounding himself? This is thy case; such is

thy work ; every stroke is a thrust at thine heart. Conscience indeed is now asleep ; but when death and judgment shall bring thee to thy senses, then wilt thou feel the raging smart and anguish of every wound. The convinced sinner is a sensible instance of the miserable bondage of sin : Conscience flies upon him, and tells him what the end of these things will be ; and yet such a slave is he to his lusts, that on he goes, though he sees it will be his endless perdition ; and when the temptation comes, lust gets the bait in his mouth, breaks all the cords of his vows and promises, and carries him headlong to his own destruction.

VI. *The Furnace of eternal Vengeance is heated for thee.* Hell and destruction open their mouths upon thee ; they gape for thee, they groan for thee, waiting as it were with a greedy eye, as thou standest upon the brink, till thou shalt drop in ! If the wrath of men be “as the roaring of a lion, more heavy than the sand,” what is the wrath of the infinite God. If the burning furnace heated in NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S fiery rage, when he commanded it to be made yet seven times hotter, were so fierce as to burn up even those that drew near it to throw the three children in, how hot is the burning oven of the Almighty’s fury ! Surely this is seventy times seven more fierce. What thinkest thou, O man, of being a faggot in hell to all eternity ? “Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the day that I shall deal with thee, saith the LORD OF HOSTS ?” (*Ezek. xxii. 14.*) Canst thou dwell with everlasting burnings ? Canst thou abide the consuming fire ? When thou shalt be as a glowing iron in hell, and thy whole body and soul shall be as perfectly possessed by God’s burning vengeance, as the fiery sparkling iron when heated, or in the fiercest forge ? Thou canst not bear God’s whip ; how then wilt thou endure his scorpions ? Thou art crushed, and ready to wish thyself dead, even under the weight of his finger ; how then wilt thou bear the weight of his loins ? The most patient man that ever lived did curse the day on which he was

born, and even wish death to come and end his misery, when GOD did but let out one little drop of his wrath : how then wilt thou endure, when GOD shall pour out all his vials, and set himself against thee, to torment thee ? When he shall make thy conscience the tunnel, by which he will be pouring his burning wrath into thy soul for ever ; and when he shall fill all thy pores as full of torment as they are now full of sin ? When immortality shall be thy misery ; and to die the death of a brute, and be swallowed up in the gulf of annihilation, shall be such a felicity, as a whole eternity of wishes, and an ocean of tears, shall never purchase ? Now thou canst put off the evil day, and canst laugh and be merry, and forget the terror of the LORD. But how wilt thou hold out, when GOD will cast thee into a bed of torments, and make thee to lie down in sorrows ? when roarings and blasphemy shall be thine only music ; and the wine of the wrath of GOD, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, shall be thine only drink ? when thou shalt draw in flames for thy breath, and the horrid stench of sulphur shall be thy only perfume ? in a word, when the smoke of thy torment shall ascend up for ever and ever, and thou shalt have no rest night nor day, no rest in thy conscience, no ease in thy bones, but shalt be an execration, an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach for evermore ?

O sinner, stop here, and consider : if thou art a man, and not a senseless block, consider ; bethink thyself where thou standest ; why, thou art upon the very brink of this furnace ! As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between thee and this. Thou knowest not, when thou liest down, but thou mayest be in hell before the morning : thou knowest not, when thou risest, but thou mayest drop in before the night. Darest thou make light of this ? Wilt thou go on in such a dreadful condition, as if nothing ailed thee ? If thou puttest it off, and sayest, this doth not belong to thee ; look over the foregoing chapter, and tell me the truth : are none of those black

marks found upon thee? Do not blind thine eyes; do not deceive thyself; see thy misery while thou mayest prevent it: think what it is to be a damned reprobate, a vessel of wrath, into which the LORD will be pouring out his tormenting fury, while he hath a being.

Sinners, it is but in vain to flatter you into the unquenchable fire; know ye, from the living GOD, that here you must lie, with these burnings you must dwell, till immortality shall die, till immutability shall change, till eternity shall run out, except you be renewed throughout by sanctifying grace.

And is this true indeed? Is this *thy* misery? Yea, it is as true as GOD is. Better open thine eyes, and see it now while thou mayest remedy it, than blind and harden thyself, till thou shalt feel what thou wouldest not believe. And if it be true, what dost thou mean, to linger in such a case as this?

Alas for thee, poor man! how effectually hath sin undone thee, and deprived and despoiled thee even of thy reason. O miserable wretch! What stupidity and senselessness have surprised thee? Oh! let me knock up, and awake this sleeper, who dwells within the walls of this flesh. Is there ever a soul here, a rational, understanding soul? or art thou only a senseless lump? Art thou a reasonable soul, and yet so far brutified, as to forget thyself immortal, and to think thyself to be as the beasts that perish? Art thou turned into flesh, that thou savourest nothing but gratifying the senses, and making provision for the flesh? or else, having reason to understand the eternity of thy future state, dost thou make light of being everlastingly miserable? O unhappy soul, that wast the companion of angels, and the image of GOD! that wast GOD's representative in the world, and hadst the supremacy amongst the creatures, and the dominion over thy Maker's works! Art thou now become a slave, for no higher felicity than the wind of man's applause, or a little refined earth, no more suitable to thy spiritual, immortal nature, than dirt and sticks? Oh, why dost

thou not bethink thee where thou shalt be for ever? Death is at hand; the Judge is even at the door; yet a little while, and time shall be no longer. And wilt thou run the hazard of continuing in such a state, in which, if thou be overtaken, thou art irrecoverably miserable?

Come, then, arise, and attend: tell me whither thou art going? What! wilt thou live in such a case, wherein every act is a step to perdition, and thou dost not know, but the next night thou mayest make thy bed in hell? Oh! if thou hast a spark of reason, consider, and turn, and hearken to thy friend, that thou mayest make thy escape in time, and be eternally happy.

“Fear ye not me, saith the LORD? Will ye not tremble at my presence?” O sinners! do you make light of the wrath to come? There is a time coming, when you will not make light of it. Why the very “devils believe and tremble.” What! you more hardened than they! Will you run upon the edge of the rock? will you play at the hole of the asp? will you put your hand upon the cockatrice’s den? will you dance about the fire till you are burned, or dally with devouring wrath, like SOLOMON’S mad-man, who cast about fire-brands, and arrows, and death, and said, “Am I not in jest?” Nothing is so distracted as the wilful sinner, who goes on in his unconverted state without sense, as if nothing ailed him. The man that runs on the cannon’s mouth, and sports with his blood, is sensible, sober, and serious, in comparison of him that goeth on still in his trespasses, “who stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty: he runneth upon him, even upon his neck, upon the thick bosses of his buckler.” Is it wisdom to dally with the second death, and to venture into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, as if thou wert but going to wash thee, or swim for thy recreation? What shall I say? I can find no expression, no comparison, whereby to set forth the dreadful distraction of that soul that will go on in sin.

Awake, awake, O sinner! arise, and take thy flight:

there is but one door by which thou mayest flee, and that is the strait door of Conversion. Unless thou turn unfeignedly from all thy sins, and come unto **JESUS CHRIST**, and take him for the **LORD** thy Righteousness, and walk in him in holiness and newness of life, as the **LORD** liveth, it is not more certain that thou art now out of hell, than that thou shalt be in it a few days hence. Oh, think of thy case! Is not everlasting misery or welfare that which doth deserve a little consideration? Look again over the miseries of the unconverted. If the **LORD** hath not spoken by me, regard me not; but if it be the word of **GOD**, that all this misery lies upon thee, what a case art thou in? Is it for one that hath his senses, to live in such a condition, and not to use all expedition for preventing his utter ruin? O man! who hath bewitched thee, that in the matters of this present life thou shouldest be wise enough to foresee thy danger, and prevent thy mischief; but in matters of everlasting consequence, thou shouldest be slight and careless, as if they little concerned thee? Why, is it nothing to thee, to have all the attributes of **GOD** engaged against thee? Canst thou do well without his favour? Canst thou escape his hands, or endure his vengeance? Dost thou hear the creation groaning under thee, and hell groaning for thee, and yet think thy case good enough? Art thou in the paw of the lion, under the power of corruption, in the dark and noisome prison, fettered with thy lusts, working out thine own damnation, and is not this worth considering? Dost thou laugh at hell and destruction, or canst thou drink the envenomed cup of the Almighty's fury, as if it were but a common potion?

Gird up now thy loins like a man, for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me: Art thou such a leviathan, that the scales of thy pride should keep thee from thy **MAKER**'s coming at thee? Wilt thou esteem his arrows as straw, and the instruments of death as rotten wood? Art thou chief of all the children of pride, that thou shouldest count his darts as stubble, and laugh at the

shaking of his spear? Art thou made without fear, and contemnest thou his barbed irons? Art thou like the horse that paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength, who goeth out to meet the armed men? Dost thou mock at fear, and art not affrighted, neither turnest back from God's sword, when his quiver rattleth against thee, the glittering spear, and the shield? Well, if the threats of the Word will not awaken thee, I am sure death and judgment will. O, what wilt thou do, when the LORD cometh forth against thee, and in his fury falleth upon thee, and thou shalt feel what thou readest! If when DANIEL'S enemies were cast into the den of lions, with their wives and their children, the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces, or ever they came at the bottom of the den, what shall be done with thee, when thou fallest into the hands of the living God, when he shall gripe thee in his iron arms, and grind and crush thee to a thousand pieces in his wrath?

Oh do not, then, contend with God; repent and be converted, so none of these things shall come upon thee. "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy on him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

CHAP. VI.

Containing Directions for Conversion.

BEFORE thou readest these Directions, I advise thee, yea, I charge thee, before God and his holy angels, to resolve to follow them, (as far as conscience shall be convinced of their agreableness to God's word,) and call in his assistance and blessing, that they may succeed. And as I have sought the LORD, and consulted his oracles what advice to give thee, so must thou entertain it with that awe, reverence, and purpose of obedience, which the word of the living God doth require.

“Set thine heart unto all that I shall testify unto thee this day; for it is not a vain thing, it is your life.” This is the end of all that hath been spoken hitherto, to bring you to make use of GOD’s means for your conversion. I would not trouble you nor torment you, before the time, with the forethoughts of your eternal misery, but in order to your making your escape. Were you shut up under your present misery, without remedy, it were but mercy to let you alone, that you might take in that little poor comfort of which you are capable in this world; but you may yet be happy, if you do not wilfully refuse the means of your recovery. Behold, I hold open the door unto you; arise, take your flight: I set the way of life before you; walk in it, and you shall live and not die. It grieves me to think that you should be your own murderers, and throw yourselves headlong, when GOD and man cry out to you, “Spare thyself.” The GOD that made thee, crieth out to thee, “Do thyself no harm.” The Ministers of CHRIST forewarn men, and follow, and fain would have them back; but, alas! no expostulations will prevail: men will hurl themselves into perdition, while pity itself looks on.

What shall I say? Would it not grieve a person of any humanity, if, in the time of a raging plague, he should have a receipt that would infallibly cure all the country, and recover the most hopeless patients, and yet his friends and neighbours should die by hundreds about him, because they would not use it? Men and brethren, though you carry the certain symptoms of death in your faces, yet I have a receipt that will cure you all; that will cure you infallibly: follow but these few directions, and if you do not then win heaven, I will be content to lose it.

Hear, then, O sinner! and as ever thou wouldest be converted, embrace these following counsels:

Direction I. Set it down with thyself, as an undoubted truth, that it is impossible for thee ever to get to Heaven in thy unconverted state. Can any other but CHRIST

save thee? Now He tells thee, he will never do it, except thou be converted.

Direction II. *Labour to get a lively sense and feeling of thy sins.* Till men are weary and heavy laden, they will not come to CHRIST. They must set themselves down for dead men, before they will come to CHRIST that they may have life. Labour, therefore, to set all thy sins in order before thee; never be afraid to look upon them, but let thy spirit make diligent search. Inquire into thy heart, and into thy life; enter into a thorough examination of thyself, and of all thy ways, and call in the help of God's Spirit, in the sense of thine own inability; for it is his proper work to convince of sin. Spread all before the face of thy conscience: cease not from striving with God, and thy soul, till it cry out, under the sense of thy sins, "What must I do to be saved?"

To this purpose, *Meditate on the number of thy sins.* DAVID's heart failed when he thought of this, and considered that he had more sins than hairs. This made him cry out, and call upon the multitude of God's tender mercies. Look backward: where was ever the place, what was ever the time, in which thou didst not sin? Look inward: what part or power canst thou find in soul or body, but it is poisoned with sin? what duty dost thou ever perform, into which poison is not shed? O how great is the sum of thy debts, who hast been, all thy life long, running upon the books, and never didst, nor canst, pay one penny! Look over the sin of thy nature, with all its cursed brood, and the sins of thy life: call to mind thy omissions, and commissions; the sins of thy thoughts, of thy words, of thine actions; the sins of thy youth, the sins of thy years. Be not like a desperate bankrupt, that is afraid to look over his books: read the records of conscience carefully. These books must be opened sooner or later.

Meditate upon the aggravation of thy sins. They are the grand enemies against the God of thy life, and against the life of thy soul: in a word, they are the public enemies of

all mankind. How do DAVID, EZRA, DANIEL, and all the good *Levites*, aggravate their sins, from the consideration of their injuriousness to GOD, of their opposition to his good and righteous laws, and of the mercies and warnings against which they were committed. O the work that sin hath made in the world! This is the enemy that hath brought in death, that hath robbed and enslaved man, that hath digged hell. This is the enemy that hath turned the creation upside down, and sown dissension between man and the creatures,—between man and man,—yea, between man and himself, setting the will against the judgment, lust against conscience,—yea, worst of all, between GOD and man, making the lapsed sinner both hateful to GOD, and the hater of him. O man! how canst thou make so light of sin? This is the traitor that shed the blood of the SON of GOD, that sold him, that mocked him, that scourged him, that spit in his face, that digged his hands, that pierced his side, that pressed his soul, that mangled his body, that never left him till it had bound him, condemned him, nailed him, crucified him, and put him to open shame. This is that deadly poison, so powerful of operation, that one drop of it, shed upon the root of mankind, hath corrupted, spoiled, and poisoned, undone his whole race at once. This is the bloody executioner, that hath killed the prophets, burned the martyrs, murdered all the apostles, all the patriarchs, all the kings and potentates; that hath destroyed cities, swallowed up empires, and devoured whole nations. Whatever was the weapon that it was done by, it was sin that did the execution. Study the nature of sin, till thy heart be brought to fear and loathe it; and meditate on the aggravations of thy particular sins, how thou hast sinned against all GOD's warnings, against thine own prayers, against mercies, against correction, against clearest light, against freest love, against thine own resolutions, against promises, vows, and covenants of better obedience. Charge thy heart home with these things, till it blush for shame, and be brought out of all good opinion of itself.

Meditate upon the desert of sin. It cries up to heaven: it calls for vengeance: its due wages are death and damnation: it pulls the curse of GOD upon the soul and body. The least sinful word or thought lays thee under the infinite wrath of GOD. O what a load of wrath, what a weight of curses, what a treasure of vengeance, have all the millions of thy sins then deserved!

Meditate upon the deformity and defilement of sin. It is as black as hell; the very image of the devil drawn upon the soul. It would more affright thee to see thyself in the hateful deformity of thy nature, than to see the Devil. There is no mire so unclean, no carcass so offensive, no plague or leprosy so noisome, as sin, in which thou art all enrolled, and so covered with its odious filth, that thou art rendered more displeasing to the pure and holy nature of the glorious GOD, than the most filthy object can be to thee.

Above all other sins, fix the eye of consideration on these two: 1. The Sin of thy Nature. It is to little purpose to lop the branches, while the root remains untouched. In vain do men lave out the streams, when the fountain is running which fills up all again. Let the axe of thy repentance (like DAVID'S) go to the root of sin. Study how deep, how close, how permanent is thy natural pollution, and how universal it is, till thou dost cry out, in the language of ST. PAUL, against thy "Body of Death." Look into all thy parts and powers, and see what unclean vessels, what dunghills, what sinks they are become. The heart is never soundly broken, till thoroughly convinced of the heinousness of original sin. Here fix thy thoughts; this is that which makes thee backward to all good, and prone to all evil; which sheds blindness, pride, prejudice, unbelief, into thy mind; enmity, inconstancy, obstinacy; into thy will; inordinate heats and colds into thy affections; insensibility, benumbedness, unfaithfulness, into thy conscience; slipperiness into thy memory; and, in a word which hath put every wheel of thy soul out of order, and made it, of a habitation of holiness, to become a very hell

of iniquity. This is that which hath defiled, corrupted, perverted all thy members, and turned them into weapons of unrighteousness, and servants of sin; which hath filled the head with carnal and corrupt designs, the hand with sinful practices, the eyes with wandering and wantonness, the tongue with deadly poison; which hath opened the ears to tales, flattery, and filthy communication, and shut them against the instruction of life, and hath rendered thy heart a very forge for sin, and the cursed womb of all deadly conceptions; so that it poureth forth its wickedness without ceasing, even as naturally, freely, and unweariedly, as a fountain doth pour forth its waters, or the raging sea doth cast forth mire and dirt. And wilt thou tell us any longer of thy good heart? O never cease to meditate on this desperate contagion, till, with EPHRAIM, thou bemoan thyself; and with shame and sorrow smite on thy breast, as the publican; and with JOB, abhor thyself, and repent in dust and ashes.—2. *The particular evil to which thou art most addicted*, find out, with all its aggravations; and set home upon thy heart all God's threatenings against it. Repentance drives before it the whole herd, but especially sticks the arrow in the beloved sin, and singles this out above the rest. O labour to make this sin odious to thy soul, and double thy guards and thy resolutions against it, because this doth most dishonour God, and endanger thee.

Direction III. *Strive to affect thy heart with a deep sense of thy present misery.* Read over the foregoing chapter again and again. Remember, when thou liest down, that, for ought thou knowest, thou mayest awake in flames; and when thou risest up, that by the next night thou mayest make thy bed in hell. Is it a little matter to live in such a fearful case? To stand tottering upon the brink of the bottomless pit, and to live at the mercy of every disease, which, if it do but fall upon thee, will send thee forthwith into the burnings? Suppose thou sawest a condemned wretch hanging over NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S burning fiery furnace, by nothing but a twine-thread,

would not thy heart tremble for such a one? Why thou art the man : this is thy very case, O man, woman, that readest this, if thou be yet unconverted. What if the thread of thy life should break ! (Why thou knowest not but it may be the next night, yea, the next moment !) Where wouldest thou be then ? Whither wouldest thou drop ? Verily, upon the crack of this thread, thou fallest into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, where thou must lie in a fiery ocean, while GOD hath a being. And doth not thy soul tremble as thou readest ? Do not thy tears bedew the paper, and thy heart throb in thy bosom ? Dost thou not yet begin to smite on thy breast, and bethink thyself what need thou hast of a change ? Oh, what is thy heart made of ? Hast thou not only lost all regard to GOD, but art thou without any love and pity to thyself ?

O study thy misery, till thy heart doth cry out for CHRIST, as earnestly as ever a drowning man did for a boat. Men must even be forced out of themselves, or else they will not come to CHRIST. Therefore, hold the eyes of conscience open ; amplify thy misery as much as possible ; do not flee from the sight of it. The sense of thy misery is necessary to the cure. Better fear the torments that abide thee now, than feel them hereafter.

Direction IV. *Settle it in thy heart, that thou art under an utter inability ever to recover thyself.* Never think thy praying, reading, hearing, confessing, amending, will do the cure : these must be attended to, but thou art undone if thou restest in them. Thou art a lost man, if thou hopest to escape drowning upon any other plank, but JESUS CHRIST. Thou must *unlearn* thyself, and renounce thy own strength, and throw thyself wholly upon CHRIST, as a man that swimmeth casteth himself upon the water, or else thou canst not escape. While men trust in themselves, and establish their own righteousness, and have confidence in the flesh, they will not come savingly to CHRIST. Thou must know thy gain to be but loss and dung,—thy strength, but weakness,—thy righteousness,

rags and rottenness, before there will be an effectual closure between CHRIST and thee. Can the lifeless carcass shake off its grave-cloaths, and loose the bonds of death? Then mayest thou recover thyself, who art dead in trespasses and sins. Therefore, when thou goest to pray or meditate, or to do any of the duties to which thou art here directed, call in the help of THE SPIRIT, as despairing to do any thing pleasing to GOD, in thine own strength: yet neglect not thy duty, but lie at the pool, and wait in the way of THE SPIRIT. While the EUNUCH was reading, the HOLY GHOST sent PHILIP to him: when the disciples were praying, when CORNELIUS and his friends were hearing, the HOLY GHOST fell upon them, and filled them all. Strive to give up thyself to CHRIST; strive to pray, strive to meditate, strive a hundred and a hundred times, try to do it as well as thou canst; and while thou art endeavouring in the way of thy duty, THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD will come upon thee, and help thee to do what of thyself thou art utterly unable to do.

Direction V. *Forthwith renounce all thy Sins.* If thou yield to any sin, thou art undone. In vain dost thou hope for life by CHRIST, except thou depart from iniquity. Forsake thy sins, or else thou canst not find mercy. Thou canst not be married to CHRIST, except divorced from sin: give up the traitor, or thou canst have no peace with heaven. Thou must part with thy sins or with thy soul: spare but one sin, and though it be but a little, or a secret one, though thou mayest plead necessity, and have a hundred shifts and excuses for it, the life of thy soul must go for the life of that sin.

O sinner, hear and consider. If thou wilt part with thy sins, GOD will give thee his CHRIST. Is not this a fair exchange? I testify unto thee this day, that if thou perish, it is not because there was never a Saviour provided, nor life tendered, but because thou preferredst (with the *Jews*) the murderer before thy SAVIOUR, sin before CHRIST. Search thy heart therefore with candles, as the *Jews* did their houses, for leaven before the

Passover; labour to find out thy sins; enter into thy closet, and consider, What evil have I lived in? What duty have I neglected towards GOD? What sin have I lived in against my brother? Never stand looking upon thy sin, nor rolling the morsel under thy tongue, but spit it out as poison, with fear and detestation. Alas! what will thy sins do for thee, that thou shouldest hesitate about parting with them? They will flatter thee, but they will undo thee, and cut thy throat while they smile upon thee, and arm the justice and wrath of the infinite GOD against thee. They will open hell for thee, and pile up fuel to burn thee. Behold the gibbet that they have prepared for thee. O serve them like HAMAN, and do upon them the execution they would else have done upon thee. Away with them, crucify them, and let CHRIST only be lord over thee.

Direction VI. *Make a solemn choice of GOD for thy Portion and Blessedness.* With all possible devotion and veneration avouch the LORD for thy GOD. Set the world, with all its glory, and paint, and gallantry, with all its pleasures, and promotions, on the one hand; and set GOD, with all his excellencies and perfections, on the other; and see that thou deliberately make thy choice. Take up thy rest in GOD; set thyself down under his shadow; let his promises and perfections turn the scale against all the world. Settle it in thy heart that the LORD is an all-sufficient portion, and that thou canst not be miserable while thou hast GOD to live upon: take him for thy shield, and exceeding great reward. GOD alone is more than all the world; content thyself with him: let others carry the preferments and glory of the world; place thou thy happiness in his favour, and the light of his countenance.

Poor Sinner, thou art fallen off from GOD, and hast engaged his power and wrath against thee: yet know that, of his abundant grace, he doth offer to be thy GOD again in CHRIST. What sayest thou, man? Wilt thou have the LORD for thy GOD? Take this counsel, and thou shalt have him. Come to him by CHRIST; renounce the

idols of thine own pleasures, gain, or reputation. Let these be pulled out of the throne, and set GOD'S interest uppermost in thy heart : take him as GOD, to be chief in thy affection, esteem, and intentions ; for he will not endure to have any set above him. In a word, thou must take him in all his *personal Relations*, and in all his *essential Perfections*.

First, *In all his personal Relations*.—GOD THE FATHER must be taken for thy Father. O say to him with the Prodigal, “ Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am not worthy to be called thy son ;” but since of thy wonderful mercy thou art pleased to take me, that am of myself as a dog, or a swine, and a child of the Devil, to be thy child, I solemnly take thee for my Father, commend myself to thy care, trust to thy Providence, and cast my burthen on thy shoulders. I depend on thy provision, and submit to thy corrections, and trust under the shadow of thy wings, and hide in thy chambers, and flee to thy name. I renounce all confidence in myself ; I repose my confidence in thee ; I depose my concernments with thee.”—Again, GOD the SON must be taken for thy Saviour, for thy Redeemer, and Righteousness. He must be accepted as the only way to the FATHER, and the only means of life. O then put off the raiment of thy captivity, put on thy wedding-garment, and go and marry thyself to JESUS CHRIST. “ LORD, I am thine, and all that I have, my body, my soul, my name, my estate. I send a bill of divorce to my other lovers, I give my heart to thee ; I will be thine undividedly, thine everlastingly. I will set thy name on all I have, and use it only as thy goods, as thy loan during thy leave, resigning all to thee ; I will have no king but thee : reign thou over me. Other lords have had dominion over me ; but now I will make mention of thy name only ; and do here take an oath of fealty to thee, promising and vowing to serve, love, and fear thee, above all competitors. I disavow mine own righteousness, and despair of ever being saved for mine own duties, or graces ; and lean only on thine all-sufficient sacrifice

and intercession for pardon, and life, and acceptance before GOD. I take thee for my only guide and instructor, resolving to be led and directed by thee, and to wait for thy counsel, and that thine shall be the casting voice with me.”—Lastly, GOD THE SPIRIT must be taken for thy sanctifier, for thine advocate, thy counsellor, thy comforter, the teacher of thine ignorance, the pledge and earnest of thine inheritance. “Come, thou SPIRIT OF THE MOST HIGH! here is a house for thee, here is a temple for thee; here do thou rest for ever: lo! I give up the possession to thee, full possession. I send thee the keys of my heart, that all may be for thy use, that thou mayest put thy goods, thy grace, into every room. I give up the use of all to thee, that every faculty and every member may be thine instrument to work righteousness, and do the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

Secondly, *In all his essential Perfections.*—Consider how the LORD hath revealed himself to thee in his word: wilt thou take him as such a GOD? O sinner, here is the most blessed news that ever came to the sons of men; the LORD will be thy GOD, if thou wilt but close with him in his excellencies. Wilt thou have the merciful, the gracious, the sin-pardoning GOD to be thy GOD? O yes, (saith the sinner,) I am undone otherwise. But the FATHER tells thee, “I am the holy and sin-hating GOD: if thou wilt be owned as one of my people, thou must be holy; holy in heart, holy in life: thou must put away all thine iniquities, be they ever so near, ever so natural, ever so necessary to the maintenance of thy interest. Unless thou wilt be at defiance with sin, I cannot be thy GOD. Cast out the leaven, put away the evil of thy doings, cease to do evil, learn to do well, or else I can have nothing to do with thee. Bring forth mine enemies, or there is no peace to be had with me.” What doth thine heart answer? “LORD, I desire to have thee as such a GOD: I desire to be holy as thou art holy. I love thee, not only for thy goodness and mercy, but for thy holiness and purity. I take thy holiness for my happiness; O be to me a fountain of

holiness ; set on me the stamp and impress of thy holiness. I will thankfully part with all my sins at thy command : my wilful sins I do forthwith forsake : and as for mine infirmities, I will strive against them in the use of the means ; I detest them, and will pray and war against them, and never let them have quiet rest in my soul.” —Beloved, whosoever of you will thus accept of the LORD for his GOD, he shall have him.

Again he tells you, “I am the all-sufficient GOD.” (*Gen. xvii. 1.*) This is as if he said, “Will you lay all at my feet, and give it up to my disposal, and take me for your only portion ? will you own and honour my all-sufficiency ? will you take me as your happiness and treasure, your hope and bliss ? I am both a sun and a shield ; will you have me for your all ?” (*Gen. xv. 1 ; Psal. lxxxiv. 11.*) Now, what dost thou say to this ; doth thy mouth water after the onions and flesh-pots of *Egypt* ? Art thou loth to exchange the happiness of earth for a part in GOD ; and though thou wouldest be glad to have GOD and the world too, yet canst thou not think of having him, and nothing but him ; but hadst thou rather take up with the earth below, if GOD would but let thee keep it as long as thou wouldest ? This is a fearful sign. But if thou art willing to sell all for the pearl of great price, if thine heart answer, “LORD, I desire no other portion but thee : take the corn and the wine and the oil, whoso will, so I may have the light of thy countenance : I fix upon thee for my happiness ; I gladly venture myself on thee, and trust myself with thee ; I set my hopes in thee ; I content myself with thee : let me hear thee say, I am thy GOD, thy salvation, and I have enough, all I wish for : I will make no terms with thee, but for thyself ; let me but surely have thee ; let me be able to make good my claim, and see my title to thyself, and, as for other things, I leave them to thee ; give me more or less, any thing or nothing, I will be satisfied in my GOD ;” —if thou take him thus, he is thy own.

Again he tells you ; “I am the Sovereign LORD : If you will have me for your GOD, you must give me the supre-

macy. (*Mat.* vi. 24.) You must not make me a second to sin, or any worldly interest. If you will be my people, I must have the rule over you; you must not live according to your own pleasure. Will you come under my yoke? Will you bow to my government? Will you submit to my discipline, to my word, to my rod?" Sinner, what sayest thou to this? Dost thou say, "LORD, I had rather be at thy command, than live according to my own pleasure: I had rather have thy will to be done, than mine: I approve of, and consent to thy laws, and account it my privilege to live under them; and though the flesh rebel, I am resolved to take no other LORD but thee. I willingly take the oath of thy supremacy, and acknowledge thee for my Sovereign; and resolve all my days to pay the tribute of worship, obedience, love, and service, to thee; and to live to thee, as the end of my life." This is a right accepting of God.

To be short, he tells you; "I am the true and faithful God: If you will have me for your God, you must be content to trust me. (*2 Tim.* i. 12; *Prov.* iii. 5.) Will you venture yourselves upon my word, and depend on my faithfulness, and take my bond for your security? Will you be content to follow me in poverty and reproach, and affliction here, and to tarry till the next world for preferment? Will you be content to labour and suffer, and to tarry for your returns till the resurrection of the just? The womb of my promise will not presently bring forth: will you have the patience to wait?"—Now, beloved, what say you to this? Will you have this God for your God? Will you be content to live by faith, and trust him for an unseen happiness, an unseen heaven, an unseen glory? Do your hearts answer, "LORD, we will venture ourselves upon thee; we commit ourselves to thee; we know whom we have trusted; we are willing to take thy word; we will prefer thy promises before our own possessions, and the hopes of heaven before all the enjoyments of earth; we will wait for thy leisure. Do what thou wilt here, so that we may but have thy faithful pro-

mise for heaven hereafter."—If you can in truth, and upon deliberation thus accept of GOD, he will be yours.—Thus there must be, in a right conversion to GOD, a closing with him suitable to his excellencies. For when men close with his mercy, but yet love sin ; or will take him for their benefactor, but not for their sovereign, or for their patron, but not for their portion ; this is no thorough and no sound conversion.

Direction VII. *Accept of the LORD JESUS in all his Offices, and with all his Inconveniencies, as thine.* Sinner, thou hast undone thyself, and art plunged into deplorable misery, out of which thou art never able to climb up ; but JESUS CHRIST is able and ready to help thee, and He freely tenders himself to thee. Be thy sins ever so many, ever so great, of ever so long continuance, yet thou shalt be most certainly pardoned and saved, if thou dost not wretchedly neglect the offer which, in the name of GOD, is here made unto thee. The LORD JESUS calleth unto thee ; look to him, and be saved. (*Isa. xlv. 22.*) Come unto him, and he will in no wise cast thee out. (*John vi. 37.*) Yea, he is a suitor to thee, and beseecheth thee to be reconciled. (*2 Cor. v. 20.*) He cries in the streets, he knocks at thy door, he woos thee to accept of him and live with him. (*Prov. i. 20 ; Rev. iii. 20.*) If thou die, it is because thou wouldest not come to him for life. (*John v. 40.*) Now accept of an offered CHRIST, and thou art made for ever ; now give thy consent to him, and the match is made ; all the world cannot hinder it. Do not stand aloof, because of thine unworthiness. Man, I tell thee, nothing in the world can undo thee but thine unwillingness : speak, man, art thou willing for the match ? Wilt thou have CHRIST in all his relations to be thine ; thy King, thy Priest, thy Prophet ? Wilt thou have him with all his inconveniencies ? Take not CHRIST hand over head, but sit down first, and count the cost. Wilt thou lay all at his feet ? wilt thou be content to run all hazard with him ? wilt thou take thy lot with him, fall where it will ? wilt thou deny thyself, take up thy cross, and follow him ?

Art thou deliberately, understandingly, freely, fixedly determined to cleave to him, in all times and conditions? If so, my soul for thine, thou shalt never perish, but art passed from death to life. Here lies the main point of thy salvation, that thou be found thus closing with JESUS CHRIST; and therefore, if thou love thyself, see that thou be faithful to GOD and thy soul here.

Direction VIII. *Resign up all thy Powers and Faculties, and thy whole Interest, to be his.* The LORD seeks not ours, but us: resign therefore thy body, with all its members, to him, and thy soul, with all its powers; that he may be glorified in thy body, and in thy spirit, which are his. In a right closure with CHRIST, all the faculties submit to him. The Judgment subscribes, "LORD, thou art worthy of all acceptation, chief of ten thousand: happy is the man that findeth thee. All the things that are to be desired, are not to be compared with thee." The Understanding lays aside its corrupt reasonings and cavils, and its prejudices against CHRIST and his ways. It is now past disputing, and decides for CHRIST against all the world. It sees such a treasure in this field, such a value in this pearl, as is worth all: "Here is the richest bargain that ever I made; here is the richest prize that ever man was offered; here is the most sovereign remedy that ever mercy prepared: he is worthy of my esteem, worthy of my choice, worthy of my love, worthy to be embraced, adored, admired, for evermore. I approve of his articles; his terms are righteous and reasonable, full of equity and mercy." Again, the Will resigns: it stands no longer wavering, but is peremptorily determined: "LORD, thy love hath overcome me; thou hast won me, and thou shalt have me: come in, LORD; to thee I freely open; I consent to be saved in thine own way; thou shalt have any thing, thou shalt have all, let me have but thee." The Memory submits to CHRIST: "LORD, here is a store-house for thee; out with this trash, and lay in the treasure; let me be a repository of thy truth, thy promises, thy providences." The Conscience comes in; "LORD, I

will ever side with thee ; I will be thy faithful register ; I will warn when the sinner is tempted, and smite when thou art offended. I will witness for thee, and judge for thee, and guide into thy ways, and will never let sin have quiet in this soul." The Affections also come in to CHRIST. " O," saith Love, " I am sick for thee." " O," saith Desire, " now I have my longing : here is the satisfaction I sought for : here is the DESIRE of NATIONS : here is bread for me, and balm for me, all that I want." Fear bows the knee with awe and veneration : " Welcome, LORD, to thee will I pay my homage ; thy word and thy rod shall command my motions ; thee will I reverence and adore ; before thee will I fall down and worship." Grief likewise comes in : " LORD, thy displeasure and thy dishonour, thy people's calamities and mine own iniquities, shall alone move me : I will mourn when thou art offended ; I will weep when thy cause is wounded." Anger likewise declares for CHRIST : " LORD, nothing so enrages me as my folly against thee ; that I should be so bewitched as to hearken to the flatteries of sin, and the temptations of SATAN, against thee." Hatred too will side with CHRIST : " I protest mortal enmity with thine enemies ; I never will be the friend of thy foes ; I vow an immortal quarrel with every sin, I will give no quarter, I will make no peace."—Thus let all thy powers submit to JESUS CHRIST.

Again : Thou must give up thy whole interest to him : if there be any thing that thou keepest back from CHRIST, it will be thine undoing. Unless thou wilt forsake all, (in the resolution of thine heart,) thou canst not be his disciple. Thou must hate father and mother, yea, and thine own life also, in comparison of him. In a word, thou must give him thyself, and all that thou hast, without reservation ; or else thou can have no part in him.

Direction IX. *Make choice of the Laws of CHRIST, as the rule of thy Words, Thoughts, and Actions.* This is the true convert's choice. But here remember these three rules : 1. *You must choose them all* : there is no coming to heaven by a partial obedience. None may think it

Art thou deliberately, understandingly, freely, fixedly determined to cleave to him, in all times and conditions? If so, my soul for thine, thou shalt never perish, but art passed from death to life. Here lies the main point of thy salvation, that thou be found thus closing with JESUS CHRIST; and therefore, if thou love thyself, see that thou be faithful to GOD and thy soul here.

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enough to adopt the cheap and easy part of religion, and leave the duties which are most costly and self-denying; you must take all or none. A sincere convert, though he makes most conscience of the greatest sins and weightiest duties, yet he makes true conscience of little sins, and of all duties. 2. *You must choose them for all times*: for prosperity, and for adversity; whether it rain or shine. A true convert is resolved in his way; he will stand to his choice, and will not set his back to the wind, and be of the religion of the times. 3. *This must not be done hastily, but with deliberation and understanding.* That disobedient son said, "I go, Sir, but went not." (*Matt. xxi. 30.*) How fairly did they promise, who said, "All that the LORD our GOD shall speak unto thee, we will do it:" and it is probable they spake as they meant; but when it came to trial, it was found that there was not such a heart in them, as to do what they had promised. If you would be sincere in closing with the laws of CHRIST, (1.) *Study the meaning, and latitude, and compass of them.* Remember that they are very spiritual, and reach to the very thoughts of the heart, so that if you will walk by this rule, your very thoughts, and inward motions, must be under government;—that they are very strict, self-denying, and quite contrary to your natural inclinations, so that you must take the strait gate, and the narrow way, and be content to have the flesh curbed from the liberty it desires;—and in a word, that they are very large: "Thy commandment is exceeding broad." (2.) *Rest not in general commands,* (for there is much deceit in that,) *but bring down thy heart to the particular commands of CHRIST.* Those JEWS mentioned by the Prophet seemed as well resolved as any in the world, and called GOD to witness they meant as they said; but they rested in generals. When GOD's commands crossed their inclination, they would not obey. (3.) *Observe the special duties to which thy heart is most averse, and the special sins to which it is most inclined: and see whether it be truly resolved to perform the one, and forego the other.* What sayest thou to thy bosom sin, thy gainful sin? to costly, and hazardous, and flesh-

displeasing duties? If thou haltest here, and dost not resolve, by the grace of GOD, to cross thy flesh, thou art unsound.

Direction X. *Let all this be completed in a Solemn Covenant between GOD and thy soul.* For thy better help therein, take these few directions.

1. Set apart some time, more than once, to be spent in secret before the LORD.

(1.) In seeking earnestly his special assistance and gracious acceptance of thee.

(2.) In considering distinctly all the conditions of the covenant, expressed in the form hereafter proposed.

(3.) In searching thine heart, whether thou art sincerely willing to forsake all thy sins, and resign thyself, thy body and soul, unto GOD, to serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of thy life.

2. Compose thy spirit into the most serious frame possible, suitable to a transaction of so high importance.

3. Lay hold on the Covenant of GOD, and rely upon his promise that he will give grace and strength, whereby thou mayest be enabled to perform thy promise. Trust not to the strength of thine own resolutions, but take hold on his strength.

4. Resolve to be faithful. Having engaged thine heart, opened thy mouth, and subscribed with thy hand unto the LORD, resolve in his strength never to go back.

Lastly, Being thus prepared, on some convenient time set apart for the purpose, set upon the work in the most solemn manner possible, as if the LORD were visibly presented before thine eyes; fall down on thy knees; and spreading forth thine hands towards heaven, open thine heart to the LORD in these or the like words.

“ O most dreadful GOD! for the passion of thy Son, I beseech thee, accept of thy poor prodigal, now prostrating himself at thy door. I have fallen from thee by mine iniquity; and am by nature a son of death, and a thousand-fold more the child of hell, by my wicked practice. But,

of thine infinite grace, thou hast promised grace to me in CHRIST, if I will but turn to thee with all my heart: therefore, upon the call of thy gospel, I am now come in, and, throwing down my weapons, submit to thy mercy.

“And because thou requirest, as the condition of my peace with thee, that I should put away mine idols, and be at defiance with all thine enemies, which I acknowledge I have wickedly sided with, against thee; I here from the bottom of my heart renounce them all: firmly covenanting with thee, not to allow myself in any known sin, but conscientiously to use all the means which I know thou hast prescribed for the utter destruction of all my corruptions. And whereas I have inordinately and idolatrously let out my affections upon the world, I do here resign up my heart to thee that madest it; humbly protesting before thy glorious majesty, that it is the firm resolution of my heart, and that I do unfeignedly desire grace from thee, that when thou shalt call me hereunto, I may practise this my resolution, to forsake all that is dear unto me in this world, rather than to turn from thee; and that I will watch against all its temptations, whether of prosperity or adversity, lest they should withdraw my heart from thee; beseeching thee also to help me against the temptations of SATAN, to whose suggestions I resolve, by thy grace, never to yield myself a servant. And because my own righteousness is but filthy rags, I renounce all confidence therein; and acknowledge that I am, of myself, a hopeless, helpless, undone creature, without righteousness or strength.

“And forasmuch as thou hast, of thy bottomless mercy, offered most graciously to me, wretched sinner, to be again my GOD, through CHRIST, if I would accept of thee; I call heaven and earth to record this day, that I do here solemnly avouch thee for the LORD my GOD: and with all possible veneration bowing the neck of my soul under the feet of thy most sacred Majesty, I do here take Thee, LORD JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for my

portion and chief good; and give up myself, my body and soul, for thy servant, promising and vowing to serve thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

“ And since thou hast appointed the LORD JESUS CHRIST the only means of coming unto thee, I do here accept of Him, as the only new and living way, by which sinners may have access to thee; and do hereby solemnly join myself in marriage-covenant to him.

“ O blessed JESUS, I come to thee hungry, and poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked; a most loathsome, polluted wretch; a guilty, condemned malefactor; unworthy even to wash the feet of the servants of my LORD, and much more to be solemnly married to the King of Glory: but since such is thine unparalleled love, I do here with all my power accept thee, and do take thee for my head and husband; for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; for all times and conditions; to love, honour, and obey thee, before all others; and this to the death. I embrace thee in all thy offices; I renounce mine own worthiness, and do here avow thee to be the LORD my righteousness: I renounce mine own wisdom, and here take thee for mine only guide: I renounce mine own will, and take thy will for my law.

“ And since thou hast told me, that I must suffer if I will reign, I do here covenant with thee to take my lot with thee, and, by thy grace assisting, to run all hazards with thee; trusting that neither life nor death shall part between thee and me.

“ And because thou hast been pleased to give me thy holy Laws as the rule of my life, and the way in which I should walk to thy kingdom, I do here willingly put my neck under thy yoke, and set my shoulder to thy burden; and subscribing to all thy laws, as holy, just, and good, I solemnly take them as the rule of my words, thoughts, and actions; promising that though my flesh contradict and rebel, yet I will endeavour to order and govern my whole life according to their direction, and will not allow myself in the neglect of any thing that I know to be my duty.

“Only, because through the frailty of my flesh I am subject to many failings, I am bold humbly to protest, that unallowed miscarriages, contrary to the settled bent and resolution of my heart, shall not make void this Covenant; for so thou hast said.

“Now, Almighty God, Searcher of Hearts, thou knowest that I make this Covenant with thee this day, without any known guile or reservation; beseeching thee, that if thou seest any flaw or falsehood therein, thou wouldest discover it to me, and help me to do it aright.

“And now, Glory be to thee, O GOD the FATHER, whom I shall be bold, from this day forward, to look upon as my GOD and FATHER, that ever thou shouldest find out such a way for the recovery of undone sinners. Glory be to thee, O GOD the SON, who hast loved me, and washed me from my sins in thine own blood, and art now become my Saviour and Redeemer. Glory be to thee, O GOD the HOLY GHOST, who, by the finger of thine almighty power, hast turned my heart from sin to GOD.

“O dreadful JEHOVAH, the LORD GOD Omnipotent! FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST! thou art now become my Covenant-Friend; and I, through thy infinite grace, am become thy Covenant-Servant. Amen, So be it! And the Covenant which I have made on earth, let it ratified in heaven!”

This Covenant I advise that you should make, not only in heart, but in word; not only in word, but in writing; and that you should, with all possible reverence, spread the writing before the LORD, as if you would present it to him as your act and deed: and when you have done this, set your hand to it; and keep it as a memorial of the solemn transactions that have passed between GOD and you, that you may have recourse to it in doubts and temptations.

Direction XI. *Take heed of delaying thy Conversion, and set upon a speedy and present turning.* Remember and tremble at the sad instance of the foolish virgins, who came not till the door of mercy was shut; and of convinced FELIX, who put off PAUL to another season, and

we never find that he had such a season more. O come in while it is called to-day, lest the day of grace should be over, and the things that belong to thy peace should be hid from thine eyes. Now mercy is wooing thee; now CHRIST is waiting to be gracious to thee, and the Spirit of GOD is striving with thee; now ministers are calling; now conscience is stirring; now oil may be had, thou hast opportunity for the buying; now CHRIST is to be had for the taking. O strike in with the offers of grace, now or never. If thou make light of this offer, GOD may swear in his wrath that thou shalt not taste of his supper.

Direction XII. *Attend conscientiously upon the Word, as the means appointed for thy Conversion.* Attend, I say, not customarily, but conscientiously; with this desire, design, hope, and expectation, that thou mayest be converted by it. To every sermon thou hearest, come with this thought: "I hope GOD will now come in; I hope this day may be the time, this may be the man, by whom GOD will bring me home." When thou art coming to the ordinances, lift up thine heart thus to GOD: "LORD, let this be the sabbath, this the season, wherein I may receive renewing grace! Oh let it be said, that to-day such an one was born unto thee."

Direction XIII. *Strike in with the SPIRIT, when he begins to work upon thy heart.* Quench not the SPIRIT; do not out-strive him; do not resist him. Beware of putting out convictions by evil company, or worldly business. When thou findest any troubles for sin, and fears about thy eternal state, beg of GOD that they may never leave thee, till they have wrought off thy heart from sin, and wrought it over to JESUS CHRIST. Say to him, "Strike home, LORD; leave not the work in the midst. If thou seest that I am not yet wounded enough, that I am not troubled enough, wound me yet deeper, LORD; O go to the bottom of my corruption, let out the life-blood of my sins."—Thus yield up thyself to the workings of the SPIRIT, and hoist thy sails to his gales.

Direction XIV. *Set upon the constant and diligent use of serious and fervent Prayer.* He that neglects prayer is a profane and unsanctified sinner. He that is not constant in prayer is but a hypocrite. This is one of the first things conversion appears in, that it sets men on praying. Therefore set to this duty: let never a day pass over thee wherein thou hast not, morning and evening, set apart some time for solemn prayer in secret. Call thy family also together daily and duly, to worship GOD with thee. Woe be unto thee, if thine be found amongst the families that call not upon GOD's name. Cold and lifeless devotions will not reach half way to heaven. Be fervent and importunate: without violence the kingdom of heaven will not be taken: thou must strive to enter, and wrestle with tears and supplications as JACOB, if thou meanest to carry the blessing. Thou art undone for ever without grace, and therefore thou must resolve to take no denial. 'That man that is fixed in this resolution; Well, I must have grace, and I never will give over till I have grace, and I will never leave seeking, and waiting, and striving with GOD, and my own heart, till he do renew me by the power of his grace: this man is in the likeliest way to win grace.

“ But GOD heareth not sinners, their prayer is an abomination.”

Answer. Distinguish between sinners. There are, 1. Resolved sinners: their prayers GOD abhors: 2. Returning sinners: these GOD will come forth to, and meet with mercy though yet afar off.

Is it not good comfort that he calleth thee? Doth he set thee on the use of means, and dost thou think he will mock thee? Doubtless, he will not fail thee, if thou be not wanting to thyself. O pray, and faint not! Throw thyself at the feet of GOD; it is for thy life, and therefore follow him, and give not over. What though GOD do not presently open to thee? Is not grace worth the waiting for? Knock and wait; and sooner or later mercy will come.

Direction XV. *Forsake evil Company, and forbear the Occasions of Sin.* Thou wilt never be turned from sin, till thou wilt decline the temptations of sin. I never expect thy conversion from sin, unless thou art brought to such self-denial as to fly the occasions. If thou wilt be playing on the brink, and tampering with the snare, thy soul will surely be taken. Where GOD doth expose men in his providence unavoidably to temptation, we may expect special assistance in the use of his means; but when we tempt GOD, by running into danger, he will not engage to preserve us when we are tempted. And of all temptations, one of the most fatal and pernicious is evil company. O what hopeful beginnings have these often stifled! O the souls, the estates, the families, the towns, that these have ruined! How many a poor sinner has been enlightened and convinced, and has been just ready to escape the snare, and yet wicked company have pulled him back, and made him seven-fold more the child of hell.

In a word, I have no hopes of thee, except thou wilt shake off thy evil company. CHRIST speaks to thee, as to them in another case; "If thou seek me, then let these go their way." Thy life lies upon it; forsake these, or else thou canst not live. Let this sentence be written upon thy conscience, "A COMPANION OF FOOLS SHALL BE DESTROYED." The LORD hath spoken it, and who shall reverse it? And wilt thou run upon destruction, when GOD himself doth forewarn thee? If GOD do ever change thy heart, it will appear in the change of thy company. Oh, fear and fly this gulf, by which so many thousands of souls have been swallowed into perdition. It will be hard for thee, indeed, to make thine escape: thy companions will be mocking thee out of thy religion, and will study to fill thee with prejudices against strictness, as ridiculous and comfortless. They will be flattering thee, and alluring thee; but remember the warnings of the HOLY GHOST, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come with us, cast in thy lot among

us ; walk not thou in the way with them, refrain thy foot from their path ; avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away ; for the way of the wicked is as darkness, they know not at what they stumble. They lay wait for their own blood ; they lurk privily for their own lives.”

My soul is moved within me, to see how many of my hearers are like to perish, both they and their houses, by this wicked snare ; even the haunting of such places and company, whereby they are drawn into sin. Once more I admonish you, as MOSES did *Israel*, “Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men.” O ! flee from them as you would those that had the plague-sores in their foreheads. These are the devil’s panders and decoys ; and if thou dost not make thine escape, they will prove thine eternal ruin.

Direction XVI. Lastly, *Set apart a day to humble thy soul in secret, by fasting and prayer, and to work a sense of thy sins and miseries upon thy heart.* Read over some good exposition of the commandments ; write down the duties omitted, and sins committed, by thee, against every commandment ; and so make a catalogue of thy sins, and with shame and sorrow spread them before the LORD. And if thy heart be truly willing, join thyself solemnly to the LORD in that Covenant set down in the *ninth Direction*, and the LORD grant thee mercy in his sight.

Thus have I told thee what thou must do to be saved. Wilt thou now obey the voice of the LORD ? Wilt thou arise and set thyself to the work ? O man ! what answer wilt thou make ? What excuse wilt thou have, if thou shouldest perish at last through very wilfulness, when thou hast known the way of life ? I do not fear thy miscarrying, if thine own idleness do not at last undo thee, in neglecting the use of the means that are so plainly here prescribed. Rouse up, O sluggard, and ply thy work : be doing, and the LORD will be with thee.

A short Soliloquy for an unregenerate Sinner.

Ah wretched man that I am! what a condition have I brought myself into by sin! I see my heart hath but deceived me all this while, in flattering me that my condition was good: I see I am a lost and undone man, for ever undone, unless the LORD help me out of this condition. My sins! my sins! LORD, what an unclean, polluted wretch am I! More loathsome and odious to thee, than the most hateful venom, or noisome carcass, can be to me. O what a hell of sin is in this heart of mine, which I flattered myself to be a good heart! LORD, how universally am I corrupted in all my parts, powers, and performances! All the imaginations of the thoughts of my heart are only evil continually. My heart is a very sink of all sin: and O the innumerable hosts and swarms of sinful thoughts, words, and actions, that have flown from thence! O the load of guilt that is on my soul! My head is full, my heart is full, my mind, and my members, they are all full of sin. O my sins! how do they stare upon me! how do they witness against me! Woe is me, my creditors are upon me; every commandment taketh hold upon me for more than ten thousand talents, yea, ten thousand times ten thousand. How endless, then, is the sum of all my debts! Woe unto me, for my debts are infinite, and my sins are increased: they are wrongs to an infinite Majesty; and if he that committed treason against a mortal is worthy to be drawn and quartered, what have I deserved, that have so often lifted up my hand against heaven, and have struck at the crown and dignity of the Almighty.

O my sins, my sins! Behold a troop cometh! Multitudes, multitudes! There is no number of their armies. Innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me; they have set themselves in array against me. It were better to have all the regiments of hell come against me, than to have my sins fall upon me, to the spoiling of my

soul. LORD, how I am surrounded? How many are they that rise up against me? They have beset me behind and before; they swarm within me, and without me: they have possessed all my powers, and have fortified my unhappy soul, as a garrison, which this brood of hell doth maintain against the God that made me.

And they are as mighty as they are many. The sands are many, but then they are not great: the mountains great, but then they are not many. But woe is me! my sins are as many as the sands, and as mighty as the mountains; their weight is greater than their number. It were better that the rocks and the mountains should fall upon me, than the crushing and insupportable load of my own sins. LORD, I am heavy laden; let mercy help, or I am gone. Unload me of this heavy guilt, this sinking load, or I am crushed without hope, and must be pressed down to hell. If my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my sins laid in the balances together, they would be heavier than the sand of the sea; therefore my words are swallowed up: they would weigh down all the rocks, and the hills, and turn the balance against all the isles of the earth. O LORD, thou knowest my manifold transgressions, and my mighty sins.

Ah my soul! alas my glory! whither art thou humbled! Once the glory of the creation, and the image of God; now a lump of filthiness, a coffin of rottenness, replenished with stench and loathsomeness. O what work has sin made with thee! Thou shalt be termed *Forsaken*, and all the rooms of thy faculties, *Desolate*; and the name that thou shalt be called by is *Ichabod*, or *Where is the glory?* How art thou come down? My beauty is turned into deformity, and my glory into shame. LORD, what a loathsome leper am I? How offensive to the most holy God, whose eyes cannot behold iniquity.

And what misery have my sins brought upon me! LORD, what a case am I in! Sold under sin, cast out of God's favour, accursed from the LORD, cursed in my body, cursed in my soul, cursed in my name, in my

estate, my relations, and all that I have! My sins are unpardoned, and my soul within a step of death. Alas! what shall I do? whither shall I go? which way shall I look? God is frowning on me from above, hell gaping for me beneath; conscience smiting me within, temptations and dangers surrounding me without. Oh, whither shall I flee? What place can hide me from Omniscience? What power can secure me from Omnipotence?

What meanest thou, O my soul, to go on thus? Art thou in league with hell? Hast thou made a covenant with death? Art thou in love with misery? Is it good for thee to be here? Alas! what shall I do? Shall I go on in my sinful ways? Then certain damnation will be mine end. And shall I be so besotted, as to go and sell my soul to the flames for a little ease, for a little pleasure or gain? Shall I linger any longer in this wretched estate? No; if I tarry here, I shall die. What, then, is there no help, no hope? None, except I turn. But is there any remedy for such woeful misery? any mercy after such provoking iniquity? Yes, as sure as God's oath is true, I shall have pardon and mercy yet, if presently, unfeignedly, and unreservedly, I turn by CHRIST to Him.

Why then I thank thee, O most merciful JEHOVAH, that thy patience hath waited for me hitherto; for hadst thou taken me away in this state, I had perished for ever. I adore thy grace, and accept the offers of thy mercy: I renounce all my sins, and resolve, by thy grace, to set myself against them, and follow thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

Who am I, LORD, that I should make any claim unto Thee, or have any part or portion in Thee, who am not worthy to lick up the dust of thy feet? Yet since Thou holdest up the golden sceptre, I am bold to come and touch. To despair, would be to disparage thy mercy; and to stand off, when thou biddest me to come, would be at once to undo myself, and rebel against thee. Therefore, I bow my soul to thee, and with all possible thank-

fulness accept thee as mine, and give up myself to thee as thine. Thou shalt be sovereign over me, my King and my God: thou shalt be in the throne, and all my powers shall bow to thee; they shall come and worship before thy feet; thou shalt be my portion, O LORD, and I will rest in thee.

Thou callest for my heart: O that it were in any way fit for thine acceptance! I am unworthy, O LORD, everlastingly unworthy, to be thine: but since thou wilt have it so, I freely give up my heart to thee; take it, it is thine: O that it were better! But, LORD, I put it into thine hand, who alone canst mend it; mould it after thine own heart; make it as Thou wouldest have it, holy, humble, heavenly, soft, tender, flexible; and write thy law upon it.

Come, LORD JESUS, come quickly; enter in triumphantly: take me to Thee for ever. I give up to Thee, I come to Thee as the only way to the FATHER, as the only Mediator, the means ordained to bring me to God. I have destroyed myself, but in Thee is my help: save, LORD, or I perish; I am worthy to die, and to be damned. Never was the hire more due to the servant, than death and hell are due to me for my sins; but I flee to thy merits, I trust alone to the virtue of thy sacrifice, and the prevalency of thy intercession; I submit to thy teaching, I make choice of thy government: stand open, ye everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in.

O thou SPIRIT OF THE MOST HIGH, the Comforter and Sanctifier of thy chosen; come in with all thy glorious train, all thy fruits and graces; let me be thine habitation. I can give thee only that which is thine own already! but here, with the poor widow, I cast my two mites, my soul and my body, into thy treasury, fully resigning them up to thee, to be sanctified by thee, to be servants to thee: they shall be thy patients, cure thou their malady; they shall be thy agents, govern thou their motions. Too long have I served the world, too long have I hearkened to SATAN; but now I renounce them all, and will be ruled by thy dictates and directions, and guided by thy counsel.

O blessed TRINITY! O glorious UNITY! I deliver up myself to thee; receive me; write thy name, O LORD, upon me, and upon all that I have, as thy proper goods: set thy mark upon me, upon every member of my body, and every faculty of my soul. I have chosen thy precepts; thy law will I lay before me: this shall be the copy which I will keep in my eye, and study to write after. According to this rule do I resolve, by thy grace, to walk; after this law shall my whole man be governed. I resolve, in the power of thy grace, to cleave to thee and thy holy ways, whatever it cost me. I am sure I cannot finally be a loser by thee; therefore I will be content with reproach, and difficulties, and hardships here; and will deny myself, and take up my cross, and follow thee. LORD JESUS, thy yoke is easy, thy cross is welcome, as it is the way to thee. I lay aside all hopes of worldly happiness; I will be content to tarry till I come to thee: let me be poor and low, little and despised here, so that I may be admitted to live and reign with thee hereafter. LORD, thou hast my heart and hand to this agreement: be it as the laws of the *Medes* and *Persians*, never to be reversed: to this I will stand; in this resolution, by grace, I will live and die. I have sworn, and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments. I have given my free consent, I have made my everlasting choice: LORD JESUS, confirm the contract! Amen.

CHAP. VII.

Containing the Motives to Conversion.

THOUGH what is already said of the necessity of conversion, and of the miseries of the unconverted, might be sufficient to induce any considering mind to resolve upon a present turning to God; yet knowing of what desperate obstinacy the heart of man is naturally capable, I have thought it necessary to add some Motives to persuade you to it.

LORD! fail me not now, at my last attempts. If any soul have read hitherto, and be yet untouched, now, LORD, fasten conviction in him, and do thy work: now take him by the heart, overcome him, and persuade him, till he say, "Thou hast prevailed, for thou wert stronger than I." LORD, didst thou not make me a fisher of men? And have I toiled all this while, and caught nothing? Alas! that I should have spent my strength for nought! And now I am casting my last: LORD JESUS, stand thou upon the shore, and direct how and where I shall spread my net; and let me so enclose with arguments the souls I seek for, that they may not be able to get out. Now, LORD, for a multitude of souls! Now for a full draught! O LORD GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me this once, O GOD!

Men and brethren, heaven and earth call upon you; yea, hell itself doth preach the doctrine of repentance unto you; the angels of the churches travail with you; the angels of heaven wait for you,—for your turning to GOD. O sinner, why should the devils make merry with thee? Why shouldst thou be a prey for that devouring Leviathan? Why should harpies and hell-hounds tear thee, and make a feast upon thee; and when they have got thee into the snare, and have fastened their talons in thee, laugh at thy destruction, and deride thy misery? This must be thy case, except thou turn: and were it not better thou shouldst be a joy to angels, than a laughing-stock for devils? If thou wouldest but come in, the heavenly host would take up their anthems, and sing, "Glory to God in the highest;" the morning stars would sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy. The glorious spirits would rejoice, in that there would be a new brother added to their society, another heir born to their LORD, and the lost son received safe and sound. The true penitent's tears are, indeed, the wine that cheereth both GOD and man.

If thou think it a little thing that men and angels would rejoice at thy conversion, know that God himself would

rejoice over thee, even with singing, and rest in his love. Never did JACOB, with such joy, weep over the neck of his JOSEPH, as that with which thy heavenly Father would rejoice over thee. Look over the story of the prodigal. Methinks I see how the aged father lays aside his state, and forgets his years : behold how he runneth ! O the haste that mercy makes ! The sinner makes not half that speed. Methinks I see how his bowels turn, how his compassions yearn. How quick-sighted is love ! Mercy spies him a great way off ; forgets his riotous courses, horrid unthankfulness, and debauched practices ; (not a word of these ;) and receives him with open arms, falls on his neck, forgets his rags, kisses the lips that deserved to be loathed, and calls for the fatted calf, the best robe, the ring, the shoes, the best cheer in heaven's store, the best attire in heaven's wardrobe. Yea, the joy cannot be held in one breast ; others must be called to participate ; the friends must meet, and make merry. Angels must wait, but the prodigal must be set at table, under his father's wing : he is the joy of the feast, he is the sweet subject of the father's delight : the friends sympathize, but none knows the felicity the father enjoys in his new-born son, whom he hath received from the dead. Methinks I hear the music and dancing at a distance. O the melody of the heavenly choristers ! I cannot learn the song, but methinks I over-hear the burden of it ; at which all the harmonious choir, with one consent, strike sweetly in : "For this my son was dead, and is alive again ; was lost, and is found." I need not farther explain the parable ; GOD is the Father ; CHRIST is the cheer ; his righteousness the robe ; his graces the ornaments ; ministers, saints, and angels, the friends and servants ; and thou that readest (if thou wilt but unfeignedly repent) the welcome prodigal, the happy instance of this grace, and blessed subject of this joy and love.

O rock ! O adamant ! What ! not moved yet ! Not yet resolved to turn forthwith, and to close with mercy !

I will try thee yet once again: if one were sent to thee from the dead, wouldest thou be persuaded? Why, hear the voice from the dead, from the damned, crying to thee that thou shouldest repent: "I pray thee, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." Hear, O man! thy predecessors in impenitence preach to thee from the infernal gibbet. O look down into the bottomless pit: see how the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever! How black are the fiends, how furious their tormentors? It is their only music to hear how the miserable sufferers roar,—to hear their bones crack: it is their meat and drink, to see how their flesh fries, and their fat drops; to drench them with burning metal, and to tear open their bodies, and pour in fierce burning brass into their bowels, and into the recesses and ventricles of their hearts. What thinkest thou of those chains of darkness, of those instruments of cruelty? Canst thou be content to burn? Seest thou how the worm gnaweth, how the oven gloweth, how the fire rageth? What sayest thou to that river of brimstone, dark and horrible, that gulf of perdition? Wilt thou take up thy habitation there? O lay thine ear to the door of hell! Hearest thou the curses and blasphemies, the weeping and wailings? How they lament their folly, and curse their day! How do they roar and yell, and gnash their teeth! How deep are their groans; how feeling are their moans; how unconceivable are their miseries! If the shrieks of KORAH, DATHAN, and ABIRAM, were so terrible, (when the earth clave asunder, and opened her mouth, and swallowed them up,) that all *Israel* fled at the cry of them; oh, how fearful would the cry be, if God should take off the covering from the mouth of hell, and let the cry of the damned ascend in all its terror among the children of men! And of all their moans and misery, this is the piercing, killing emphasis and burden, *For ever! for ever!*

Why, as GOD liveth, that made thy soul, thou art but a few hours distant from all this, except thou repent, and be converted.

Oh, I am even lost and swallowed up in the abundance of those arguments which I might suggest. If there be any point of wisdom in all the world, it is to repent; if there be any thing righteous, any thing reasonable, this is it: if there be any thing in the world that may be called madness and folly, any thing that may be counted sottish, absurd, brutish, and unreasonable, it is this, to go on in thine unconverted state. Let me beg thee, as thou wouldest not wilfully destroy thyself, to sit down and weigh, besides what hath been said, these following motives; and let conscience speak, if it be not reasonable that thou shouldest repent and turn to GOD.

1. *The GOD that made thee, doth most graciously invite thee.*

(1.) *His most sweet and merciful nature doth invite thee.* O the kindness of GOD, his working bowels, his tender mercies! They are infinitely above our thoughts; higher than heaven, what can we do? deeper than hell, what can we know? "He is full of compassion, and gracious; long suffering, and plenteous in mercy." This is a great argument to persuade sinners to come in: "Turn unto the LORD your GOD, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil." If GOD would not repent of the evil, it would be a discouragement to us to repent: if there were no hope of mercy, it were no such wonder if rebels should stand out: but never had subjects such a gracious prince, such patience, clemency, and pity, to deal with, as you have. "Who is a GOD like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity?" O sinners, see what a GOD you have to deal with! If you will but turn, "he will turn again, and have compassion on you: he will subdue your iniquities, and cast all your sins into the depth of the sea. Return unto me, saith the LORD OF HOSTS, and I will return unto you." Sinners do not fail in having too high thoughts of

GOD'S mercies; but, first, in overlooking his justice, secondly, in promising themselves mercy out of GOD'S way. His mercy is beyond all imagination; "great mercies," "manifold mercies," "tender mercies," "sure mercies," "everlasting mercies," are all thy own, if thou wilt but turn. Art thou willing to come in? Why, the LORD hath laid aside his terror, erected a throne of grace, and holds forth the golden sceptre: touch, and live. Would a merciful man slay his enemy, when prostrate at his feet, acknowledging his wrong, begging pardon, and offering to enter with him into a covenant of peace? Much less will the merciful GOD.

(2.) *His Calls and Promises invite thee.* Ah, what an earnest suitor is mercy! How lovingly, how instantly it calleth after thee! How passionately it wooeth thee! "Return, thou backsliding *Israel*, saith the LORD, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever: only acknowledge thine iniquity. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD, for I am married unto you: return, and I will heal your backslidings. As I live, saith the LORD GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn from his way, and live. Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of *Israel*? Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, and make you a clean heart, and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of *Israel*? for I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the LORD GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye."

O melting and gracious words! The voice of a GOD, and not of a man! This is not the manner of men, for the offended sovereign to sue to the offending traitor. How doth mercy follow thee, and plead with thee! Is not thy heart broken yet? O that "to-day" thou wouldest "hear his voice."

2. *The doors of heaven are thrown open to thee, the*

everlasting gates are set wide for thee, and an abundant entrance into the kingdom of heaven administered to thee. CHRIST now says to thee, "Arise, and take possession." View the glory of the other world, as set forth in the map of the Gospel. Get thee up to *Pisgah*, and lift up thine eyes westward, northward, southward, and eastward, and see the good land that is beyond *Jordan*, and that goodly mountain. Behold the paradise of GOD, watered with the streams of glory. Arise, and walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for the land which thou seest, the LORD will give it thee for ever, if thou wilt but return. Let me say to thee, as PAUL said to AGRIPPA, "Believest thou the Prophets?" If thou believest indeed, do but view what glorious things are spoken of the city of GOD; and know, that all this is here tendered, in the name of GOD, to thee: as verily as GOD is true, it shall be for ever thine, if thou wilt but thoroughly turn.

Behold the city of pure transparent gold, whose foundations are garnished with all manner of precious stones, whose gates are pearls, whose light is glory, whose temple is GOD. Believest thou this? If thou dost, art thou not worse than distracted, who wilt not take possession, when the gates are thrown open to thee, and thou art bid to enter? O ye sons of folly, will ye embrace the dunghills, and refuse the kingdom? Behold the LORD GOD taketh you up into the mountain, shows you the kingdom of heaven, and all the glory thereof, and tells you, "All this will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me;" if you will submit to mercy, accept my SON, and serve me in righteousness and holiness! "O fools and slow of heart to believe!" Will you seek and serve the world, and neglect eternal glory? What! not enter into paradise, when the flaming sword, that was once set to keep you out, is now used to drive you in! But you will say, I am uncharitable to think you infidels and unbelievers. Why, what shall I think you? Either you are desperate unbelievers, that do not credit it; or stark distracted, if you know and believe the excellency and eternity of this

glory, and yet do so fearfully neglect it. Surely you have no faith, or no reason.

If thou say thou believest, let me next know thy resolutions. Wilt thou embrace this for thy happiness? Wilt thou forego thy sinful gains, thy forbidden pleasures? Wilt thou be content to submit to present reproach and poverty, if they lie in the way to heaven, and follow the LORD with humble self-denial, in a mortified and flesh-displeasing life? If so, all is thine, and that for ever. Is not the offer fair? Is it not right that he should be damned, that will go on and perish, when all this may be had for the taking? In a word, wilt thou now close with these offers? Wilt thou take GOD at his word? Wilt thou let go the world, and rid thy hands of thy sins, and lay hold on eternal life? If not, let conscience tell thee whether thou art not distracted, that thou shouldest neglect so happy a choice.

3. GOD *will settle upon thee, at present, unspeakable privileges.* Though the fulness of your blessedness shall be deferred till hereafter, yet GOD will give you no little things in hand.

He will pluck you from the paw of the lion. The serpent shall bruise your heel, but you shall bruise his head. He shall deliver you from the present evil world. Prosperity shall not destroy you: adversity shall not separate between him and you. He will redeem you from the power of the grave, and make the king of terrors a messenger of peace to you. He will take out the curse from the cross, and make affliction the fining-pot, the fan, the physick, to blow off the chaff, purify the metal, and purge the mind. He will save you from the arrest of the law, and turn the curse into a blessing. He hath the keys of hell and death, and shutteth so that no man openeth; and he will shut its mouth, as once he did that of the lions, so that you shall not be hurt by the second death.

But he will not only save you from misery, but install you in unspeakable prerogatives; he will bestow himself

upon you: he will be a friend unto you, and a father unto you; he will be a sun and a shield: in a word, he will be a God to you. And what can be said more? What you may expect that a God should do for you, and be to you, that he will be, that he will do. She who marries a prince, expects that he should provide for her like a prince, that she may live in a suitable state, and have an answerable dowry. He who hath a King for his father, or friend, expects that he should provide for him like a King. Alas! the Kings and Monarchs of the earth, so much above you, are but like the painted butterflies, if compared with God. As he doth infinitely exceed the glory and power of his glittering dust, so he will, beyond all proportion, surpass, in providing for his favourites, whatever princes can do for theirs. He will give you grace and glory, and withhold no good thing from you. He will take you for his sons and daughters, and make you heirs of his promises, and establish his everlasting covenant with you. He will justify you from all that law, conscience, or SATAN, can charge upon you. He will give you free access into his presence, and accept your person, and receive your prayers. He will abide in you, and make you partakers of his counsels, and hold a constant and friendly communion with you. His ear shall be open, his door open, his store open to you, at all times, His blessing shall rest upon you; he will make your enemies to serve you, and cause all things to work for good unto you.

4. *The terms of Mercy are brought as low as possible.* God has stooped as low to sinners, as he can with honour. He will not stain the glory of his holiness: and how could he come lower than he has done, unless he should do this? He does not impose any thing unreasonable, or impossible, as a condition of life upon you. Two things were necessary to be done, according to the tenor of the first covenant, by you: (1.) That you should fully satisfy the demands of justice for past offences. (2.) That you should perform personally, perfectly, and perpetually, the whole law for the time to come. But behold God's

gracious abatement in both! He does not stand upon satisfaction from you; he expects nothing but that you should accept his SON, and He will be righteousness and redemption to you. And as to the future obedience, here he is content to yield to your weakness, and omit the rigour. He does not stand upon perfection as a condition of life, though he still insists upon it as due, but is content to accept of sincerity. Though you cannot pay the full debt, he will accept you according to that which you have, and take willingness for doing, and the purpose for the performance. (2 Cor. viii. 12.)

O consider your Maker's condescension, and let me say to you, as NAAMAN's servant to him; "My father, if the Prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather when he saith unto thee, Wash and be clean?" If GOD had demanded some terrible, severe, and rigorous thing of you, in order to escape eternal damnation, would you not have done it? Suppose it had been to spend all your days in sorrow in some howling wilderness, or to pine yourselves with famine, or to offer the fruit of your bodies for the sin of your souls, would you not have thankfully accepted eternal redemption, though these had been the conditions? Yea, farther: if GOD should have told you, that you should have burned in the fire for millions of ages, or have been so long tormented in hell, would you not have accepted it? Alas! All these are not so much as one sand in the glass of eternity. If your offended Creator should have held you but one year upon the rack, and then bid you come and forsake your sins, accept CHRIST, and serve a few years in self-denial, or else lie in this case for ever and ever; do you think you should have disputed the terms, and have been unresolved whether to accept of the proposal? O sinner, return and live! Why shouldst thou die, when life is to be had for the taking? Coudest thou say indeed, "LORD, I know that thou wast an hard man," thou hadst some little excuse: but when the GOD of heaven has stooped so low, and abated so

far, if now thou shouldest stand aloof, who shall plead for thee?

5. *Wherein you are impotent, God doth offer grace to strengthen you.* What though you are plunged into that misery, from which you can never get out? CHRIST offereth to help you out; he stretcheth his hand to you, and if you perish, it is for refusing his help. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man open to me, I will come in." What though you are poor, and wretched, and blind, and naked? CHRIST offereth a cure for your blindness, a cover for your nakedness, a remedy for your poverty; he tendereth to you his righteousness, his graces: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." Do you say, that condition is impossible, for I have not wherewith to buy? You must know that this buying is without money, and without price. This buying is by begging, and seeking with diligence and constancy in the use of GOD'S means. GOD commandeth thee to know him, and to fear him. Dost thou say, "Yea, but my mind is blinded, and my heart is hardened from this fear?" I answer, GOD doth offer to enlighten thy mind, and to teach thee his fear. So that now, if men live in ignorance, and estrangement from the LORD, it is because "they will not understand, and desire not the knowledge of his ways." (*Job* xxi. 14.) "If thou criest after knowledge, if thou seekest her as silver, then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of GOD." (*Prov.* ii. 3, 4, 5.) Is not this a fair offer, "Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my SPIRIT upon you?" (*Prov.* i. 23.) Though of yourselves you can do nothing, yet you may do all through his SPIRIT enabling you; and he doth offer assistance to you. GOD bids you "wash, and make you clean," (*Isa.* i. 16.) You say, you are unable, as much as the leopard is to wash out his spots. (*Jer.* xiii. 23.) Yea, but the LORD doth offer to purge you; so that if you be filthily still, it

is through your own wilfulness: (*Jer. xiii. 27.*) “O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be?” God doth wait for the time when you will be made clean, when you will yield to his motions, and accept of his offers, and let him do for and in you, what you cannot do for yourselves. You do not know how much God will do upon your importunity, if you will be but restless and urgent with him.

Thou art not able to believe, nor repent: God appoints thee to use certain means in order to thy obtaining faith and repentance. Doth not this argue, that God will bestow these graces upon thee if thou dost seek him diligently in prayer, meditation, reading, hearing, self-examination, and the rest of his means? Otherwise God would but mock his poor creatures, if he enjoined these endeavours; and then, when they have been put hard to it, and continued waiting upon him for grace, denied them at last. Surely, if a good-natured man would not deal thus, much less will the most merciful and gracious God.

THE CONCLUSION.

AND now, my brethren, let me know your minds! What do you intend to do? Will you go on and die? or will you set about a thorough and speedy conversion, and lay hold on eternal life? How long will you linger in *Sodom*? How long will you halt between two opinions? Are you not yet resolved which to prefer, CHRIST or BARABBAS? Can the world do that for you which CHRIST can? Will it stand by you to eternity? Will pleasures, titles, lands, treasures, descend with you? If not, is it not necessary to look after something that will? What mean you, to stand wavering to and fro? Shall I leave you at last no farther advanced than AGRIPPA,—but *almost* persuaded? Why, you are for ever lost, if left here: as good be not

at all, as not altogether Christians. You are half of the mind to desist from your negligent life, and to set about a strict and holy course; you could wish you were as some others are, and could do as they can do: how long will you rest in idle wishes, and fruitless purposes? When will you come to a fixed, full, and firm resolution? Do not you see how SATAN deludes you, by tempting you to delays? How long hath he drawn you on in the way of perdition? How many years have you been purposing to amend? What, if GOD should have taken you away, during that time?

Well! put me not off with a dilatory answer: tell me not of hereafter; I must have your present consent. If you be not now resolved, while the LORD is treating with you, and wooing you, much less are you likely to be so hereafter, when these impressions are worn out, and you are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Will you give me your hands? Will you set open the doors, and give the LORD JESUS full and present possession? Will you put your names into his covenant? Will you subscribe? What do you resolve upon? If you are still bent upon delay, my labour is lost, and all is likely to come to nothing. Come! cast in your lot, and make your choice. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation: To-day, if you will hear his voice."—Why should not this be the day from whence thou shouldst be able to date thine happiness? Why shouldst thou venture a day longer in this dangerous and dreadful condition? What if GOD should this night require thy soul? "Oh that thou mightest know, in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace, before they be hid from thine eyes!" This is thy day: others have had their day, and have received their doom; and now art thou brought upon the stage of this world, here to act thy part for a whole eternity. Remember thou'art now upon thy good behaviour for everlasting; if thou make not a wise choice now, thou art undone for ever. What thy present choice is, such must thy eternal condition be.

And is this true indeed? Are life and death at thy choice? Then, what hinders but that thou shouldest be happy? Nothing doth or can hinder, but thine own wilful neglect, or refusal. See, here is CHRIST; here are mercy, pardon, life: what hinders, but that thou shouldest be pardoned, and saved? One of the martyrs, as he was praying at the stake, had his pardon set by him in a box, which indeed he properly refused, because offered upon unworthy terms; but here the terms are most honourable and easy. O sinner, wilt thou burn with thy pardon by thee? Do but forthwith consent to renounce thy sins, deny thyself, and take up the cross,—and thou carriest the day; CHRIST is thine, pardon, peace, life, blessedness, all are thine. And is not this an offer worth embracing? Why shouldest thou hesitate, or doubtfully dispute about the case? Is it not past controversy, whether God be better than sin, and glory better than vanity? Why shouldest thou forsake thine own mercy, and sin against thine own life? When wilt thou shake off thy sloth, and lay aside thine excuses? “Boast not thyself of to morrow:” thou knowest not where this night may lodge thee.

Beloved, Now the HOLY SPIRIT is striving with you: He will not always strive.—Hast thou not felt thy heart warmed by the word, and been almost persuaded to forsake thy sins, and come to God? Hast thou not felt some good motions in thy mind, wherein thou hast been warned of thy danger, and told in what thy careless course would end? It may be, thou art like young SAMUEL, who, when the LORD called once and again, knew not the voice of the LORD. But these motions are the offers, and calls, and strivings of the SPIRIT. O know the day of thy visitation!

Now the LORD JESUS stretcheth wide his arms to receive you: He beseecheth you by us. How movingly, how meltingly, how passionately he calleth!—Wilt thou turn a deaf ear to his voice? It is not the voice that breaketh the cedars, and maketh the mountains to skip like a calf; that shaketh the wilderness,

and divideth the flames of fire. It is not SINAI'S thunder, but the soft and still voice. It is not the voice of Mount EBAL, a voice of cursing and terror; but the voice of Mount GERIZIM, the voice of blessing and of glad tidings. It is not the voice of the trumpet, nor the noise of war; but a message of peace from the King of Peace. I may say to thee, O sinner, as MARTHA to her sister, "The MASTER is come, and calleth for thee." Now, with MARY, arise quickly, and come unto him. How sweet are his invitations! He crieth in the open concourse, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." How free is he! He excludeth none: "Who-soever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely. Who is simple, let him turn in hither; come, eat of my bread, drink of the wine which I have mingled. Come unto me, take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." How doth he bemoan the obstinate refuser! "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold me, behold me; I have stretched out my hands all the day to a rebellious people." O be persuaded now, at last, to throw yourselves into the arms of love.

Behold, O ye sons of men, the LORD JESUS hath thrown open the prisons, and now he cometh to you, and beseecheth you to come out. If it were from a palace, or a paradise, that CHRIST did call you, it were no wonder if you were unwilling; but it is from your prison, from your chains, from the dungeon, from the darkness, that he calleth you; and yet will you not come? He calleth you into liberty, and yet will you not hearken? His yoke is easy, his laws are liberty, his service freedom; and whatever prejudices you have against his ways, if GOD may be believed, you shall find them all pleasure and peace, and shall taste sweetness and joy unutterable, and take infinite delight and felicity in them.

Beloved, I am loth to leave you : I cannot tell how to give you up. I am now ready to conclude ; but fain I would finish this bargain between CHRIST and you, before I end. What ! shall I leave you as I found you at last ? Have you read hitherto, and are not yet resolved immediately to abandon all your sins, and close with CHRIST ? Alas ! what shall I say, what shall I do ? Will you reject all my importunity ? Have I run in vain ? Have I used so many arguments, and spent so much time to persuade you, and yet must I sit down in disappointment ? But it is a small matter that you reject me ; you put a slight upon the God that made you ; you reject the bowels of a Saviour, and will be found resisters of the HOLY GHOST, if you will not now be prevailed with to repent and be converted.

Well, though I have called you long, and ye have refused, I shall yet this once more lift up my voice like a trumpet, and cry from the highest places of the city, before I conclude. Once more I shall call after regardless sinners, that, if it be possible, I may awaken them. “ O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD ! ” Unless you are resolved to die, lend your ears to the last calls of mercy. Behold, in the name of God, I make an open proclamation to you : “ Harken unto me, O ye children : hear instruction and be wise, and refuse it not.”

“ Ho ! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money ; come ye, buy, and eat : yea, come ; buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread ? and your labour for that which satisfieth not ? Harken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me : hear, and your soul shall live ; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of DAVID.”

Ho ! every one that is sick of any manner of disease or torment, or is possessed with an evil spirit, whether of pride, or fury, or lust, or covetousness, come to the

Physician. Lo, here is He who "healeth all manner of sickness, and all manner of diseases among the people."

Ho! every one that is in debt, and every one that is in distress, and every one that is discontented; gather yourselves unto CHRIST, and he will become a captain over you. He will be your protection from the arrests of the law, he will save you from the hand of justice. Behold, He is an open sanctuary to you, he is a known refuge. Away with your sins, and come in unto him, lest the anger of the LORD seize you, lest devouring wrath overtake you.

Ho! every ignorant sinner, come and buy eye-salve, that thou mayest see. Away with thine excuses; thou art for ever lost, if thou continuest in this state; but accept of CHRIST for thy prophet, and He will be a light unto thee. Cry unto him for knowledge, study his word, take pains about the principles of religion, humble thyself before Him, and he will teach thee his way, and make thee wise unto salvation. But if thou wilt not follow Him, but sit down in idleness, because thou hast but one talent, he will condemn thee as a wicked and slothful servant.

Ho! every profane sinner, come in and live. Return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon thee. Be entreated. O "return, come." Thou that hast filled thy mouth with oaths and execrations, all manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven thee, if thou wilt but thoroughly turn to CHRIST. Though thou wast as unclean as MAGDALEN, yet "put away thy whoredoms out of thy sight, and thine adulteries from between thy breasts;" and give up thyself unto CHRIST, as a vessel of holiness for his use alone; and then, "though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool; and though they be as crimson, they shall be as white as snow."

Hear! O ye drunkards, "How long will you be drunken! Put away your wine." Though you have rolled in the vomit of your sin, forsake your beloved

vices, and the LORD will receive you. Give up yourselves unto CHRIST, to live soberly, righteously, and godly; embrace his righteousness; accept his government; and though you have been like the swine, he will wash you.

Hear! O ye scorers, hear the word of the LORD. Though you made sport at godliness, and the professors of it; though you have scorned CHRIST, and his ways; yet, even you doth he call, to be gathered under the wings of his mercy. In a word, though you should be found among the worst in that black roll, mentioned in 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, yet, upon your thorough conversion, you shall be washed, you shall be justified, you shall be sanctified, in the name of the LORD JESUS, and by the Spirit of our God.

Ho! every formal professor, thou that art but a lukewarm Christian, and retest in the form of godliness, cease from thy halving and thy halting; be a *throughout* Christian; be zealous, and repent; and then, though thou hast been an offence to CHRIST, thou shalt become the joy of his heart.

And now, bear witness, that mercy hath been offered you! "I call heaven and earth to record against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that you may live." I can but woo you, and warn you; I cannot compel you to be happy; if I could, I would. What answer will ye send me with to my Master? Let me speak to you, as ABRAHAM'S servant did to some of old, "And now, if you will deal kindly and truly with my Master, tell me." O for such a happy answer as REBEKAH gave to them! "They called REBEKAH, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go." O that I had but this from you! Why should I be your accuser, who thirst for your salvation? Why should the passionate pleadings and wooings of mercy be turned into the horrid aggravations of your obstinacy? Judge in yourselves:

Do you not think their condemnation will be doubly dreadful, who shall still go on in their sins, after all endeavours to recall them? Doubtless, “it shall be more tolerable for *Tyre* and *Sidon*, yea, for *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, in the day of judgment, than for you.” (*Matt.* xi. 22—24.)

Beloved, if you have any pity for your perishing souls, close with the present offers of mercy. If you would not continue and increase the pains of your travailing ministers, do not rest short of the New Birth. If the GOD that made you have any authority with you, obey his command, and come in. If you are not the despisers of grace, and would not shut up the doors of mercy against yourselves, repent and be converted. Let not heaven stand open for you in vain; let not the LORD JESUS open his blessings, and bid you buy without money and without price, in vain; let not his Ministers and his SPIRIT strive with you in vain, and leave you now at last unper-suaded;—lest that sentence go forth against you, “The bellows are burnt; the lead is consumed of the fire; the founder melteth in vain. Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the LORD hath rejected them!”

FATHER OF SPIRITS! take in hand the heart that is too hard for my weakness. Do not thou conclude, though I have done;—half a word from thine effectual power will do the work. O thou that hast the key of DAVID, that openest and no man shutteth; open thou this heart, as thou didst LYDIA’S, and let the King of Glory enter in, and make this soul thy captive. Let not the Tempter harden him by delays. Let him not stir from this place, nor take his eyes from these lines, till he be resolved to forego his sins, and to accept of life upon thy terms. In thy name, O LORD GOD, did I go forth to these labours; in thy name do I conclude them. Let not all the time they have cost be lost hours; let not all the thoughts of my heart, and all the pains that have been about them, be lost labour. LORD, put thine hand on the heart of this

reader; and send thy SPIRIT, as once thou didst send PHILIP to join himself to the chariot of the Eunuch, while he was reading the word. And though I should never know it while I live, yet I beseech thee, O LORD GOD, let it be found at that day, that some souls are converted by these labours. And let some be able to stand forth and say, that by these persuasions they were won unto thee. Amen, Amen. Let him that readeth say, Amen!

A
COUNSEL
FOR
PERSONAL AND FAMILY GODLINESS.

BELOVED, I despair of ever bringing you to salvation, without sanctification; or possessing you of happiness, without persuading you to holiness. GOD knows I have not the least hope of ever seeing one of your faces in heaven, except you be converted, and sanctified, and exercise yourselves unto godliness. I beseech you to study Personal Godliness, and Family Godliness.

1. *Personal Godliness.* Let it be your first care to set up CHRIST in your hearts: see that you make all your worldly interests to stoop to him, and that you be entirely and unreservedly devoted unto him. If you harbour any sin, you are undone. See that you unfeignedly take the law of CHRIST as the rule of your words, thoughts, and actions; and subject your whole man, members, and mind, faithfully unto him. If you have not a true respect to all GOD's commandments, you are unsound at heart. O study to get the image and impress of CHRIST upon you within. Begin with your hearts, else you build without foundation. Labour to get a saving change within, or all external performances will be to no purpose: and then study to show forth the power of godli-

liness in your life. Let piety be your first and great business. It is the highest justice to give GOD his due. Beware that none of you be a prayerless person ; for that is a most certain discovery of a Christless and a graceless person. Suffer not your Bibles to gather dust : see that you converse daily with the word. That man can never lay claim to blessedness, whose delight is not in the law of the LORD. Let meditation and self-examination be your daily exercise.

But piety without charity is but half of Christianity, or rather impious hypocrisy. We may not divide the tables: see therefore that you do justly, and love mercy; and let equity and charity run like an even thread throughout all your dealings. Be you temperate in all things; and let chastity and sobriety be your undivided companions. Let truth and purity, seriousness and modesty, be the constant ornament of your speech. Let patience and humility, simplicity and sincerity, shine in all the parts of your conversation. See that you forgive wrongs, and requite them with kindness, as you would be found children of the Most High. Be merciful in your censures; and put the most favourable construction upon your brethren's carriage, which their actions will reasonably bear. Be slow in promising, punctual in fulfilling. Let meekness, innocency, affability, yieldingness, and courtesy, commend your conversations to all men. Let none of your relations want that love and loyalty, that reverence and duty, that tenderness, care, and vigilancy, which their several places and capacities call for. I charge you, before the Most High God, that none of you be found a swearer, or a liar, a lover of evil company, or a scoffer, or malicious, or covetous, or a drunkard, or a glutton, unrighteous in his dealing, unclean in his living, or a quarreller, or a thief, or a backbiter, or a railer: for I denounce unto you, from the living GOD, that destruction and damnation are the end of all such.

II. *Family Godliness.* He that hath set up CHRIST in his heart, will be sure to set him up in his house. Let

every family with you be a christian church, every house a house of prayer. Let every householder say, with JOSHUA, "I and my house will serve the LORD;" and resolve, with DAVID, "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart." Let me press upon you a few duties in general.

First, Let religion be in your families, not as a matter by the bye, (to be minded at leisure, when the world will give you leave,) but the standing business of the house: let them have your prayers as daily as their meals. Is there any of your families but have time to take food? Wretched man! Canst thou not find time to pray in?

Secondly, Settle it upon your hearts, that your souls are bound up in the souls of your families. They are committed unto you, and if they be lost through your neglect, will be required at your hands. Sirs, if you do not, you shall know that the charge of souls, if neglected, exposes you to a heavy guilt. O man, hast thou a charge of souls to answer for, and dost thou not yet bestir thyself for them, that their blood be not found in thy skirts? Wilt thou do no more for immortal souls than for thy beasts that perish? What dost thou for thy children and servants? Thou providest meat and drink for them, and dost thou not the same for thy beasts? Thou givest them medicines, and cherishest them, when they are sick; and dost thou not as much for thy swine? More particularly,

1. Let the solemn reading of the word, and singing of psalms, be your family exercises.

2. Let every person in your families be duly called to an account of their profiting by the word heard or read, as they are about doing your own business. This is a duty of consequence unspeakable, and would be a means of bringing those under your charge to remember and profit by what they receive.

3. Often take an account of the souls under your care, concerning their spiritual states. Make inquiry into their conditions; and insist much upon the sinfulness and misery

of their natural state, and upon the necessity of conversion in order to their salvation. Admonish them gravely of their sins, and encourage their good beginnings. Follow them earnestly, and let them have no quiet from you, till you see in them a saving change. This is a duty of high consequence, but (I am afraid) fearfully neglected. Doth not conscience say, "Thou art the man?"

4. Look to the strict sanctification of the Sabbath by all your household. Many poor families have little time else. O improve but your Sabbath-days as diligently in doing your Master's work, as you do the other days in doing your own work, and I doubt not but you may come to some proficiency.

5. Let the morning and evening sacrifice of solemn prayer be daily offered up in all your families. O miserable families, without God in the world, that are without family-prayer! What! have you so many family-sins, family-wants, family-mercies, and yet no family-prayers? How do you pray with all prayer and supplication, if you do not use family-prayer? Say not, "I have no time." What, hast thou not all thy time on purpose to serve God, and save thy soul? And yet is this the business for which thou canst find no time? Find but a heart, and I will find time. Pinch out of your meals, and sleep, rather than want time for prayer. Say not, "My business will not give leave." This is the greatest business, to save thyself, and the souls committed to thee. In a word, the blessing of all is to be got by prayer. Helps are to be had, till thou art better able: but if there be no other remedy, thou must join with thy abler neighbour. God hath special regard to joint prayer; and therefore you must improve family advantages for the performance of it.

6. Put every one in your families upon private prayer. Observe whether they perform it. Get them the help of a form, if they need it, till they are able to do without it. Direct them how to pray, by reminding them of their sins, wants, and mercies, the materials of prayer.

7. Set up Catechising in your families, at least once in every week. Have you no reverence for the Almighty's charge, that you should "teach these things diligently unto your children, and talk of them as you sit in your houses;" and "train them up in the way wherein they should go?" Hath GOD so commended ABRAHAM, because he would "teach his children and household," and given such a promise to him thereupon; and will not you put in for a share, either in the praise or the promise? Hath CHRIST honoured Catechising with his presence, and will you not own it in your practice? You will call them up, and force them to do your work; and should you not be as zealous in putting them upon GOD's work? Say not, they are dull, and are not capable. If they be dull, GOD requires of you the more pains and patience. But dull as they are, you will make them learn how to work; and can they not learn as well how to live? Are they capable of the mysteries of your trade, and are they not capable of the plain principles of religion?

Would you answer the calls of Divine Providence? Would you plant nurseries for the Church of GOD? Would you that GOD should build your houses, and bless your substance? Would you that your children should bless you? O then set up piety in your families, as ever you would be blessed, or be made a blessing. Let your hearts and your houses be the temples of the living GOD, in which his worship may be constantly and reverently performed. O be wise in time, that you be not miserable to eternity!

TWO

PRACTICAL CASES OF CONSCIENCE
RESOLVED.

THE FIRST CASE OF CONSCIENCE.

ON MATT. v. 47 :

What do ye more than others ?

QUEST. *Wherein should Christians be singular in their obedience ? Or, what may they and must they do more than others ?*

ANSW. Take the answer in these ten Rules, containing the character of a Christian.

Rule I. *Heartily love them that slight you ; and wish and seek the good of those that hate you, and seek to hurt you.* This is the very thing urged in the text, “ If you salute your brethren only, and love them that love you, do not even the publicans the same ? ” (*Matt. v. 46, 47.*) To love them that respect and value us, is what every one can do : but to love them truly that think meanly of us, and have prejudices and hard thoughts against us, and to speak well of them that speak evil of us,—that is to do more than others. Thus did the martyr CRANMER ; of whom it was a proverb, “ Do the Archbishop of Canterbury a displeasure, and you shall ever have him your friend.” Thus that holy man said, in his parting words,

“ I had never any greater pleasure in all my life, than to forget and forgive injuries, and to show kindness to them that sought evil to me.” Consider who have offended you, and disobliged you, and slighted you ; and keep up good thoughts of them, if the case will bear it,—speak nothing but good of them,—think what kindness you may show them,—pray for them, and wish well for them ; “ so shall you be the children of your Father which is in heaven.”

Rule II. *Swim against the stream.* The dead will swim with, but the living against the stream. When religion is in fashion, every one will be in it : but to make head against the current of the times,—to be for strict godliness in all your ways, when the stream runs quite against it,—and to resolve, as DAVID did, “ to be yet more vile,”—this is to be and to do more than others. To be singular in your good choice and resolutions, with JOSHUA, though all should vote against you ; with NOAH, to be perfect in your generations, when ever so adulterous ; and to walk with GOD, when all flesh have corrupted their way ;—this is to do more than others.

Rule III. *Take most care of that which is most out of sight.* A Christian’s eye is most on the things least seen : namely, 1. *Upon his heart* ; herein he doth exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees, whose great care was to keep all fair and clean that came to view. Make great conscience of your behaviour in secret, and let your main guard be upon your heart.—2. *Upon his hope.* Others look to the things seen,—things in hand : but the true believer walks by faith, not by sight, and lives a quite different life from that of any others in the world ; as living upon the hopes of heaven doth differ from living on the pleasures, profits, and honours of the world.

Rule IV. *Be merciful to others’ failings, and very severe to your own.* To aggravate our own evils, and to have an excuse ready for our brother’s,—to censure ourselves freely, and to come with a mantle behind us

to cover our brother,—this is to do more than others. The servant of GOD rebukes others with meekness, but falls out easily and bitterly with himself.

Rule V. *Suffer rather than sin.* To go so far with CHRIST as our way lies together, is to do no more than an unsound professor may do. The trial is, when CHRIST'S interest and ours do cross; so that we must either balk our duty, or our safety and advantage. The famous martyr, under JULIAN, would not give one half-penny towards the building of the idol's temple, though he was offered his life on those terms. When a man lies in outward misery, and has a door of deliverance open, if he will but sin, and yet will not accept it,—this is to do more than others.

Rule VI. *Rejoice in losses for CHRIST, and glory in the cross.* When we take pleasure in infirmities and tribulations, and rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of CHRIST, this is to do more than others. When the servants of GOD not only patiently but triumphantly undergo the crosses which rack the hearts of others; when PAUL and SILAS sing in the stocks, and the martyrs embrace the faggots, and kiss the stake; when the valiant PHILPOT shall say of his prison, “In the judgment of the world we are in hell, but I find in it the sweet consolation of heaven;” and the holy BRADFORD, “My prison is sweeter to me than my parlour, or than any pleasure I have had in all my life;”—this is to exceed others.

Rule VII. *Make a true conscience of the least sin, but most conscience of the greatest.* In one of these will the unbeliever be found tardy. It may be, he will fly from open sins, and startle at gross and staring sins, but of little sins he makes little conscience; or else, he will be very tender of little things, so as to scruple the picking of ears of corn on the sabbath-day, or the curing of the sick, and thus strain at the gnat,—when he will in other things swallow a camel, and devour widows' houses. The

sincere christian will indulge no sin ; he grieves for, groans under, cries out feelingly against his very infirmities ; but most dreads what GOD most hates.

Rule VIII. *Allow yourselves in the neglect of no duty, but reserve yourselves for the duties of most weight.* To tithe mint and cummin; and neglect judgment, mercy, and faith ; to be zealous for human ceremonies, ordinances, and men's traditions, and omit the weightier matters of the law, is the way of the Pharisees. To eye both the tables ; to join sweetly together, morality and piety ; to be punctual with men, but not careless of GOD ; to give to CÆSAR the things that are CÆSAR's, but first to give to GOD the things that are GOD's;—this is to do more than others. The sincere Christian hath respect to all GOD's commandments ; walks in all his statutes ; and is throughout with GOD ; but he is most zealous in those things which lie next the heart of religion.

Rule IX. *Love your reprovers.* Herein DAVID doth more than AHAB : see their contrary frames in 1 Kings xxii. 8, and *Psal.* cxli. 5.

Rule X. *Subject all your worldly interest to your Maker's glory ; and perform holy duties with holy ends.* While others do their best actions with carnal aims, you must do your common actions with heavenly aims.

Quest. *How may we know, when we do more than others who are unsound ?*

I shall answer this question by propounding eight questions to you ; beseeching you to retire to the most solemn and strict examination, and make conscience to give a clear answer to these few interrogatories.

Quest. I. *When others pick and choose, have you respect to all GOD's commandments ?* The sound christian sets all GOD's commands before him. He eyes all his copy, and heartily studies a thorough conformity. He doth not fear the LORD and serve other gods, nor divide his service between GOD and Mammon ; but he is intent on uniformity, and entirely devoted to GOD's service and

fear alone. He hath a good conscience, willing in all things to live honestly, and doth forsake all his sins, and keep all God's statutes, which are known to him.

Let me therefore ask you two questions :

(1.) *When others divide the tables, do you join them in your practice?* The hypocrite may be just and square towards men, but follow him to his family or closet, and you shall find but little of God. His family is neglected; and his soul is neglected. Or, it may be, he is a forward first-table man; but you shall find him tardy in the second. He will make many prayers, and long prayers, yet no conscience of devouring widows' houses. He is a great pretender to piety; but mean while neglects judgment and mercy. But the sincere man joins all together. He is so far careful for justice towards men, that, mean while, he will not neglect the first and greatest part of justice, to give God his due. He doth justly; he loves mercy; but, withal, he walks humbly with God. He walks soberly with respect to himself, righteously towards his neighbour, and in a godly manner towards his Maker. He is not one of those who are good only on his knees; but you shall find him every where conscientious. You shall have temperance at his table, chastity and modesty in his behaviour, grace and truth in his works, charity in his deeds, faithfulness in his trust, and justice in his dealings. He doth not only seem to be religious, but bridleth his tongue; he is not only a good christian, but a good neighbour; not only a good man, but a good husband, a good master, a dutiful child, a diligent and faithful servant, and a good subject. In a word, he makes great conscience of discharging the duties of his relations among men.

(2.) *When others rest in externals, do you look to the spiritual part of every command, and principally mind the inward vitals of religion?* Do you not only make conscience of performing duties, but carefully look to the manner of performing them, and the ends for which you perform them? Do you not only make conscience of

abstaining from open, but also from secret sins? Do you abound, above all, in secret duties? Do you keep a watch upon your hearts, and make conscience of avoiding not only the gross acts of sin, but even sinful thoughts, inclinations, and desires?

Quest. II. *When others have had their reserves in closing with CHRIST, do you give up all to him entirely?* Have you taken CHRIST deliberately, understandingly, sitting down first, and counting the cost? Have you not secret reserves for your own ease, safety, estate, or beloved sin? Have you, upon solemn consideration, accepted CHRIST as the LORD your righteousness, for better, for worse, for all changes of times and conditions, so as to run all hazards with him, and to take your lot with him, fall as it will?

Quest. III. *When others are for a little religion by the bye, do you make religion your business?* Do you not put off GOD with the world's leavings, and serve him only when you are at leisure? Must not GOD stand by, while the world is first served? And are not your souls the least of your cares, and put off with some scraps of your time? Is religion your trade, and is your conversation in heaven? Do you walk with GOD, or have you only now and then a turn with him? When you have ended your prayers, is there an end of your religion till you come to them again; or do you carry on a design of religion throughout your whole course? Have you only a list of religion at the outside of the piece; or is the woof of religion woven into the whole cloth, into heart and life, into your discourse, and trades, and tables? Do you "first seek the kingdom of GOD, and the righteousness thereof?" Is it the chief care of your lives, that GOD may be served, and your souls saved? And is this the one thing necessary with you, about which you are most solicitous? Do your very hearts say, with DAVID, "One thing have I desired of the LORD, and that I will seek after?"

Quest. IV. *When others are for the wages of religion, are you for the work?* Can you say, with DAVID, "I

have chosen thy precepts?" Had you rather be holy than otherwise, if you were left to your choice? Had you rather be God's servants, and live at his command, than serve your own lusts? Do you count the laws of CHRIST your heritage, or rather do you not count them your bondage? Do you choose not only the wages of righteousness, but the ways of righteousness? Are God's commandments your delight? And are the sweetest hours of your lives the hours which you spend with him? Do you never enjoy yourselves so much as when you most enjoy God? Is his service your greatest comfort? And is it meat and drink to you to do his will? Do you make use of holy duties, only as men do of physic when they are ill at ease, when conscience lashes, or afflictions sting, or to pacify God, that he may not hurt you? Or, do you use them as your daily bread, the staff of your life, and the means of your comfort?

Quest. V. *When others are for a cheap and easy religion, are you for self-denial?* When others are for the religion that will serve them best, are you for that which will serve God best? When others are all upon the sparing plan, and will spare what may be spared, and study how they may best save charges in going to heaven, are you of such princely spirits, as to resolve not to serve the LORD with that which will cost you nothing? Is your course of religion such as doth mortify your flesh, and cross and curb its desires; or do you love to give it what it craves, and suffer it to take its own way? Have you no enemy you dread so much as self? Do you pamper and please it, and make provision for it; or do you pray and watch against it, and grieve for its infirmities, and had you rather that this enemy were under your feet, than have all the world?

Quest. VI. *When others are for no more of religion, than they deem to be absolutely necessary, are you for the height of religion?* Some are very inquisitive what is the lowest degree of religion that a man may have, and go to heaven. But the sincere Christian, though satisfied that his state is

safe, will rest in no attainments in grace; but reaches forward, and presses on, "if by any means he may attain to the resurrection of the dead." He that doth not desire, and design, and endeavour after perfection, never yet came up to sincerity. A true believer desires holiness for holiness' sake; and therefore is set upon perfecting holiness. Others desire it only for heaven's sake; and therefore are only for so much of it as will bear their charges thither. They make use of holiness only as a bridge to heaven; and therefore are for no more than will just serve their turn. The true believer has a holy nature, and therefore holiness is his element and natural employment; and he must needs desire holiness in its height, because every nature aspires after perfection in its kind. He desires not holiness, merely because it is the way to heaven; but he loves heaven the better for the holy way that leads to it, and for the perfect holiness which is there.

Quest. VII. *When others are only intent on salvation from hell by CHRIST, are you as truly intent on sanctification by CHRIST?* Do you take CHRIST as GOD offers him, with all his offices and benefits, to be both a PRINCE and a SAVIOUR, to give repentance as well as remission of sins? Are you desirous of the dominion of CHRIST, as well as of deliverance by CHRIST? Do you close with his burden, as well as his benefits? Do you count his laws your liberty; his service your freedom? Do you go in CHRIST's ways as one in fetters, or do you run with enlargement of heart?

Quest. VIII. *When others make self their end, do you set up GOD above all as your highest end?* Is it your great design, in your whole course of life, to glorify and enjoy GOD? Do you count this your whole business and blessedness? Do you make other business stoop to this, and other interests yield to this? Do your souls breathe after this, above all worldly good, that CHRIST may be magnified in you? Do you count your name, and your estate, but as loss, and the delights of sense but as puddle-water, in comparison of CHRIST?

If conscience give a comfortable and clear answer to these questions, go in peace. Blessed are you of the LORD! GOD is your friend: heaven is your portion: CHRIST is yours: all is yours. For "he that hath these things shall never be moved."

THE
SECOND CASE OF CONSCIENCE.

ON 1 THESS. IV. 1:

Furthermore then, we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the LORD JESUS, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please GOD, so ye would abound more and more.

QUEST. *What may and must a Christian be, and do, that he may please GOD?*

ANSW. To your pleasing GOD, something is necessary as to your Persons, and something as to your Performances.

First. As to your Persons, it is necessary, in general, that you be in a state of reconciliation with GOD. If you would "walk worthy of the LORD unto all pleasing," you must first be friends with him. Labour to get the breach made up, to have the enmity slain, to have divine displeasure removed. Till your pardon be obtained, and your peace made, nothing you can do will please GOD. Come in then, and touch the golden sceptre; yield to mercy; "kiss the SON;" resign yourselves to CHRIST; accept of the peace tendered to you in the word of reconciliation; and then GOD will be your friend. More particularly, that you may be in a state of reconciliation, and so in a capacity of pleasing GOD, you must follow these directions:

I. *Put away every sin.* It is thy iniquity that separateth between thee and thy GOD. If thou wouldest have GOD pleased, turn every sin out of doors; “pluck it out and cast it from thee.” If thou art of them that have pleasure in unrighteousness, the LORD hath no pleasure in thee. He is not a GOD that hath pleasure in wickedness; evil shall not dwell with him; the foolish shall not stand in his sight; he hateth all the workers of iniquity. See that thou abandon every sin that thou knowest; spare not one AGAG, not a right eye, not an HERODIAS; for then GOD will not spare thee. Give the darling of thy bosom a bill of divorce. Say to all thy idols, “Get thee hence.” GOD will not look to that man who looks pleasantly upon any sin. Though thou be very diligent in GOD’s service, and presentest him with multitudes of sacrifices, and many prayers, he will be pleased with nothing, but hide his face, and stop his ears, whilst thou keepest thine iniquities in thine hands. O look into thy hands, look into thy heart, look into thy house, into thy shop, thy trade, thy calling! See if there be not some way of wickedness that thou art found in. Thou canst not have peace with GOD, nor he pleasure with thee, till this be removed.

II. *Put on the LORD JESUS CHRIST: viz.*

1. *The red robe of his righteousness* [or merits] *for justification.* The LORD will never give thee a good look, nor a good word, but in CHRIST. He is a consuming fire out of CHRIST; but get on this robe, and he will be well pleased. ENOCH had this testimony, that he pleased GOD: but CHRIST had much more, namely, a testimony that GOD is well pleased with penitent and believing sinners, in and for him. Away with these rags, and with these **fig-leaves!** How can the righteous soul of GOD but abhor you, whilst you trust in your own righteousness? Dare not come to GOD, but with CHRIST in your arms: approach him not but in the garments of your Elder Brother, lest you carry away the curse. JOSHUA’S filthy garments must be put off, (*Zech. iii. 4,*) and CHRIST’S raiment put on, or else you cannot stand before the

bright and burning eyes of infinite holiness. Put on the LORD JESUS by believing; that is, accept of him in all his offices, and with all his inconveniences, and deliver up thyself to him, and this will entitle thee to his merits and righteousness. Without this nothing will avail. If thy head were waters, and thine eyes a fountain of tears, if thou shouldest wear thy tongue to the root with praying, if thou shouldest weep an ocean, all could not get out one spot of guilt. Nothing can be accepted, while thou art out of CHRIST: and therefore in the first place apply thyself to him.

2. *The white robe of his grace for sanctification.* Thou that art "in the flesh," that is, unrenewed and unsanctified, "canst not please God." Never think to make up the matter by a little mending and reforming in particular acts. Man! thy heart must be renewed, and thy state altogether altered; or God cannot be pleased. The tree must be made good, and the fountain healed; or else the stream will be salt, and the fruit sour. If CHRIST be once formed in thee, that is, his image, likeness is the ground of love; similitude, and suitableness of nature, are the loadstone of affection. God cannot but love his own likeness. Wouldest thou have his favour? Wouldest thou be the object of his delight? Then conform to his pleasure; study to be like him; purify thyself as he is pure. The righteous LORD loveth righteousness. He desireth truth in the inward parts; and takes infinite complacency in the graces of his people. Therefore "as the elect of God, holy, and beloved, put on bowels of mercy, kindness;" and "put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, filthy communication." Particularly let me recommend to you some special graces, with which God doth manifest himself to be wonderfully pleased.

(1.) *Be clothed with humility.* This is a garment which must be put on, or else you cannot be saved. It is the dress in which you must come to God. He must be served with humility of mind. You must humble yourselves to walk with him. Humility is a plain, but yet a

comely garment. This grace doth eminently honour GOD, and therefore GOD doth put a peculiar honour upon it, and manifest a most special delight in it. Of all the men in the world, this is the man that GOD will look unto, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at his word. As thou wouldest have GOD well-pleased with thee, be thoroughly displeased with thyself. If thou dost thoroughly loathe thyself, GOD doth love thee. If thou abhorrest thyself, GOD delighteth in thee. Be angry with thyself, and the Almighty will turn away his anger from thee: condemn thyself, and GOD will acquit thee. In no wise extenuate thy sins, nor justify thyself. Think the worst of thyself; be willing that others should think meanly of thee; and heartily love them that slight thee. This is the frame with which GOD is well-pleased. Pass sentence on thyself, and GOD will absolve thee: set up thyself at his footstool, and he will lift thee up into the throne.

(2.) *Put on a spirit of zeal and activity.* There is nothing with which GOD is more displeased, than remissness, lifelessness, and indifferency in religion. Lukewarm water is not a greater offence to the stomach, than the lukewarm professor is to GOD: and therefore he will spew such a one out of his mouth. Christians, where is your zeal for the LORD of hosts? CHRIST's redeemed must be zealous of good works: "not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the LORD." Not only do that which is right in the sight of the LORD, but do it with all your heart. The LORD loveth a willing servant. Bestir yourselves for the LORD. Be ye followers of CHRIST, who went up and down doing good. Every Christian should be a common blessing, a public good. This is to be the "children of your Father which is in heaven," who is "good unto all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works:" and be sure that the Father doth best love that child who is like himself. A private, narrow spirit, is a low and a base spirit, unworthy of a Christian. A catholic, communicative spirit is full of great desires, and

great designs. A large heart set upon doing good,—whose fire, though ever hottest within, will be breaking forth, and provoking others,—whose love will not be confined to a party, but gladly and thankfully owneth CHRIST wherever it sees him,—this catholic spirit, I say, is the glory of religion, the church's blessing, and GOD's delight.

(3.) *Live by faith.* If you would so walk as to please GOD, you must walk by faith. Christians must look to the things unseen; they must not live at the common rate; CHRIST must be their life, prayer their breath, and the promises their daily bread. By faith did the elders obtain that good report. Live in the power of faith, and thou wilt please Him to the heart. Give glory to Him by believing. Let the life thou now livest “in the flesh, be by faith of the SON of GOD.” Faith, as one well says, is the nourishment of morality.

Live by faith in prosperity. Though thou hast the world about thee, let it not be above thee; keep it at thy feet; use it as thy servant; live much in the view of glory, and the contemplation of eternity; be as though thou possessedst not; rejoice as though thou rejoicedst not; love as though thou lovedst not; use this world as not abusing it; it is but a fashion, not a substance, and one which passeth away; use it therefore with mortified affections.

Live by faith in adversity. Weep as though you wept not, enduring the cross, and despising the shame, looking unto JESUS, accounting CHRIST's reproach your riches, and his shame your glory. Compare these light afflictions with the weight of glory. Encourage your heart with the promises. Count, if you can, the riches that are laid up in them. Roll yourselves upon the LORD; and know that your heavenly Father hath no greater delight than to see his children trust him, when all visible helps are out of sight.

(4.) *Put on the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit:* for this is “in the sight of GOD of great price.” Study

to be, like your Father, slow to anger, ready to forgive, forgetting injuries, loving enemies, requiting ill will with kindness, ill words with courtesies, neglects with benefits; and if any wrong you, do him a kindness the sooner: so shall you bear His likeness, and be His delight. O “seek meekness!” How can the HOLY DOVE rest in a wrathful heart? CHRIST is a lamb, in point of meekness: how can He take pleasure in an unquiet and contentious spirit? Verily with the froward, He will show himself froward: if you will not forgive others, He will not forgive you. Art thou hard to be pleased, a froward wife, a froward master, a cross and self-willed servant? Surely GOD will not be pleased with thee: He will mete to us as we measure to others.

(5.) *Get a spirit of self-denial.* Be content to be empty, and to be abased, that GOD may be honoured; be willing to decrease, that he may increase. Forget thyself; renounce thine own wisdom, thine own worthiness, thine own will; bite in thy passions, curb thine appetite, bridle thy tongue. This do, and thou shalt be greatly accepted, and shalt find that GOD’S favour will infinitely reward thee for all the murmuring oppositions and discontents of the flesh.

(6.) *Maintain a spirit of resolution and constancy in the ways of GOD.* This was the renown of the three worthies, mentioned in *Dan. iii.* They feared not the fierceness of NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S rage, nor the fire of the furnace; all the world could not make them bow; and how gloriously did GOD own them, and evidence his pleasure in them? Stand your ground; resolve to live and die by substantial godliness; cleave to the LORD with full purpose of heart; let no difficulties make you change your station; then shall you be an honour and a pleasure to the GOD that made you.

Well, then, would you know what frame of heart is pleasing to GOD? Why, this humble, zealous, active frame; this believing, meek, self-denying, and resolved frame! This is the frame that is well-pleasing in the sight of GOD.

Secondly, As to your *Performances*, I shall briefly state, that in order that they may please GOD, you must look to these five things.

I. *That they be done by the right Rule*; which is GOD'S *Word*. You must not follow the imaginations of your own hearts; you must not do that which is right in your own eyes. In all sacred actions, you must have GOD'S command to warrant you. You may not offer to GOD that of which you are not able to say, "Thou requirest these things at our hands." In all civil actions, you must have GOD'S allowance. Be sure, He will never accept that which his word condemns, and therefore under pain of GOD'S displeasure dare not to set your hands to what the Word forbids.

II. *That they be done to the right End*; which is GOD'S *Glory*. How damnably did the *Pharisees* err! How miserably did JEHU miscarry! And both in acts which were, as to their matter, commanded, but which were faulty in not aiming at this end.

III. *That they proceed from right Principles*: namely, 1. *Faith*; without which it is impossible to please GOD. Prayer will not avail, except it be the prayer of faith. We believe, and therefore we speak. 2. *Love*. If we should give our goods to the poor, and our bodies to the fire, and not from love, it would profit us nothing. 3. *Fear*. We cannot serve GOD acceptably, without "reverence and *godly* fear,"—not a *slavish* fear. The LORD "taketh pleasure in them that fear him," in them that hope in his mercy. Observe the happy mixture; where these two are conjoined, there is a true filial fear. DAVID saith, "I will come to thy house in the multitude of thy mercy;"—behold his faith; "and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple;"—there is his fear with faith. Faith without Fear is presumption; Fear without Faith is despair: join these together, and GOD is well-pleased.

IV. *That they be done in a right Manner*:—*Preparedly*, not rashly and inconsiderately, in the presence of so

dreadful a Majesty ; and *prudently*, for lawful acts may be spoiled, and be done unlawfully, without consideration had to the offence that may in some cases attend them ; yea, holy duties, as well as common actions, may be turned into sins, by being ill-timed, and for want of a due attention to the present circumstances.

V. *That they be directed through the right Means* : that is, JESUS CHRIST, the only way to the FATHER. Bring all thy sacrifices to this High-Priest, and offer all upon this altar ; else all is lost. It is not enough to say, “through our LORD JESUS CHRIST,” at the end ; but in every duty you must come with a lively dependance on him for righteousness and strength, for assistance and acceptance. Remember to do all in the name of the LORD JESUS, and to come leaning upon his hand. Without this, all your services will be rejected.

EXTRACTS

FROM

T H E W O R K S

OF

MR. SAMUEL SHAW,

Some time Minister of Long-Whatton, in Leicestershire:

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE.

A
SHORT ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE
OF
MR. SAMUEL SHAW.

MR. SAMUEL SHAW, the author of the following papers, was born of religious parents, at Repton, in Derbyshire, in the year 1635; and educated at the free school there, then the best in that part of England. At fourteen years of age he left Repton, and went to St. John's College in Cambridge. When he had completed his studies at the University, he removed to Tamworth, in Warwickshire, and was Master of the free school there, in 1656.

From Tamworth he removed to Mosely, a small place on the borders of Worcestershire, at the desire of Colonel GREAVES of that place, who had a great esteem and affection for him. At his coming thither, he was ordained; and, in 1658, he obtained a presentation to the rectory of Long-Whatton, worth 150*l.* per annum.

In June of the same year, he had full and peaceable possession of this place, and continued so to have, till the restoration of King CHARLES, in 1660: then, fearing some disturbance, he obtained a fresh presentation under the great seal of England. This was granted without much difficulty, as the former incumbent, MR. HENRY ROBINSON, and two more who enjoyed it after him, were all

dead. But though his title was thus corroborated, yet Sir JOHN PETTYMAN found means to remove MR. SHAW in 1661; and they introduced one MR. BUTLER, who had never been incumbent, nor had any manner of title to the place.

After this he never had any public living, for he could not satisfy himself to conform.

When he left Long-Whatton, he removed to Cotes, a small village near Loughborough in the same county. During his stay here, his family was afflicted with the plague, being infected by some relations from London, who came from thence to avoid it. It was about harvest, 1665. At that time he preached in his family, and afterwards published that excellent book, called, "The Welcome to the Plague." He buried two children, two friends, and one servant, of that distemper: but he and his wife, who both had it, escaped; and, not being ill both at once, looked after one another, and the rest of the family; which was a great mercy: for none durst come to his assistance; but he was, in a manner, shut up for about three months together. He was forced to attend his sick, and bury his dead himself in his own garden.

Towards the latter end of the year 1666, he removed to Ashby-de-la-Zouch, in the same county; and was chosen Master of the free school there, in 1668. The revenue was then but small, the school buildings quite out of repair, and the number of scholars few: but, by his diligence, he soon got the salary augmented, not only for himself, but all succeeding schoolmasters; and, by his interest among gentlemen, all attached to him on account of his merit, he collected money for the building of a good school, and a school-house, as also a gallery for the convenience of the scholars in the church.

He had another difficulty, however, to contest with in this matter; which was, how to get a license, without subscription to those things of which conscience would not allow. But he got over that also: for, by means of LORD CONWAY, he obtained from the Archbishop of Can-

terbury a license to teach a school any where in his whole province; and this without so much as once seeing or waiting upon the Archbishop. And needing also a license from the Bishop of the diocese, he got a friend to make his application to DR. FULLER, then Bishop of Lincoln, who put his late book, occasioned by the plague in his family, into the Bishop's hands. The Bishop was so pleased with the piety, peaceableness, humility, and learning, there displayed, that he gave him a license upon such a subscription as his own sense dictated and inserted; and added, "that he was glad to have so worthy a man in his diocese, upon any terms."

His piety, learning, and temper, soon increased the reputation of his school, as well as the number of his scholars; so that he always kept one, and for a great while two ushers, to assist him; having often a hundred and sixty boys, or more, under his charge. His house, and the town, were continually full of boarders from London, and other distant parts of the kingdom.

Here he did excellent service in educating youth. Several divines of the Church of England, and many gentlemen, eminent in their several professions, were his scholars. He endeavoured to make the youth, that were under his care, in love with piety; instilling sound principles into their minds in early life, both by his own advice, and by the inducement set before them in his good example. His temper was affable, and his method of teaching winning and easy; and he had a singular talent in finding out, and suiting himself to, the tempers and inclinations of boys.

Afterwards, when the dissenting Ministers were allowed a toleration, and liberty to preach confirmed by Act of Parliament, he licensed his school for a place of religious worship; and the first time he used it, preached from *Acts* xix. 9, "Disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus." Here he continued till his death, which happened on the 22d of January, 1696, in the fifty-ninth year of his age.

He was of a middle stature, and his countenance not very penetrating; but his eyes were sparkling, and he had a most easy and engaging way of expressing himself. His discourse was witty, affable, and pertinent; and his disposition and temper pleasant. He had quick repartees; and his conversation was enlivened with a thorough insight into the several branches of polite learning, especially poetry and history. But his greatest excellence was in religious discourse, and in the rational and pious sentiments, both of his sermons and his prayers.

In the place where he lived, he was universally esteemed, being frequently employed in reconciling differences. He was universal in his charity; had a public and generous spirit, ready to encourage any good design; was much given to hospitality; of a peaceable disposition; and moderate in his principles.

In short, a mixture of so much learning and modesty, wit and judgment, piety and pleasantness, is rarely found together, as met in him. And he lived beloved, and died lamented, by all that had the happiness of his acquaintance.

IMMANUEL;
OR,
A DISCOVERY OF TRUE RELIGION,
AS IT IMPORTS
A LIVING PRINCIPLE IN THE MINDS OF MEN.

Written about the Year 1666.


BY SAMUEL SHAW,

Some time Minister of Long-Whatton, in Leicestershire.

IMMANUEL;

OR,

A DISCOVERY OF TRUE RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

The occasion of the words of the text. The principal contents of it. The origin of true religion. All souls the offspring of GOD, and a more especial portraiture of Him; but godly souls yet more especially. GOD the author of religion from without, in several respects; GOD the author of it from within, enlightening the faculties. Religion something of GOD in the soul. A discovery of religious men by the affinity that they have to GOD. GOD alone to be acknowledged in all holy accomplishments: the origin of sin from hence discovered.

JOHN IV. 14.

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

THIS chapter contains an excellent discourse of the blessed SAVIOUR of the world, into whose lips grace was poured, and he ceased not to pour it out again. That which is said of the wise, (*Prov. xv. 7,*) is fully verified of wisdom itself; his lips dispersed knowledge. A poor woman of Samaria comes to draw water, and our Saviour takes occasion, from the water, to instruct her in the great doctrines of the Kingdom of Heaven. O the admirable zeal for GOD, and compassion for souls, which dwelt in that divine breast! And O the wonderful, unsearchable counsels of an all-wise GOD! He ordains SAUL'S seeking of asses to be the means of his finding a

kingdom upon earth ; and this poor woman's seeking of water to be an occasion of her finding the way to the kingdom of heaven. She comes to the well of JACOB, and, behold, she meets with the GOD of JACOB there. The occasion, passages, and issue of this discourse, would each afford many profitable observations ; but I think none more than this particular verse ; in which the mystery of gospel-grace is unfolded, and true religion excellently described. For I understand our Saviour, not as speaking of faith, or knowledge, or any other particular grace, but of grace in general ; of the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, that is, his gifts and graces ; of true godliness ; or, if you will, of the Christian Religion ; for that word I shall choose to retain throughout my discourse, as being most intelligible and comprehensive.

In these words we find the true Christian Religion unfolded in the Origin, Nature, Properties, Consequence, and End of it. The Origin of it is found in those words, "I shall give him ;" the Nature of it is described by a "well of water ;" the Properties of it will be found in the phrase of "springing up ;" the Consequence of it is, that the man that is endued with it shall "never thirst ;" the End or Perfection of it is "everlasting life." Of all these, by GOD's assistance, I shall treat in this order.

First, I begin at the Origin of it, as it seems meet I should ; for indeed it is found in the words, "The water that I shall give him."

Religion is of divine origin. All souls are indeed the offspring of GOD. Those noble faculties of understanding, and a will free from constraint, do more resemble the nature of GOD than all the world besides. There is more of the glory, beauty, and brightness of GOD in a soul, than there is in the sun itself. The apostle allows it as a proper speech spoken in common of all men : (*Acts xvii. 28* :) "For we are also his offspring." GOD hath fixed more lively prints of himself, and his divine essence, upon a rational soul, than he hath upon the whole creation ; so that the soul of man, even as to its constitution, doth dis-

cover more of the nature of GOD, than all the other things that he hath made. He that rightly converses with his own soul, will get more acquaintance with GOD, than they that gaze continually upon the material heavens, or traverse the utmost corners of the earth, or “go down into the sea in ships.” The serious consideration of the little world will teach more of Him than the great one could do: so that I hesitate not to take the Apostle’s words concerning the word of GOD, and apply them to the nature of GOD: (*Rom. x. 6, 7*;) “Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven,” to bring a discovery of GOD from thence? Or, “Who shall descend into the deep,” to fetch it up from thence? The nature and essence of GOD are “nigh thee,” even in thy soul; excellently displayed in the constitution, frame, powers, and faculties thereof. GOD has not made any creature so capable of receiving and reflecting his image and glory, as angels and men: which has made me often to say, “That the vilest soul of man is much more beautiful and honourable than the most excellent body, than the very body of the sun at noon-day.” And, by the way, this may render sin odious and loathsome; because it has defiled the fairest piece of GOD’s workmanship in the world, and has blurred the clearest copy which he has drawn of himself in the whole creation.

But though all rational souls be the children of GOD, yet all of them do not imitate their Father: though their constitution express much of the essence of GOD, yet their disposition doth, too often, express the image of the devil. But godly souls, who are “followers of GOD,” are indeed his “dear children.” (*Eph. v. 1*.) Holy souls, who are endued with a GOD-like disposition, and work the works of GOD, these are truly and properly his offspring. (*Matt. v. 44, 45*.) And in this respect GOD’s children are his “workmanship, created unto good works.” (*Eph. ii. 10*.)

Religion is of divine origin: GOD is the author and father of it, both from without and from within.

1. GOD is the author of it from without. When man

had fallen from GOD by sin, and was become both unwilling and unable to return, GOD was pleased to set up that glorious light, his own SON, “the Sun of Righteousness,” in the world, that he might guide their feet into the way of peace; who is therefore called, “A light to lighten the Gentiles.” GOD, of his infinite grace and overflowing goodness, provided a Mediator, by whom the apostate souls might be reconciled, and re-united to himself; and “to as many as receive him, to them he giveth power to become the sons of GOD.”

Yet further, it pleased GOD, in his infinite wisdom and mercy, to chalk out the way of life and peace in the Holy Scriptures, and therein to unlock the secrets of salvation to succeeding generations. Herein he has plainly laid down the terms of the covenant of peace, which was made in the Mediator, and given precepts and promises for the direction and encouragement of as many as will inquire into the same. These are the sacred Oracles, which give clear and certain answers to all that consult them about their future state. CHRIST JESUS opened the way into the holiest of all, and the Scriptures come after, and point it out unto us; he purchased life and immortality, and these bring it to light. (*2 Tim. i. 10.*)

And yet further, that these might not be mistaken, or perverted to men’s destruction, GOD has been pleased to commit these records into the hands of his Church, and therein to his Ministers, whom he hath appointed, called, qualified, and instructed, for the explanation and application of them: so that they are called “scribes instructed unto the kingdom of GOD,” “stewards of the mysteries,” and “stewards over the household of GOD, to give unto every one his portion.” These Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers, GOD hath given for the perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying of the body of CHRIST.

These things hath GOD done for us, from without us; he hath set up a light, marked out our way, and appointed us guides. To these I might add the many enticements, which we call mercies or comforts of this life; and the

many affrightments of judgments and afflictions ; which **God** has added to the promises and threatenings of his word, to bring us into the way of life. But all these are too little, too weak of themselves, to bring back a straggling soul, or to produce a living principle of true religion in it. Therefore,

2. **God** is the author of religion from within. He not only reveals himself and his **Son** to the soul, but in it ; he not only makes discoveries to it, but lively impressions upon it ; he not only points out the way of life, but breathes into it the breath of life. He has not only provided a Saviour, a Redeemer, but he also draws the soul unto him. He has not only appointed Pastors and Teachers, but he himself impregnates their word, and clothes their doctrine, with his own power, using their ministry as an instrument whereby to teach ; so that the children of **God** are said to be “all taught of **God**.” Ministers can only discover, and, as it were, enlighten the object ; but **God** enlightens the faculty. He gives the seeing eye, and does actually enable it to discern. Therefore the work of converting a soul is still ascribed to **God** in Scripture ; he begets us again : (1 *Pet.* i. 3 ;) he draws the soul, before it can run after him. (*Cant.* i. 4.) **Christ** apprehends the soul, and lays powerful hold of it. (*Phil.* iii. 12.) **God** gives a heart of flesh, a new heart ; he causes men to walk in his statutes ; (*Ezek.* xxxvi. 26, 27 ;) he puts his laws into their inward parts, and writes it in their hearts. (*Jer.* xxxi. 33.)

But yet, methinks, we are not come to a perfect discovery of religion's being the offspring of **God** in the minds of men. For it is **God** who enlightens the faculties of men as to the learning of all other things also ; He teaches grammar and rhetoric, as well as divinity ; He instructs even the husbandman to discretion in his affairs of husbandry, and teaches him to plough, and sow, and thresh, &c. (*Isa.* xxviii. 26.) Not only the gift of divine knowledge, but “every good, and perfect gift, cometh from the Father of lights.” **God** does, from

within, give that capacity and illumination of our faculties, whereby we comprehend the mysteries of nature, as well as of grace. Therefore we may conceive of the origin of religion in a more inward and spiritual manner still. It is not so much given of GOD, as it is itself something of GOD in the soul; as the soul is not so properly said to give, as to be, the life of man. As the conjunction of the soul with the body is the life of the body; so verily the life of the soul stands in its conjunction with GOD by a spiritual union of will and affections. GOD does not enlightens men's minds as the sun enlightens the world, by shining unto them, and round about them; but by shining into them, by enlightening their faculties, as I said before, and, which seems to be somewhat more, by "shining in their hearts," as the Apostle phrases it. (2 Cor. iv. 6.) He sets up a candle, which is his own light within the soul; so that the soul sees GOD in his own light, and loves him with the love that he hath shed abroad in it: and religion is no other than a reflection of that divine image, life, and light, and love, which, from GOD, are imprinted upon the souls of true Christians. GOD is said to enlighten the soul, but it is not as the sun enlightens; so he draws the soul too, but not as one man draws another with a cord; but he draws the soul as the sun draws up earthly vapours, by infusing its virtue and power into them; or, as the loadstone draws the iron, by the powerful influences of his grace. GOD does not so much communicate himself to the soul by way of discovery, as by way of impression; and indeed not so much by impression, as by a mystical and wonderful way of implantation.

Religion is not so much something from GOD, as something of GOD in the minds of believers: it is therefore called his image; (Col. iii. 10;) and believers are said to "live according to GOD in the SPIRIT." (1 Pet. iv. 6.) But, as if that were not high enough, it is not only called his image, but even a participation of his divine nature; (2 Pet. i. 4;) something of CHRIST in the soul, an *Infant*

CHRIST, as one calls it, alluding to the Apostle's words, (*Gal. iv. 19.*) where the saving knowledge of CHRIST is called CHRIST himself,—“until CHRIST be formed in you.”

True religion is, as it were, GOD dwelling in the soul, and CHRIST dwelling in the soul. GOD himself is pleased thus to express his relation to the godly soul: (*Isa. lvii. 15.*) “I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit:” and again, (*2 Cor. vi. 16.*) “As GOD hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them.” Pure religion is a beam of the FATHER of LIGHTS: it is a drop of that eternal fountain of goodness and holiness, the breath of the power of GOD, a pure influence flowing from the power of the Almighty, the brightness of the everlasting Light, the unspotted mirror of the power of GOD, and the image of his goodness, more beautiful than the sun, and above all the orders of stars: being compared with the light, it is found before it. What is spoken of the eternal SON of GOD, (*Heb. i. 3.*) may, in a sense, be affirmed of religion, that it is the effulgency or beaming forth of divine glory; for there is more of the divine glory and beauty shining forth in one godly soul, than in all things in the world beside. The glorious light of the sun is but a dark shadow of the divine light, not to be compared with the beauty of holiness. An immortal soul does more resemble the divine nature than any other created being; but religion in the soul is a thousand times more divine than the soul itself. The material world is a darker representation of divine wisdom, power, and goodness; it is, as it were, the footsteps of GOD. The immaterial world of angels and spirits represents him more clearly, and is, as it were, the face of GOD: but holiness in the soul most nearly resembles him of all created things; one may call it the beauty and glory of his face. Every creature partakes of GOD: He had no copy but himself and his own essence to frame the world by; so that all these must needs carry some resemblance of their Maker. But no

creature is capable of such communications of GOD, as a rational immortal spirit; and the highest that angel, or spirit, or any created nature, can be made capable of, is to "be holy as GOD is holy." So then if the poet may call the soul,—and ST. PAUL allows him in it,—*Divinæ particula auræ*; surely one may rather speak in those terms of religion, which is the highest perfection that the soul can attain to, either in the world that now is, or that which is to come. One soul, any one soul of man, is worth all the world beside for glory and dignity; but the lowest degree of true holiness, pure religion, conformity to the divine nature and will, is more worth than a world of souls, and to be preferred before the essence of angels. I have often admired three great mysteries and mercies, GOD revealed in the flesh, GOD revealed in the word, and GOD revealed in the soul: this last is the mystery of godliness which I am speaking of, but cannot fathom: it is this which, as the Apostle says, transcends the sight of our eyes, the capacity of our ears, and all the faculties of our souls too. (1 Cor. ii. 9.) CHRIST JESUS formed in the soul of man, incarnate in a heart of flesh, is as great a miracle, and a greater mercy, than CHRIST formed in the womb of a virgin, and incarnate in a human body. There was once much glorying concerning CHRIST in the world, the hope of *Israel*; but let us call out to the powers of eternity, and the ages of the world to come, to help us to celebrate and magnify CHRIST in us "the hope of glory."

1. This will help us in our discoveries of that precious pearl, religion. There is nothing in the world that men generally more seek, or less find: every nation in the world hath courted it in one way or other; but, alas, how few have obtained it! At this day there are many claims laid to it: the men of *Judah* cry, She is of kin to us; the men of *Israel* say, We have ten parts in this queen, and we have more right in religion than ye; according as they contended of old about King DAVID. (2 Sam. xix.) They say of CHRIST, as it was foretold,

though perhaps not in the same sense as was foretold, "Lo, here he is, and lo, there he is," which has made many say, "He is not at all:" or, if I may go on in the same allusion, they live by the rule which there follows, they will not go forth to seek him any where. Mighty strivings, yea, and wars there have been about the Prince of Peace, whose He should be: and at this day no question is more debated, nor less decided, than which is the most religious party in the land. O would to God that men would dispute this controversy with works, and not with words, much less with blows!

Religion is of an eminent pedigree, of a noble descent; you may find her name in the register of heaven; and look where God is, there is she. She carries her name in her forehead. The divine disposition which she manifests, the divine works which she performs, which no one else can perform, the same bear witness which is she. I am ready to say, with the man that had been blind, "Herein is a marvellous thing," that ye know not religion, who she is, and yet she is the mighty power of God opening the eyes, changing the hearts, and as it were deifying the souls of men. Why do we not also go about inquiring which of those many stars is the moon in the firmament? If ye ask of the religious party, I will point you to the blessed and eternal God, and say, "As he is, so are they, in their capacity, each one resembling the children of a King;" or I will point out the religious Christian by the same token, as CHRIST himself was marked out to JOHN the Baptist: (*John* i. 33:) "Upon whom thou shalt see the SPIRIT descending, and remaining on him, the same is he." If ye inquire about the children of God, the Apostle shall describe them for you: (*Eph.* v. 1:) the "followers of God" are his "dear children." That which is most nearly allied to the nature and life of God, that call religion, under whatsoever disguises or reproaches it may go in the world. Examine the world by no lower a mark than that character that is given of DAVID; (*1 Sam.* xiii. 14;) and the man that doth appear to be

“after GOD’s own heart,” viz. conformable to his image, compliant with his will, and studious of his glory, fix upon him; for that is the man, under what name soever he goes, of what party soever he is. Examine what alliance your soul hath to GOD, and “whose is the image and superscription.”

Religion is a divine accomplishment, an efflux from GOD, and may, by its affinity to heaven, be discerned from the offspring of hell and darkness. Therefore, Christians, if you will make a judgment of your state, lay your hearts and lives to the rule, the eternal goodness, the uncreated purity, and see whether you resemble that copy: for conformity to the image and will of GOD, is religion; and GOD will own it for his, when all the counterfeits and shadows of it will fly away, and disappear for ever. I fear it may be imputed as a great piece of vanity to many speculative Christians, that they are very inquisitive, prying into the hidden rolls of GOD’s decree, and the secrets of predestination, to find out the causes and method of their vocation and salvation: in the mean time, they are not solicitous for, nor studious of, the relation and resemblance that every religious soul bears unto GOD himself, the heaven that is opened within the godly soul itself, and the whole plot and mystery of salvation transacted upon the heart of a true Christian.

There is a vanity which I have observed in many pretenders to nobility and learning; and that is, when men seek to demonstrate the one by their coat of arms, and their family, and the other by a gown, or a title, or their names standing in the register of the university, rather than by the accomplishments and behaviour of gentlemen or scholars. A like vanity, I doubt, may be observed in many pretenders to religion: some are searching GOD’s decretals, to find their names written in the book of life, when they should be studying to find GOD’s name written upon their hearts, “holiness to the LORD” engraven upon their souls: some are busily examining themselves by marks without them, when they should labour

to find the marks and prints of GOD and his nature upon them: some have their religion in their books and authors, which should be the law of GOD written on the tables of the heart: some glory in the number of their duties, and in the multitude of their pompous performances, crying with JEHU, “Come, and see my zeal for the LORD;” whereas it were much more excellent, if one could see their likeness to the LORD, and the characters of divine beauty and holiness drawn upon their hearts and lives. But we, if we judge rightly of our religious state, must view ourselves in GOD, who is the fountain of all goodness and holiness, and the rule of all perfection.

Value yourselves by your souls, and not by your bodies, estates, friends, or any outward accomplishments. To study the blessed and glorious GOD in his word, and to converse with him in his works, is indeed an excellent employment; but O what a blessed study is it to view him in the communications of himself, and the impressions of his grace upon our own souls! All the thin and subtle speculations of the most eminent philosophers concerning the essence and nature of GOD, are poor, and low, and beggarly employments and attainments, in comparison of those blessed visions of GOD which a godly soul hath in itself, when it finds itself partaker of a divine nature, and living a divine life. O labour to view GOD and his perfections in your own souls, in those transcripts of them which his HOLY SPIRIT draws upon the hearts of all godly men.

This is the most excellent discovery of GOD of which any soul is capable; it is better and more desirable than that famous discovery which was made to MOSES in the cleft of the rock. Nay, I should much rather desire to see the real impression of a god-like nature upon my own soul, to see the crucifixion of my own pride and self-will, the mortification of the mere sensual life, and a divine life springing up in my soul instead of it,—I would much rather desire to see my soul glorified in the image and beauty of GOD put upon it, which is indeed a pledge, yea,

and a part of eternal glory, than to have a vision from the Almighty, or hear a voice witnessing from heaven, and saying, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom my soul is well-pleased." This which I am speaking of is a true foundation of heaven in the soul, a real beginning of happiness : for happiness, yea, heaven itself, is nothing else but a perfect conformity, a cheerful and eternal compliance of all the powers of the soul with the will of GOD : so that as far as a soul is thus conformed to GOD, and filled with his fulness, so far is he glorified upon earth.

2. Let wisdom then be justified of her children ; let the children of GOD, those that are his genuine offspring, rise up and call him blessed, in imitation of their LORD and SAVIOUR, that eldest SON of GOD, that "First-born among many brethren," who rejoiced in spirit, and said, "I thank thee, FATHER, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast revealed these things;" (*Luke* x. 21;) or, according to the style of the Apostle PETER, (*1 Pet.* i. 3,) "Blessed be the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again." There is no greater contradiction in the world, than a man pretending to religion, and yet ascribing it to himself; for pure religion is entirely of a divine original. Besides, religion doth principally consist in the subduing of self-will, in compliance with the divine will, in serving the interest of GOD's glory in the world. Then, and not till then, may a soul be truly called religious, when GOD becomes greatest of all to it and in it, and the interest of GOD is so powerfully planted in it, that no self-interest, no creature-love, no particular or private end, can grow by it, no more than the Magicians could stand before MOSES, when he came in the power of GOD to work wonders.

We, if we indeed partake of the divine nature, shall not dare to take any of the divine glory ; if we conform to GOD's image, we shall not set up our own. Self-glorying is utterly inconsistent with true religion, as fire is with

water : for religion is nothing else but the shining forth of GOD into the soul, the reflection of a beauty and glory which GOD hath put upon it. Give all therefore unto GOD ; for whatsoever is kept back, is sacrilegiously purloined from him : let us glory in the fulness of GOD alone, and in self-penury and nothingness. The whole of religion is of GOD. Do we see and discern the great things of GOD ? It is by that light which GOD hath set up in us ; according to the declaration of the Apostle, (*1 Cor. ii. 11,*) “ The things of GOD knoweth no man, but the SPIRIT of GOD.” That love whereby we love him, he first shed abroad in our hearts. If our souls be beautiful, it is with his brightness, the beauty and glory of essential holiness, according to the expression of the Apostle, (*Heb. xii. 10,*) “ Partakers of his holiness.” If we be really full, we receive it of his fulness, according to ST. PAUL’S saying, (*Eph. iii. 19,*) “ Filled with all the fulness of GOD.” In a word, if we be in any god-like dispositions, like unto him, it is by his spreading of his image in us, and over us. By all which, it appears to be a thing not only wicked and unwarrantable, but utterly impossible for a godly soul to exalt itself against GOD, or for grace to advance itself against divine glory : for grace is nothing else but a communication of divine glory ; and GOD is then glorified, when the soul in holy and gracious dispositions becomes like unto him. How is it possible that grace should be a shadow to obscure divine glory, when itself is nothing else but a beam of glory, and, as it is found in the creature, may properly be called a reflection of it ?

To conclude then,—be persuaded, that a man has so much of GOD, as he has of humility and self-denial ; and no more : he is so far of GOD, as he loves him, honours him, imitates him, and lives to him ; and no further.

3. By this discovery of the origin of religion, we come to understand the origin of sin and wickedness. The origin of sin, from without, is from the Devil, who first ushered it into the world, and ceases not to tempt men to it continually ; as also from men, who are his instruments ;

and it does, in a sense, spring from without. But these things are improperly said to be the causes of sin. The inward cause is the corrupt heart of man, that devilish nature, which is indeed the worst devil in the world to man. It is an old saying, "One man is a devil to another:" which, though it be, in some sense, true; yet it is more proper to say, Man is a devil to himself, taking the spirit and principle of apostasy, that rebellious nature, for a devil, which indeed best deserves that name. But yet, if we inquire more strictly into the origin of this monster, we shall best know what to say of it, by what we have heard of religion. Sin then, to speak properly, is nothing else but a degeneration from a holy state, an apostasy from a holy God. Religion is a participation of God, and sin is a straggling off from Him. Therefore, sin is wont to be defined, a departure from God, a forsaking of Him, a living in the world without Him. The soul's falling off from God describes the general nature of sin; but then, as it sinks into itself, or settles upon the world, and fastens upon the creature, so it becomes specified, and is called pride, covetousness, ambition, and many other names. All souls are the offspring of God, being originally formed in his image and likeness; and when they express the holiness of the divine nature, in being perfect as God is perfect, then are they called the children of God: but those impure spirits, that fall from God, may be said, to implant themselves into another stock by their own low and earthly lives, and are no longer owned for the children of God, but are of their Father the Devil. By this you may also take notice of the miserable condition of unholy souls. We need not call for fire and brimstone to paint the wretched state of sinful souls. Sin itself is hell, and death, and misery to the soul, as being a departure from goodness and holiness itself; I mean from God, in union with whom, the happiness, blessedness, and heaven of a soul doth consist. Avoid sin, therefore, if you would avoid being miserable.

CHAP. II.

True Religion described, as to the nature of it, by Water : a metaphor usual in the scriptures ; 1. On account of its power to cleanse ; 2. On account of its power to allay thirst. The nature of religion described by a Well of water. That it is a principle in the souls of men, proved. An examination of religion by this test ; by which examination are excluded all things that are merely external. A godly man hath neither the whole of his business, nor his motives, lying without him. Many things internal found not to be religion : it is no sudden passion of the mind ; nor any thing begotten and maintained by the mere power of imagination.

I COME now to speak of the nature of true religion, which our blessed LORD here describes by “ a well of water.” I. By Water. II. By a Well of Water.

I. Pure religion is described by Water. This is a comparison very familiar in the Holy Scriptures, both of the Old Testament and the New. By this similitude, gospel-grace was typified in the ceremonial law, wherein both persons and things, ceremonially unclean, were commanded to be washed in water. Under this notion, the same grace is prayed for by the Psalmist, when he had defiled himself in the bed of a stranger ; (*Psal. li. 7 ;*) “ Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” He had drunk water out of a strange cistern, and now he calls out for water from the fountain of grace, to cleanse him : he cries out for water from the fountain of grace, the blessed MESSIAH, that sprung up into the world at Bethlehem, and that with more earnestness than formerly. We read that he wished for the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate. (*2 Sam. xxiii. 15.*) In the same phrase, the same grace is promised by the ministry of the Prophets, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto us. Thus we read of the flou-

rishing state of the church ; (*Isa.* lviii. 11 ;) “ Thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not ;” and of the fruitful state of the gospel-proselytes ; (*Joel* iii. 18 ;) “ All the rivers of JUDAH shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.” These promises, as the Prophet EZEKIEL plainly shows, are to be understood of the grace of sanctification ; (*Ezek.* xxxvi. 25 ;) “ I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean : from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you :” for ordinary water cannot cleanse men from idols. The Prophet ISAIAH also puts it out of doubt, whose prophecy, together with the interpretation of it, we find in one verse ; (*Isa.* xlv. 3 ;) “ I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground : I will pour out my SPIRIT upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.”

By the same ceremony, the gospel-dispensation shadows out the same mystery in the sacrament of baptism : and, by the same phrase, our SAVIOUR offers the same grace ; (*John* vii. 37 ;) “ If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink :” and his Apostles after him, in allusion to water, call this grace the “ washing of regeneration.” (*Tit.* iii. 5.)

Now, as the grace of GOD is compared unto fire, because it is of a refining nature, and consumes the dross of the soul ; so also it is compared unto water, especially for these two properties, viz., of cleansing and quenching : for, observe this, by the way, that it is a very injurious thing to the HOLY GHOST, to press the metaphors which He useth in Scripture, further than they naturally and freely serve. Neither are we to rest in the letter of the metaphor, but to attend unto the scope of it.

If we tenaciously adhere to the phrase, wanton wits will be ready to quarrel with absurdities, and so unawares run into strange blasphemies. They will cry out presently, —How can fire wash ?—when they read those words of the

Prophet : (*Isa. iv. 4.*) “The LORD will wash away the filth of the daughter of Zion, by the SPIRIT of burning.” But who art thou, O man ! that wilt teach him to speak, who formed the tongue ? The SPIRIT of GOD intends the virtue or property of things when he names them, and to that we must mainly attend.

1. Therefore, by the phrase *Water*, is the cleansing nature of religion commended to us : it is the cleansing of the soul, which sin and wickedness have polluted. Sin is often described in Scripture as filthiness, loathsomeness, abomination, uncleanness, a spot, a blemish, a stain, a pollution ; which terms indeed convey a most proper description of it. The spots of leprosy, and the eruption of the foulest scurvy, are beautiful in comparison of it. JOB upon the dunghill was not half so loathsome as goodly ABSALOM ; in whose body “ there was no blemish, from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head,” but whose soul was stained with the spots of malice and revenge, and festered with the loathsome tumour of ambition. LAZARUS, lying at the gates full of raw and running sores, was a far more lovely object in the pure eyes of GOD, than JEZEBEL, looking out at the window, adorned with spots and paint. If the best which a godly man has of his own, be as a filthy rag, where shall we borrow a phrase foul enough to describe the wickedness of an ungodly man ? I need say no more of it, I can say no worse, than to tell you that it is something contrary to GOD, who is the eternal Father of light, who is beauty, and brightness, and glory itself ; or, to give it you in the Apostle’s phrase, (*Rom. iii. 23.*) it is “ a coming short of the glory of GOD.” This hath made me many times almost ready to cry out with the Prophet, “ Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this ;” when I have seen poor, ignorant, profane wretches, passing by a person, or a family, visited with some loathsome disease, in a mixture of fear and disdain, stopping their noses and hastening away ; when their own souls have been more vile than the dung upon the earth, spotted with ignorance and atheism, swollen with the risings of pride, and self-will,

and contempt of God and his holy image. This may well be a matter of wonder to any man, till he consider with himself, that one part of these men's uncleanness, is that very blindness which keeps them from discerning it. I speak principally of the defilement of the soul; though the same pollute the whole conversation: for every action which springs forth from such an unclean heart, thereby becomes filthy; even as Moses's hand, put into his bosom, became leprous, or rather, as (under the ceremonial law) one that was rendered unclean by a dead body, defiled all that he touched.

Now, religion is the cleansing of this unclean spirit and conversation; so that, though the soul were formerly filthy and odious, when once those living waters flow into it, and through it, from the pure fountain of grace and holiness, the SPIRIT of our God, one may say of it, as the Apostle says of the Corinthians, (1 *Cor.* vi. 11,) "Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified." The soul that was before white as leprosy, is now white as wool. O what beauty and glory are upon that soul, which shines with the image and brightness of God upon it! • SOLOMON in all his glory was not beautiful like such a soul: nay, the splendour of the sun, in its greatest strength, is a miserable glimmering, if it be compared with the day-star of religion, which even in this life arises in the heart; or, if you will, in the Prophet's style, the Sun of Righteousness, which arises with healing in his wings, upon them that fear the name of God. The godly soul having entertained the pure effluxes of divine light and love, breathes after nothing more than to see more familiarly, and love more ardently: its inclinations are pure and holy; its motions spiritual and powerful; its delights high and heavenly; it may be said to rest in its love; and yet it may be said, that love will not suffer it to rest, but is still carrying it out to a more intimate union with its beloved object. What is said of the ointment of CHRIST'S name, (*Cant.* i. 3,) is true of the water of his SPIRIT; "it is poured forth,

therefore do the virgins love him." Religion begets a pure and holy love in the soul towards the blessed God, its author; it bathes itself in the fountain from which it sprang; and basks itself perpetually in the warm beams which first produced it. Religion issues from God himself, and is ever issuing out towards God alone, passionately breathing with DAVID, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? in earth there is none that I desire beside thee!" The soul that formerly may be said to have "lain among the pots," by reason of its filthiness, is now "as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her wings with yellow gold." This pure principle being put into the soul, sets it upon holy studies, excites holy meditations, directs it to high and noble ends, and makes all its affections to be pure and chaste, labouring to enjoy God himself, which before were adulterous and idolatrous, ready for sin and the world to lodge in. In a word, this offspring of heaven, this "King's daughter," the godly soul, is "all glorious within;" yea, and outwardly too, she is "clothed with wrought gold;" her faith within is more precious than gold, and her conversation curiously made up, an embroidery of good works, some of piety, some of charity, some of sobriety, but all of purity, shining with more noble and excellent splendour than the high-priest's garments and breast-plate, spangled with such variety of precious stones. "Not my feet only, but my hands and my head, LORD," said PETER, not well knowing what he said; but the soul that is truly sensible of the excellent purity which is caused by divine washings, longs to have the whole man, the whole life, also made partaker of it, and cries, "LORD, not my head only, not my heart only, but my hands and my feet also; make me wholly pure, as God is pure." In a word, true religion is the cleansing of the soul, and all the powers of it; so that, whereas murderers sometimes lodged in it, now righteousness: the den of thieves, thievish lusts, and loves, and interests, and ends, which formerly stole away the soul from God, is now become a temple fit for the great KING to dwell, live, and reign in: and the whole conversation is turned

from its wonted vanity, worldliness, and iniquity, and is continually employed about things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report.

2. By the phrase *Water*, the quenching nature of religion is commended to us. God has endued the immortal soul with a restless appetite, and raging thirst, after some chief good, which the heart of every man is continually groping after, though indeed few find it, because they seek it where it is not to be found. If we speak properly, it is not gold, or silver, or popular applause, at which the covetous or ambitious mind doth ultimately aim, but some chief good, happiness, sufficiency, and satisfaction in these things ; wherein they are more guilty of blasphemy than atheism. For it is clear they do not deny a supreme good ; because that at which men chiefly and ultimately aim is their god, be it what it will ; but they blaspheme the true God, when they place their happiness where it is not to be found, and attribute that fulness and sufficiency to something else besides the living God. Sin has not destroyed the nature and capacity of the rational soul, but has diverted the mind from its adequate object, and has sunk it into the creature, where it wanders hither and thither, like a banished man, from one den or cave to another, but is secure nowhere. A wicked man, who is loosed from his centre by sin, and has departed from the fountain of life, sinks low in his affections, and flutters perpetually about the earth and earthly objects, but can find no more rest for the foot of his soul, than NOAH'S dove could find for the sole of her foot. Now, religion is the hand that pulls this wandering bird into her own ark, from whence she was departed ; it settles the soul upon its proper centre, and quenches its burning thirst after happiness. And for this reason it is called water in Scripture, as appears from *Isa. lviii. 11* ; “ The LORD shall satisfy thy soul in drought : and *Isa. xlv. 3* ; “ I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground ; ” compared with *John vii. 37* ; “ JESUS stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.” Religion is a

taste of infinite goodness, which quenches the soul's thirst after created and finite good; in the same manner as that taste which NATHANAEL had of CHRIST'S divinity, took him off from the expectation of any Messiah to come, and made him cry out, "Rabbi, thou art the SON of GOD; thou art the King of Israel." (*John i. 49.*) And every religious soul has such a taste of GOD, even in this life, as, though it does not perfectly fill him, yet does perfectly assure him where all fulness dwells.

II. I proceed to the second phrase, whereby our SAVIOUR describes the nature of true religion; it is a Well, a fountain in the soul: "Shall be in him a Well of water." From which phrase I shall only observe,—*That religion is a principle in the souls of men.*

The water which CHRIST pours into the soul is not like the water poured upon our streets, which washes them, and runs away; but it becomes a cleansing principle within the soul itself; every drop from GOD becomes a fountain in man: not as if man were the first spring of his own motions towards GOD: I find not any will in the natural man so divinely free. GOD has indeed given this to his only-begotten SON, to have "life in himself," but not to any of his adopted ones. If you ask me concerning man in his natural capacity, I am so far from thinking that he possessed a self-quickening power, a principle of life in himself, that I must needs assert the contrary, with the Apostle, that he is "dead in trespasses and sins." Repenting and believing are properly man's acts, and yet they are performed by GOD'S power; first, CHRIST must give this water, before it can be a well of water in the soul. Religion is a living principle in the souls of good men. I cannot better describe the nature of religion, than to say it is a nature; for so the Apostle speaks, or at least allows us to speak, when he calls it "a participation of the divine nature." Nothing but a nature can partake of a nature; a man's friend may partake of his goods and kindness, but his child only partakes of his nature. The

Sun enlightens the world outwardly, but it does not give a sun-like nature to the things so enlightened ; and the rain moistens the earth, and refreshes it inwardly, but it does not beget the nature of water in the earth : “ but this water that I give,” says our SAVIOUR, “ becomes a well of water in the soul.” Religion is not any thing without a man, hanging upon him, or annexed to him ; neither is it every something that is in a man ; but it is a divine principle informing and actuating the souls of good men, a living and lively principle, a free and flowing principle, a strong and lasting principle, an inward and spiritual principle. It is called a seed, “ the seed of God,” in 1 *John* iii. 9, where this seed of God is called an abiding or remaining principle. In the first creation, God made the trees of the earth, having seed in themselves ; and in the new creation, these trees of righteousness, of God’s planting, are also made with seed in themselves, though not of themselves : it is said to be the seed of God indeed, but remaining in the godly soul. Again, it is called a treasure, in opposition to an alms or annuity, which lasts only for a year ; and a treasure of the heart, in opposition to all outward and earthly treasures. It is a treasure affording continual expenses, not exhausted but increased by expenses ; wherein it exceeds all treasures in the world. By the same propriety of speech, sin is called a treasure too ; but it is an evil treasure, as our SAVIOUR speaks in that same place. Do you not see what a stock of wickedness sinful men have within themselves, which, although they have been spending it ever since they were born, is not impaired, nay, is much augmented thereby ? And shall not the Second ADAM bestow something as permanent upon his offspring, as the First ADAM conveyed to his posterity ? Though men have something without, to guide them in the way of life, yet it is some living principle within them, that constitutes them living men.

The Law was an external rule or dispensation, which could not give life, though it showed the way to it ; but the Gospel, in the most proper notion of it, seems to be an

internal impression from God, a living principle, whereby the soul is enabled to express a real conformity to God himself. If we consider the Gospel, merely in an historical and literary point of view, it is as weak and impotent as the Law was ; and men may be as formal in the profession of this, as they were of that, which we may see by daily sad experience. But if we consider the Gospel as an efflux of life and power from God himself upon the soul, producing life wherever it comes, then we have a clear distinction between the Law and the Gospel ; to which the Apostle seems to refer when he calls the Corinthians “the epistle of CHRIST, written not with ink, but with the SPIRIT of the living God ; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.” (2 Cor. iii. 3.) According to this notion of the Law and Gospel, I think we may, with a learned man of our own, come to a good understanding of that tormented text, (*Jer.* xxxi. 33,) quoted by the Apostle, (*Heb.* x. 16,) “This is the covenant that I will make, I will put my laws into their hearts.” The Gospel does not so much consist in words as in virtue ; a divine principle of religion in the soul, is the best gospel. Thus ABRAHAM and MOSES, under the Law, were truly evangelical ; and, on the other hand, all carnal Christians, who converse with the Gospel only as an outward thing, are as truly legal, and as far short of the righteousness of God, as ever any of the Jews were.

Thus we see that religion is a principle in the souls of good men : it “shall be in him a well of water.”

We shall here take notice of the difference between the true and all counterfeit religions. Religion is that pearl of great price which few men are possessed of, though all men pretend to it ; saying, like the LAODICEANS, they are rich, and need nothing, when indeed they are poor, and have nothing. This, then, shall be the test, by which, at present, we will try the counterfeit pearls. True religion is an inward nature, an inward and abiding principle in the minds of good men, “a well of water.”

1. Then we must exclude all things that are merely

CHAPTER IV.

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external ; these are not Religion itself ; for that is not something annexed to the soul, but a new nature put into it. And here we shall glance at two things.

(1.) A godly man does not find the whole of his business lying without him. Religion does not consist in external reformati^ons, though ever so many and specious. A false religion may serve to tie men's hands, and reduce their outward actions to a fair seemliness in the eyes of men ; but the main dominion and power of true religion are over the soul, and its business lies mostly in reforming and purging the heart, with all its affections and motions. It is not a battering-ram coming from without, and serving to beat down the outworks of open and visible enormities ; but enters with a secret and sweet power into the soul itself, reduces it from its rebellious temper, and persuades it willingly to surrender itself, and all that is in it. Sin may be driven away from the outward conversation, and yet retire and hide itself in the secret places of the soul, and there bear rule as perfectly by wicked loves and lusts, as ever it did by profane and notorious practices. A man's hands may be tied, by some external cords put upon them, from visible revenge ; and yet murders may lodge in the temple of his heart, as murderers lodged in the temple of old. Men's tongues may be restrained from the sin of speaking fair words concerning themselves, and shame may chastise them out of proud boastings ; when, in the mean time, they swell in self-conceit, and are not afraid to bear an unchaste and sinful love towards their own perfections, and adore an image of self, set up in their hearts. Neither does religion consist in external performances, though ever so many, and seemingly spiritual. Many professors of Christianity, I doubt, sink all their religion into a constant course of duties, being mere strangers to the life, and strength, and sweetness of true religion. Those things are needful, and useful, and helpful, yea, and honourable, because they have a relation to God ; but they are apt to become snares and idols to superstitious minds, who imagine

that God is in some way gratified by these ; and thus they take up their rest in them. That religion, which only varnishes and beautifies the outside, which leads the tongue to prayer and conversation, which instructs and extends the hands to diligence and almsdeeds, which awes the conduct into some external righteousness or devotion, is here excluded, as also by the Apostle. (1 *Cor.* xiii.) Much less can that pass for religion, that spends itself about forms, and opinions, and parties. The religion that runs upon modes, and turns upon interest, is a poor narrow thing, and may easily view itself at once, altogether from first to last. Men may be as far from the kingdom of heaven in their more spiritual forms, and orthodox opinions, as they were in those more carnal and erroneous, if they take up their rest in them : neither is it the pursuit of any interest, but the grand interest of their soul, that will constitute them religious.

(2.) A godly man, in his more inward and spiritual acts, has not his motive without him : for a man may be somewhat more inward in his motions, and yet as outward in his motives as the former. Religious acts are not originally caused by weights hung upon the soul, either by God or men, neither by the worldly blessings which God gives, nor by the heavy afflictions which he sends. The wings by which the godly soul flies out towards God, are not fastened to him by wax, as the poets feign ICARUS's to have been ; but they grow out of himself, as the wings of an eagle which flies towards heaven. On the other hand, a soul may be pressed down under the weight of God's judgments, which has no mind to stoop, no self-denying or self-debasing disposition in it. Thus you may see JEHU flying upon the wings of ambition and revenge, borne up by successes in his government ; and his predecessor AHAB bowing down mournfully under a heavy sentence. The laws, and penalties, and encouragements, and observations of men, sometimes put a weight upon the soul too ; but they beget a mere sluggish,

uneven, and unkindly motion in it. You may expect that under this head I should say something of heaven and hell ; and so I may, for they belong to this place. If you take heaven properly, for a full and glorious union with GOD, and hell for an eternal separation from the Divinity ; and suppose that the soul have well imbibed the love of GOD, and the fear of living without him, then indeed these are pure and religious principles ; but if we view them as things merely external, they are no higher motives than the carnal JEWS had. A soul is not carried to heaven, as a body is carried to the grave, upon men's shoulders ; it is not carried to GOD in a chariot, as a man is carried to see his friend. The holy fire of ardent love, wherein the soul of ELIJAH had been long carried up towards GOD, was more excellent than the fiery chariot by which his body and soul were transformed together. Religion is a spring of motion which GOD has put into the soul itself.

And as all things that are external, whether actions or motives, are excluded in this examination ; so neither,

2. Must we allow of every thing that is internal, to be religion. And therefore,

(1.) It is not a fit, a start, a sudden passion of the mind, caused by the power and strength of some present conviction in the soul, which, in a hot mood, will rush out after GOD in all haste. This may fitly be compared to the rash motion of the host of ISRAEL, who, being chidden for their slothfulness over night, rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, " Lo, we be here, and will go up into the place which the LORD hath promised, for we have sinned." And indeed it fares with these men often, as it did with those, both as to the undertaking, and as to the success ; their motion is as sinful as their station ; and their success is answerable, they are driven back and discomfited. Nay, though this passion might arise so high as ecstasy or rapture, yet it deserves not the name of religion : " for religion is,"

as some one elegantly says, “like the natural heat that is radicated in the hearts of living creatures, which has the dominion of the whole body, and sends forth warm blood, and spirits, and vital nourishment, into every part and member; it regulates and orders the motions of it in a due and even manner.” But these ecstasical souls, though they may blaze like a comet, and swell like a land-flood, and shoot forth fresh and high for a season, are soon extinguished, emptied, and dried up, because they have no principle, no stock to spend, no root in themselves. These men’s motions and actions are no more like religion, than a morning-dew, which soon passes away, is like a well or fountain of water.

(2.) If religion be a principle, a new nature in the soul, then it is not a mere mechanism, a piece of art. Art imitates nature; and there is nothing more common, I fear, than for religion itself to go into an art. All the external acts and shootings forth of religion, may be imitated by art, and acted over by a mimical Pharisee, who finds nothing at all of its gentle and mighty heat, its divine and noble life, in his own soul. Nay, it is possible, and I wish it may not be common, for men that are somewhat convinced, enlightened, and affected, to imitate the very power and spirit of religion, and to deceive themselves too, as if they possessed some true living principle; and herein they exceed the most exquisite painters. Men, hearing such glorious things spoken of heaven, may wish themselves there, being mightily taken with a conceit of the place. But how shall they come at it? Why, they have seen in books, and heard in discourses, of certain signs of grace, and evidences of salvation; and now they set their fancies at work, to find or make some such things in themselves: and these look like a handsome platform of religion, which they presently view, and fall in love with, and think they even taste of the powers of the world to come, when indeed it is nothing but self-sufficiency on which they feed.

Now, you may know this artificial religion by this ; these men can vary it, alter it, enlarge it, straiten it, and new-mould it at pleasure, according to what they see in others, or according to what themselves like best ; one while acting over the joy and confidence of some Christians, anon the humiliation and brokenness of others. But this fanciful religion is of a flitting and vanishing nature : whereas true Christians are gently, yet powerfully, moved by the natural force of true goodness, and the beauty of God, and move on steadily in their way to him. The spirit of regeneration in believers, spreads itself upon the understanding, and sweetly derives itself through the will and affections, which makes true religion to be a consistent and thriving principle in the soul, as not being acted upon the stage of imagination, but upon the highest powers of the soul.

By this same nature of true religion you may examine all those counterfeit religions, which spring from a natural belief of a Deity, from mere convictions, from low and earthly apprehensions of heaven, from learning, and the precepts of men, which are seated in the fancy, and swim in the brain ; whose effect is but to gild the outward man, or, at best, but to move the soul by an external force, in an inconstant and transient manner. In a word, all these pretenders to religion may seem to have Water, but they have no Well ; as there are others, deep men, principled indeed with learning, policy, and ingenuity, but not with true goodness, whom the Apostle calls “ wells,” but “ without water.” (2 *Pet.* ii. 17.) But the truly godly, and God-like soul hath in itself a principle of pure religion : “ The water that I shall give him, shall be a well of water, springing up into eternal life.”

CHAP. III.

Containing the first Property mentioned of true religion,— the freeness and unconstrainedness of it : this discovered in several outward acts of the soul. This freedom considered as to its Author ; in which is discussed how far the command of GOD may be said to actuate a godly soul. Secondly, As to its Objects. Two concessions : 1. That some things without the soul may be said to be motives : 2. That there is a constraint lying upon the godly soul ; which yet takes not away its freedom. An inquiry into forced devotion ; and first into the causes ; secondly, into the properties of it.

I PROCEED NOW, from the Nature of religion, to speak of those Properties of it, which are couched under this phrase, “ springing up into everlasting life.”

The first property of it, couched under this phrase, is, that it is free and unconstrained. Religion is a principle, and it flows and acts freely in the soul, after the manner of a fountain ; it makes the people a willing people, and the soul, in whom it is seated, to become a free-will offering unto GOD. ALEXANDER the Great subdued the world with force of arms, and made men rather his servants, than his lovers and friends : but the great GOD obtains an amicable conquest over the hearts of men, and overpowers them in such a manner, that they love to be his servants, and willingly and readily obey him, without dissimulation or constraint, without mercenariness or morosity ; in which they are unlike the subjects of the kingdoms of this world, who are kept in their duties by fear and force, not from kindness and benevolence.

Now, this willingness or freeness of godly souls may be explained and confirmed by the consideration both of their outward and inward acts.

1. As to outward acts of service which the true Christian performs, he is freely carried out towards them,

without any constraint. If he keep himself from the evils of the place, and age, and company, wherein he lives, it is not by a restraint which is upon him merely from without him, but by a principle of holy temperance planted in his soul: it is the seed of GOD abiding in him which preserves him from the commission of sin. He is not kept back from sin as a horse by a bridle, but by an inward change made in his nature.

On the other hand, if he employ himself in any external acts of moral or instituted duty, he does it freely, not as of necessity, or by constraint.—If you speak of acts of charity, the godly man gives from a principle of love to GOD, and kindness to his brother; cheerfully, not grudgingly, or of necessity. Charity may be wrung out of a miser, but it proceeds from the liberal soul as a stream from its fountain.—If you speak of righteousness or temperance, he is not over-ruled by power, or compelled by laws, but actuated by the power of that law which is engraven upon his mind.—If you speak of acts of worship, whether moral or instituted, in all these he is also free, as to any constraint. Prayer is not his task, or a piece of penance, but it is the natural cry of the new-born soul; neither does he take it up as a piece of policy, to bribe GOD's justice, or engage men's charity, to purchase favour with GOD, or man, or his own clamorous conscience; but he prays because he wants, and loves, and believes: he wants the fuller presence of that GOD whom he loves; he loves the presence which he wants; he believes that he that loves him will not suffer him to want any good thing that he prays for. And therefore he does not limit himself penuriously to a morning and evening sacrifice and solemnity, as unto certain rent-seasons, wherein to pay an homage of dry devotion; but his loving and longing soul, disdainng to be confined within canonical hours, is frequently soaring in heavenly raptures, and sallying forth in holy ejaculations. He is not content with some weak essays towards heaven, in set and formal prayer, once or twice a day, but labours to be all the day

long receiving, by the mouth of faith, those divine influences, and streams of grace, which he begged in the morning by the tongue of prayer; which has made me sometimes think it a proper speech to say, “the faith of prayer,” as well as “the prayer of faith;” for believing, or hanging upon divine grace, does really drink in what prayer asks for, and is, in effect, a powerful kind of praying in silence: by believing we pray, as well as in praying we believe.—A truly godly man has not his hands tied up merely by the force of a national law; no, nor yet by the authority of the Fourth Commandment, to keep one in seven a day of rest. As he is not content with mere resting upon the sabbath, knowing that neither working, nor ceasing from work, does of itself commend a soul to God, but presses after intimacy with God in the duties of his worship; so neither can he be content with one sabbath in a week, nor think himself absolved from holy and heavenly meditations on any day in the week, but labours to make every day a sabbath, as to the keeping of his heart in a holy frame, and to find every day to be a sabbath, as to the communications of God to his soul. Though the necessities of his body will not allow him, it may be, (though indeed God hath granted this to some men,) to keep every day as a sabbath of rest; yet the necessities of his soul call upon him to make every day, as far as may be, a sabbath of communion with the blessed God.—If you speak of fasting, he keeps not fasts merely by virtue of a civil, no, nor a divine institution; but from a principle of godly sorrow afflicts his soul for sin, and endeavours more and more to be emptied of himself.—If you speak of thanksgiving, he does not give thanks by laws and ordinances; but having in himself a law of thankfulness, and an ordinance of love, engraven upon, and deeply radicated in his soul, delights to live to God, and to make his heart and life a living descant upon the goodness and love of God; which is the most divine way of thank-offering; it is the hallelujah which the Angels sing continually.

In a word, wherever GOD hath a tongue to command, true godliness will find a hand to perform; whatever yoke CHRIST JESUS shall put upon the soul, religion will enable it to bear, yea, and to count it easy too; the mouth of CHRIST hath pronounced it easy, and the SPIRIT of CHRIST makes it easy. Let the commandment be what it will, it will not be grievous. The same SPIRIT does, in some measure, dwell in every Christian, which, without measure, dwelt in CHRIST, who counted it his meat and drink to do the will of his FATHER.

2. More especially, the true Christian is free from any constraint as to the inward acts which he performs. Holy love to GOD is one principal act of the gracious soul, whereby it is carried out freely, and with an ardent love, towards the object that is infinitely lovely, and towards the enjoyment of it. I know that this springs from indigency, and is commanded by the sovereignty of the supreme good, the object which the soul contemplates; but it is properly free from any constraint. Love is an affection that cannot be extorted, as fear is; nor forced by any external or internal power. The revenues of Persia, or the treasures of Egypt, cannot exact it. Though the outward and bodily acts of religion are often compelled, yet this pure and chaste affection cannot be forced; it seems to be a kind of *Peculiar* in the soul, though under the jurisdiction of the understanding. By this property of it, it is elegantly described by the SPIRIT of GOD: (*Cant.* viii. 7:) “If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.” It cannot be bought with money, nor purchased with gifts or arts: and if any should offer to bribe it, it would give him a sharp check, in the language of PETER to SIMON, “Thy money perish with thee.” Love is no hireling, no base-born or mercenary affection, but noble, free, and generous. Neither is it low-spirited and slavish, as fear is: therefore, when it comes to full age, it will not suffer this son of the bond-woman to divide with it the inheritance, the dominions of the soul; when it comes to be

“perfect,” it “casteth out fear,” says the Apostle. (1 *John* iv. 18.) Neither indeed is it produced directly under the mere authority of any law, whether human or divine : it is not begotten by the influence even of a divine law, merely as a law, but as holy, just, and good. “The spirit of love and of power,” in opposition to “the spirit of fear,” does more influence the godly man in his pursuit of God than any law without him : this is as a wing to the soul ; whereas outward commandments are but as guides in his way ; or, at most, but as spurs in his sides.

The same I may say of holy delight in God, which is indeed the flower of love, or love grown up to its full age and stature, which has no torment in it, and consequently no force upon it. Like unto this are holy confidence, faith, and hope,—ingenuous and natural acts of the religious soul, whereby it hastens into the divine embraces, “as the eagle hasteneth to the prey,” and not by force and constraint, “as a fool to the correction of the stocks.” These are all the genuine offspring of holy religion in the soul, and they are utterly incapable of force : violence is contrary to the nature of them ; for to use the Apostle’s language, with the change of one word, “Hope that is forced, is not hope.”

Now a little farther to explain this excellent property of true religion, we may consider the Author, and the Object of it.

The Author of this free principle is God himself, who has made it a partaker of his own nature, who is a free agent ; Himself is the fountain of his own acts. The uncreated Life and Liberty hath given this privilege to the religious soul, in some sense, to have life and liberty in itself, and a dominion over its own acts. I do not know that any created being has more divinity in it than the soul of man ; nor that any thing in the soul more resembles the divine essence, than the freedom which the soul has in itself. This is something of God in the soul, and therefore may justly claim the “free SPIRIT” for its Author ; (*Psal.* li. 12 ; 2 *Cor.* iii. 17 ;) or the SON of

GOD for its origin, according to those words, (*John* viii. 36,) "If the SON shall make you free, then shall ye be free indeed."

But here it may be demanded, whether the command of GOD does not actuate the godly soul, and set it upon its holy motions? I confess indeed that the command of GOD is much considered by a godly man, and is of great weight with him, and does in some sense lay a constraint upon him; but yet I think not so much the authority of the law, as the reasonableness and goodness of it, does prevail principally with him.* The religious soul does not so much view the law under the notion of a command, as under the notion of holy, just, and good, as the Apostle speaks, and so embraces it, chooses it, and longs to be perfectly conformable to it.

I do not think it so proper to say, that a good man loves GOD, and all righteousness and holiness, and religious duties, by virtue of a command to do so, as by virtue of a new nature that GOD hath put into him, and which instructs and prompts him so to do. A religious man being reconciled to the nature of GOD, embraces all his laws by virtue of the equitableness and perfection that he sees in them; not because they are commanded, but because they are in themselves to be desired, as DAVID speaks, in *Psal.* xix. 10. In that psalm the holy man gives us a full account why he did so love and esteem the laws and commandments of GOD, viz. because they are perfect, right, pure, clean, true, sweet, and lovely, as you will find.

* Many of the observations in this Chapter require to be considered with caution. There may by possibility be some commands of GOD, the "reasonableness and goodness" of which do not very clearly appear to our limited understanding. In such cases, is our obedience *less excellent* than in cases of an opposite description? And indeed, in any case, what principle can be more characteristic of the *new nature*, for which the author so forcibly contends, than that of implicit and cheerful submission to the *will of God, because it is his will?* In this there is nothing inconsistent with the highest moral excellence. EDITOR.

To love the LORD our GOD with all our heart, and strength, and mind, is not only a duty, by virtue of that first and great commandment which requires it; but indeed the highest privilege, honour, and happiness of the soul. To this purpose may that profession of the Psalmist be applied, (*Psal.* cxix. 173,) “I have chosen the way of thy precepts;” and, (verse 30,) “I have chosen the way of truth.” Choosing is an act of judgment and understanding, and respects the quality of the thing, more than the authority of the command. DAVID did not stumble into the way of truth accidentally, by virtue of his education, or acquaintance, or the like circumstance; nor was he driven into it by the mere severity of an external law; but he chose the way of truth, as that which was indeed most eligible, pleasant, and desirable.

As for the Object of this free and generous spirit of religion, it is no other than GOD himself, ultimately, and other things, only as they are subservient to the enjoyment of Him. GOD, as the supreme good, able to fill, and, perfectly to satisfy, all the wants of the soul, and thus to make it wholly and eternally happy, is the proper object of the soul’s most free and cheerful motions. The soul views GOD as the perfect and absolute good, and GOD in CHRIST as an attainable good; and finds enough in this object to encourage it to pursue after him, and throw itself upon him. Religion fixes upon GOD, as upon its own centre, as upon its proper and adequate object; it views GOD as the infinite and absolute good, and thus is drawn to him without any external force. The godly soul is overpowered indeed, but it is only with the infinite goodness of GOD, which exercises its sovereignty over all the faculties of the soul; which overpowering is so far from straitening or confining it, that it makes it truly free and generous in its motions. Religion wings the soul, and makes it take flight freely and swiftly towards GOD and eternal life: it is of GOD; and, by a sympathy which it has with Him, it carries the soul out after Him, and into conjunction with Him. In a word,

the godly soul being loosed from self-love, driven out of all self-satisfaction, and delivered from all self-confining lusts, wills, interests, and ends, and being overcome with a sense of a higher and more excellent good, goes after that freely, centres upon it firmly, grasps after it continually, and had rather be that than what itself is, as seeing that the nature of that supreme good is infinitely more excellent and desirable than its own.

Thus have I briefly explained the freeness of this principle: I would now make some improvement of it, but that it seems needful I should here interweave a cautionary concession or two.

1. It must be granted, that some things without the soul may be motives and encouragements to the soul to quicken and strengthen it in its religious acts. Though grace be an internal principle, and most free from any constraint, yet it may be stirred up by such means as God hath appointed, as prayer, meditation, and reading.

This being premised, if you ask what I think of afflictions; I confess God does ordinarily use them as means to make good men better, and it may be, sometimes, to make bad men good: these may be as weights to hasten the soul's motions towards God, but they do not principally beget such motions. If you ask me of temporal prosperity, commonly called mercies and blessings, or of promises and rewards offered; I confess they may be as oil to the wheels, and ought to quicken and encourage to the study of true and powerful godliness: but they are not the spring of the soul's motions: they ought to be unto us as dew upon the grass, to refresh the soul; but it is the root which properly gives life and growth.

2. It may be granted, that there is a kind of constraint lying upon the soul, in its most excellent motions; according to that declaration of the Apostle, (2 *Cor.* v. 14,) "The love of CHRIST constraineth us:" and again, (1 *Cor.* ix. 16,) "Necessity is laid upon me to preach the Gospel." But yet it holds good, that grace is a most free principle, and that "where the SPIRIT of the LORD is,

there is liberty." For the constraint of which the Apostle speaks is not opposed to freedom, but to not acting; and, although the soul, so principled, cannot but act, yet it acts freely. Those things that are according to nature, though they be done necessarily, yet are they done with the greatest freedom imaginable. The water flows, and the fire burns, necessarily, yet freely. Religion is a new nature in the soul; and the religious soul, being touched with the sense, and impressed with the influences of divine goodness, fulness, and perfection, is carried indeed (in one sense) necessarily towards GOD, as its proper centre, and yet its motions are pure, free, generous. The necessity that lay upon PAUL to preach the Gospel is not to be understood of any external violence, much less of bodily necessity, by reason of which many men serve their own interests in that great function, more than the LORD JESUS; for though he preached the Gospel necessarily, yet did he preach freely and willingly, as he often professed. The godly soul cannot but love GOD as his chief good; yet he delights in this necessity, and is exceeding glad that he finds his heart framed and enlarged to love him: I say enlarged, because GOD is such an object as does not contract and straiten the soul, as all created objects do, but ennobles and enlarges it. The sinful soul, the more it lets out, and lays out, and spends itself upon the creature, the more it is straitened and contracted; and the native freedom of it is enslaved, debased, and destroyed: but grace establishes and ennobles the freedom of the soul, and restores it to its primitive perfection; so that a godly soul is never more at large, more at rest, more at liberty, than when it finds itself delivered from all self-confining creature-loves, and under the powerful constraint of infinite love and goodness.

By this we may learn what to think of the forced devotion of many pressed soldiers of CHRIST in his church militant. Though indeed the freedom of the will cannot be destroyed, yet many men's devotion may be said to be

wrung out of them, and their obedience constrained. I shall explain this briefly in two or three particulars.

Men often force themselves to some things in religion that are contrary to their nature and genius: such, for instance, as conformity to the letter of the law, and some external duties, which they force themselves to perform, as to hear, pray, give alms, or the like; in all which, the violent obedience of a pharisee may be more specious than the true and genuine obedience of a free-born disciple of JESUS CHRIST.

There seem to be three things that especially force a kind of devotion, and show of religion, viz. consciousness of guilt, self-love, and false apprehensions of God. There is in all men a consciousness of guilt, arising from that imperfect and glimmering light which they have of God, and of their duty towards him; which, though it be in some men more quick and stinging, in others more remiss and languid, yet, I think, is not utterly extinguished, even in the worst men, but sometimes begets sadness in the midst of their merriments, and disturbs their most secure rest. This foundation of hell is laid in the bowels of sin itself, as a preface to eternal horror. Now, although some more profligate wretches furiously break through these briars, yet others are so caught in them, that they cannot escape these pains and fears, except they make a composition, and enter into terms, to live more honestly, or, at least, less scandalously. In this undertaking they are carried on, in the next place, by a natural desire of self-preservation: for the worst of men hath so much reason left, that he could wish that himself were happy. Conscience having discovered the certain reward of sin, self-love will easily prompt men to do something or other to escape it. But what shall they do? Why, religion is the only expedient that can be found out. But how come they to run into so great a mistake about religion? Why, their false and gross apprehensions of God drive them from him, in the way

of superstition and hypocrisy, instead of leading them in the way of sincere love and self-resignation to him. Thus we see how a man, void of the life and spirit of religion, forces himself to do God a kind of worship, and pay him a kind of homage.

Sometimes men may be said, in a certain sense, to be forced by other men to put on a dress of religion. And this constraint men may lay upon men by their tongues, hands, and eyes:—by their tongues, in the business of education, by an ardent inculcation of things divine and heavenly; and thus an unjust man, like the unjust judge in the gospel, though he fear not God, yet may be overcome by the importunity of his father, friend, minister, tutor, to do some righteous acts:—by their hands; that is, either by enacting or executing penal laws upon them, or by the example which they set before them:—by their eyes; that is, by continually observing their behaviour; for when many eyes are upon men, they must do something to satisfy expectation, and purchase reputation. It may be said, that God sometimes lays an external force upon men; as particularly by his severe judgments, or threatenings of judgments, awakening them, humbling them, and constraining them to some kind of religion: for God himself, acting upon men only from without them, is far from producing a living principle of free religion in the soul.

Now, the better to discern this forced and violent religion, I will briefly describe it by its properties.

I. This forced religion is, for the most part, dry and spiritless. I know, indeed, that fancy may be screwed up to a high pitch, so as to raise the mind into a kind of rapture. A mere artificial and counterfeit Christian may be so strongly actuated by imagination, that he may seem to himself to be fuller of God than the sober and constant soul. But, in general, this forced devotion is empty and dry, void of zeal and warmth, and drives on heavily in pursuit of the God of *Israel*, as PHARAOH did in pursuit of the *Israel* of God, when his chariot-wheels were taken

off. God's drawing the soul from within, as a principle, does indeed cause that soul to run after him; (*Cant. i. 4*;) but the motion of those things that are drawn by external force is commonly heavy, slow, and languid.

2. This forced religion is penurious and needy. Something the slavish-spirited Christian must do, to appease an angry God, or to allay a storming conscience; but it shall be as little as may be. He is ready to grudge God so much of his time and strength, and to find fault that sabbaths come so frequently, and last so long, and that duties are to be performed so often. So he is described by the Prophet: (*Amos viii. 51*;) "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?" But yet I will not deny, but that this kind of religion may be liberal and expensive too, in the branches of external duties, as is the manner of many trees that bear no fruit. Therefore these are not the things by which you must take measure, and make estimate of your religion. But in the great things of the Law, in the grand duties of mortification, self-denial, and resignation; here this forced religion is always very stingy and penurious. In the duties that nearly touch their beloved lusts, they will be as strict with God as may be, and will break with him for a small matter: God must have no more than his due, as they blasphemously phrase it in their hearts; saying, with the slothful servant in the Gospel, "Lo, there thou hast that is thine." They will not part with all for CHRIST; they will not give up themselves entirely unto God. "The LORD pardon me in this one thing," cries NAAMAN; so they, in this or that, beg of God to have them excused.

The slavish-spirited Christian is never more shrunk up within himself, than when he is to converse with God: but the godly soul is never more free, enlarged, and glad, than when it doth most intimately and familiarly converse with God. The man who is free as to liberty, is free also as to liberality and expenses; and that not only in external, but internal and spiritual obedience, and com-

pliance with the will of God: he gives himself wholly up to God, knows no interest of his own, keeps no reserve for himself, or for the creature.

3. This forced religion is uneven, as depending upon inconstant causes. As land-floods, that have no spring within themselves, vary their motions, are swift and slow, high and low, according as they are supplied with rain; even so these men's motions in religion, depending upon fancy for the most part, than which nothing is more fickle and flitting, have no constancy nor consistency in them.

CHAP. IV.

The active and vigorous nature of true religion proved by many scriptural phrases: and more particularly explained in three things; 1. In the soul's continual care and study to be good; 2. In its care to do good; 3. In its powerful and incessant longings after the fullest enjoyment of God.

I COME NOW to the second property of true religion, which is to be found in this phrase, "springing up;" wherein the Activity and Vigour of it is described. Religion, though it be compared to water, yet is no standing pool, but "a well of water springing up." It is no lazy and languid thing, but full of life and power: so I find it every where described in Scripture, by things that are most active, lively, vigorous, spreading, powerful; and sometimes even by motion itself. As sin is, in Scripture, described by death and darkness, which are a cessation and privation of life, and light, and motion; so religion is described by life, which is active and vigorous; by an angelical life, which is spiritual and powerful; yea, by a divine life, (*Eph. iv. 18,*) which is, as I may say, most lively and vivacious. "CHRIST liveth in me," and the production of this new nature in the soul is called a

“quickenings,” (*Eph.* ii. 1,) and the reception of it a “passing from death unto life.” (*John* v. 24.) Again, as sin and wickedness are described by flesh, which is sluggish and inactive, so this holy principle in the soul is called spirit, yea, “the Spirit of Power,” (*2 Tim.* i. 7,) and “the Spirit of Life;” (*Rom.* viii. 2;) “The law of the Spirit of Life in CHRIST JESUS hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” How can the power and activity of any principle be more commended, than by saying it is life, and “the Spirit of Life,” and “the law of the Spirit of Life” in the soul? This has made me sometimes apply those words of the Prophet, as a description of every godly soul, (*Mic.* iii. 8,) “I am full of power and might by the SPIRIT of the LORD.”

Yea, further, the Apostle seems to describe this principle in the soul by activity or motion itself, (*Phil.* iii. 12—14,) where he gives this excellent character of himself, and this lively description of his disposition, as if it were nothing else but activity and fervour; “I follow after, if that I may apprehend; I forget those things that are behind, and reach forth unto those things that are before; I press towards the mark,” &c.

It were too much to comment upon those phrases of like importance, *labouring, seeking, striving, fighting, running, wrestling, panting, longing, hungering, thirsting, watching,* and many others, which the HOLY GHOST makes use of, in various parts of the Scriptures, to express the active, industrious, vigorous, and powerful nature of this divine principle. The streams of divine grace, which flow from the throne of GOD into the souls of men, do not cleanse them, and so pass away like some violent land-flood, that washes the fields and meadows, and then leaves them to contract as much filth as ever; but the same become “a well of water,” continually springing up, boiling and bubbling, and working in the soul, and sending out “rivers of living water.”

But, more particularly to unfold the active nature of this divine principle, we shall consider it in these three

particulars, viz. as it is still conforming to God, acting for him, and longing after him.

1. The active nature of true religion planted by God in the soul, appears and shows itself in a continued care and study *to be good*;—to conform more and more to the nature of the blessed God, the glorious pattern of all perfection. The nature of God being absolutely perfect, is the only rule of perfection to the creature. If we speak of Goodness, our Saviour tells us, that God alone is good; of Wisdom, the apostle tells us, that God is only wise; of Power, He is omnipotent; of Mercy and Kindness, He is Love itself. Men are only good by way of participation from God, and in a way of assimilation to him; so that, though good men may be imitated and followed, yet it must be with this limitation, as far as they are “followers of God:” the great Apostle durst not press his example any further, (1 Cor. xi. 1,) “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of CHRIST.” But the nature of God, being absolutely perfect, is to be eyed and imitated singly, entirely, universally, in all things wherein the creature is capable of following him, and becoming like unto him. So Christians are required to look up unto the Father of Lights, the fountain of all perfections, and to take from him the pattern of their dispositions and conversations, to eye him continually, and to derive an image of him, not into their eye, as we do by sensible objects, but into their souls, to polish and frame them into the most clear and lively resemblances of him; that is, in the language of the Scripture, to be “perfect, as their heavenly Father is perfect,” to be “holy as God is holy.” And thus the genuine children of God are described by the HOLY GHOST; (*Eph. v. 1*;) they are “followers of God.” This is the shortest, but the surest and clearest mark that can be given of a good man, “a follower of God.” They are not owned for the children of God, who are merely created by him, nor they who have only a notional knowledge of him, or exhibit some external worship to him, but they that

imitate him. The true children of ABRAHAM were not those that were descended from him, but they that did the works of ABRAHAM. Even so are they only the offspring of heaven, the true children of the living God, who are followers of him; "Be ye followers of God, as dear children." A godly soul, having its eyes opened to behold the infinite beauty, purity, and perfection, of that good God, whose nature is the very fountain, and must needs then be the rule of all goodness, presently comes to undervalue all created excellencies, both in itself, and all the world besides, as to any satisfaction that is to be had in them, or any perfection that can be acquired by them, and cannot endure to take up with any lower good, or to live by any lower rule, than God himself. A godly man, having the unclean and rebellious spirit cast out, and being once reconciled to the nature of God, is daily labouring to be more intimately united thereunto, and to be all that which God is, as far as he is capable.

Religion is a participation of life from him, who is life itself, and so must needs be an active principle spreading itself in the soul, and causing the soul to spread itself in God; and therefore the kingdom of heaven, which, in many places of the Gospel, I take to be nothing else but this divine principle in the soul, which is both the truest heaven and most properly a kingdom, (for thereby God doth most powerfully reign and exercise his sovereignty, and most excellently display his glory in the world,) is compared to "seed sown in good ground," which springs up into a blade, and brings forth fruit; to mustard-seed, which spreads itself, and grows great, so that the birds of the air may lodge in the branches thereof; to leaven, spreading itself through the whole quantity of meal, and leavening the whole and all the parts of it.

By a like similitude, the path of the just is compared to a shining light, whose lustre increaseth continually, "shining more and more unto the perfect day;" which continual growing up of the holy soul into God, is excellently described by the Apostle, in an elegant metaphor,

(2 Cor. iii. 18,) “ We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the LORD, are changed into the same image from glory to glory ;” that is, from one resemblance of divine glory to another. The gracious soul, not being content with its present attainments, and having in its eye a perfect and absolute good, forgets that which is behind, and labours, prays, strives, and studies, to get the perfections of GOD more clearly copied out upon itself, and itself, as much as may be, swallowed up in the divinity : it covets earnestly these best things, to be perfected in grace and holiness, to have divine characters more fair and legible, divine impressions more deep and lively, divine life more strong and powerful, and the communicable image of the blessed GOD spread quite over it, and through it. A godly man is not content to receive of CHRIST’s fulness, but labours to be filled with all the fulness of GOD ; he rejoices that he has received of CHRIST grace for grace, as a child hath limb for limb with his father ; but this his joy is not fulfilled, except he find himself adding daily some cubits to his infant stature ; nor indeed is he then satisfied, until he come to the measure of the stature of his LORD, and be grown up into him in all things, who is the Head. He delights and glories in GOD, beholding his graces growing in his soul ; but that does not satisfy him, except he may see them flowing out also. He is neither barren nor unfruitful, as the Apostle PETER speaks ; but this is not enough ; he desires to be fat and fruitful also, as a watered garden, even as the garden of GOD. The spirit lusts against the flesh, and struggles with it in the soul, as JACOB did with ESAU, until he had cast him out : the seed of GOD wars continually against the seed of the Serpent, raging and restless like JEHU, shooting, and stabbing, and strangling all he meets with, till none at all remain of the family of that AHAB, who had formerly been his master. Oh ! how does the devout soul long to have CHRIST’s victory carried on in itself, to have CHRIST going on in him, conquering and to conquer, till at length the very last enemy be subdued, that the Prince of Peace

may ride triumphantly through all the regions of his heart and life, and not so much as a dog move his tongue against him! This holy principle which is of GOD in the soul, is actually industrious too; it does not fold the arms together, and hide its hand in its bosom, faintly wishing to obtain a final conquest over its enemies, but advances itself with a noble boldness against lusts and passions, even as the sun glories against the darkness of the night, until it have chased it all away.

The godly soul puts itself under the banner of CHRIST, fights under the conduct of the Angel of GOD's presence, and so marches up undauntedly against the children of ANAK, those earthly loves, and sensual affections, which are indeed taller and stronger than all other enemies that encounter it in this wilderness-state: and the gracious GOD is not wanting to such endeavours; he, "remembering his promise, helpeth his servants," even that promise, (*Isa.* xl. 31,) that "they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength." A true Israelite, impregnated with this noble principle, is not like those slothful Israelites, who were content with what they had got of the holy land, and either could not, or cared not to enlarge their border; but he makes war upon the remainder of the Canaanites, and is never at rest till he have, with SARAH, cast out the bond-woman and her son too. You may see an emblem of such a soul in MOSES holding up his hands all the day long, till AMALEK was quite discomfited. As often as the floods of temptation, springing from the Devil, the world, or the flesh, offer to come in upon him, he opposes them in the strength of CHRIST: "the SPIRIT of the LORD lifteth up a standard against them;" so that he is not carried down by them, or, at least, not overwhelmed with them. The godly soul continually studies conformity to GOD, because He is the perfect and absolute good; and the soul reckons that its happiness consists only in being like unto Him,—in partaking of a divine nature. Here I might also take occasion to speak of three things, which I will but briefly name.

(1.) A godly man reckons with himself, that conformity

to the image and nature of GOD is the most proper way of conversing with GOD in this world. The great, and indeed only employment of an immortal soul, is to converse with its CREATOR ; for this end it was made. Now, to partake of a divine nature, to be endowed with a god-like disposition, is most properly to converse with GOD ; this is a real, powerful, practical, and feeling converse with him, infinitely to be preferred before all notions, professions, performances, or speculations.

(2.) A godly man reckons that the image of GOD is the glory and ornament of the soul ; it is the lustre, and brightness, and beauty of the soul, as the soul is of the body. Holiness is not only the duty, but the highest honour and dignity of which any created nature is capable ; and therefore the soul, which has its senses exercised to discern good and evil, pursues after it, as after its full and proper perfection.

(3.) A godly man reckons, that conformity to the divine image, or participation of the divine nature, is the surest evidence of divine love, which is a matter of so great inquiry in the world. By growing up daily in CHRIST JESUS, we are infallibly assured of our implantation into him. The SPIRIT of GOD descending upon the soul in the impressions of meekness, kindness, uprightness, a dove-like disposition, is a better and more desirable evidence of our sonship, and GOD'S favour towards us, than if we had the SPIRIT descending upon our heads in a dove-like shape, as it did upon our blessed SAVIOUR. For these reasons, the Christian, above all things, labours to become god-like, to be formed more and more into a resemblance of the supreme good, and to imbibe divine perfections into the very inmost of his soul.

2. The active nature of true religion manifests itself in a good man's continual care and study *to do good*, to serve the interest of the holy and blessed GOD in the world. A good man being constrained by a view of the infinite goodness of GOD, and the great end of his life, cannot think it worth while to spend himself for any

inferior good, or bestow his time and strength for any lower end; and therefore, as it is the main happiness of his life to enjoy God, so he makes it the main business of his life to serve Him, to be acting for Him, to lay out himself for Him, and to display and propagate His glory in the world. And, as he is transported with the apprehensions of the supreme goodness, which infinitely deserves all that he can do for Him, so does he really partake of the active and communicative nature of that blessed Being, and himself becomes active and communicative too. A godly soul sluggish and inactive, is as if one should say, a godly soul altogether unlike to God;—a pure contradiction. A good man, whether he pray, or preach, or read, or celebrate sabbaths, or administer private reproof or instruction,—or indeed plough or sow, eat or drink,—all this while lives not to himself, but serves a higher interest than that of the flesh, and a higher good than any created being. A truly christian activity not only appears in those things which we call religious performances; but in the whole frame of the heart contriving, and the conversation expressing and unfolding, the glory of God. A holy, serious, heavenly, humble, sober, righteous, and self-denying course of life, does most excellently express the divine glory, by imitating the nature of God, and most effectually calls all men to the imitation of it: so our SAVIOUR has plainly stated the case, (*John xv. 8,*) “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit:” by which fruits are not to be understood only preaching, praying, and religious conference, which are indeed high and excellent duties; but also righteousness, temperance, and self-denial, which are pure reflections of the divine image, and a real glorifying of God’s name and perfections. A Christian cannot be content to be happy alone, and to be still drawing down heaven into his own soul; but he endeavours also, both by prayer, counsel, and holy example, to draw up the souls of other men heavenward. This God witnesses of ABRAHAM, (*Gen. xviii. 19;*) “I know him, that he will command

his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD :” and this MOSES excellently witnesses of himself in that holy rapture of his, (*Num. xi. 29.*) “ Would GOD that all the LORD’s people were Prophets, and that the LORD would put his SPIRIT upon them !” By such examples as these a good man desires to live ; yea, by higher precedents than those of either ABRAHAM or MOSES, even by the example of the FATHER and of the SON. He admires and strives to imitate that character which is given of GOD himself, (*Psal. cxix. 68.*) “ Thou art good, and doest good ;” and that which is given of CHRIST JESUS, the LORD of life, (*Acts x. 38.*) who “ went about doing good,” and who also witnessed elsewhere concerning himself, that he came not into the world to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent him. O how happy would the godly soul count itself, if it could but live and converse in the world at the same rate, and with the same devout, fervent, exalted spirit, as CHRIST JESUS did, whose meat and drink it was, still to be doing the will, and advancing the glory, of his FATHER ! But, alas ! the poor soul finds it cannot rise so nimbly, run so swiftly, nor serve the infinite and glorious GOD so cheerfully and liberally, as it would, and therefore sighs within itself, and wishes that it might escape ; but finding a time appointed, which it must be content to live out, it looks up, and is ready to envy the Angels of GOD, who are always upon GOD’s errands, and almost regrets that itself is not a ministering spirit, serving the pure and perfect will of the Supreme Good without ceasing.

The godly soul, under these powerful apprehensions of the nature of GOD, the example of CHRIST, and the honourable office of the holy Angels, is ready to cry out, “ O that I were that to my GOD, which my body, my eyes, hands, and feet, are to me ! for I say to one of these, Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Do this, and he doeth it.” In a word, a good man being acquainted feelingly with the highest good, and considering diligently the great end of his

coming into the world, and his short time of being in it, serves the eternal and blessed God, lives upon eternal designs, and by consecrating all his actions unto God, gives a kind of an immortality to them, which are in themselves flitting and transient. He counts it a reproach to any man, to do any thing insignificantly, much more to live impertinently; and he reckons all things that have not a tendency to the highest good, and a subserviency to the great end, to be impertinencies, yea and absurdities, in an immortal soul, which should continually be “springing up into everlasting life.”

3. The active and vigorous nature of true religion manifests itself in those powerful and incessant *longings after God*, with which it fills that soul in which it is planted. The good man, though he be formed into some likeness to God, yet desires to be more like him; though he be somewhat serviceable to him, yet he desires to be more instrumental to his will; and though he be good, yet he desires to be better. These holy hungerings after God are one of the best signs of spiritual health, and of a true Christian: for, in this low state, we are better acquainted with lovings and languishings, than with fruition; and the best enjoyment we have of God is but scanty and short. Love is certainly a high and noble affection; but, alas! our love, whilst we are here in the body, is in its nonage, in its weak and sickly state, if compared to what it will be, when it shall be grown up in glory. But this languishing affection is a certain symptom of a healthful constitution; or, as the Apostle calls it, of “the Spirit of a sound mind.” Godly souls are thirsty souls, always gasping after the living springs of divine grace, even as the parched desert thirsteth for the dew of heaven. ELIJAH passing by ELISHA as he was at plough, and catching him with his mantle, is but a scanty resemblance of the blessed God passing by a carnal mind, and wrapping it in the mantle of his love, and thereby causing it to run, yea, to fly swiftly after him. If divine grace do but once touch the soul, the soul presently sticks to it, as the needle to the

loadstone. They who heard CHRIST JESUS chiding the winds and the waves, cried out, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him:" but if one had been present when he called JAMES and JOHN from their nets, MATTHEW from the custom-house, and ZACCHEUS from the tree, and by calling made them willing to come, he would have cried out, surely, What manner of GOD is this! that, by his bare word, makes poor men leave their trades and livelihood, and rich men their gainful exactions, usuries, and oppressions, to follow him. What a mighty virtue is there in the ointment of CHRIST'S name, that as soon as it is poured out, the virgins love him? (*Cant. i. 3.*) When MICAH was in pursuit of his gods, he cried out, so that they asked him what ailed him; and will ye wonder that a holy soul, in pursuit of the holy GOD, should be in earnest; that he should run, and cry as he runs? GOD, breathing into the soul, makes the soul breathe after him, and thrust away all distracting companions, occupations, and concerns, saying to her idols, with EPHRAIM, "Get ye hence." The soul thus inspired is impatient of every thing that would either stop or slacken its motions after GOD. The godly man desires still to be doing something for GOD; but if he cannot spend his life for GOD as he desires, yet he will be spending his soul upon him: though he cannot perpetually abide upon the knee of prayer, yet he would be continually upon the wing of faith and love: when his tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth, that he cannot speak for GOD, yet his soul shall cleave unto him, and complain because it can speak no longer. For faith and love are uniting graces, and long to make the soul as much one with their object, as it is possible for the creature to be with its Creator. Religion puts a restless appetite into the soul after a higher good, and makes it throw itself into his arms, and wind itself into his embraces, longing to be in more intimate union with him, or rather entirely wrapt up in him: it is an insatiable principle, like the daughter of the horse-leech, crying continually, "Give,

give:" What the Prophet speaks rhetorically of hell, (*Isa. v. 14,*) is also true concerning the offspring of heaven; "it enlargeth itself, and openeth its mouth without measure." The spirit of true godliness seems to be altogether such, that it cannot rest in any measure of grace; but ardently longs to receive more plentiful communications of love, more deep and legible impressions of grace, more clear and ampler experiences of divine assistance, more sensible evidences of divine favour, more powerful and ravishing illapses of divine consolation. Such is the spirit of true godliness, that the weakest that is endued with it, longs to be as DAVID, and the DAVIDS to be as GOD, as the Angel of the LORD, according to that promise, *Zech. xii. 8.* The godly soul that is in his right senses, under the powerful apprehensions of the loveliness of GOD, and the beauty of holiness, cannot be content to live by any lower instance than that of DAVID, whose soul even broke for the longing it had unto the LORD; (*Psal. cxix. 20;*) or that of the spouse who was even "sick of love." (*Cant. ii. 5.*) You have read of the mother of SISERA, looking out at the window, waiting for his coming, and crying through the lattice, "Why is his chariot so long in coming; why tarry the wheels of his chariot?" But this is not to be compared to the earnest expectation of the creature, waiting for the manifestation of GOD.

You have read of the ISRAELITES marching up towards the promised land, and murmuring that they were held so long in the wilderness: but the true ISRAELITISH soul makes more haste, with less discontent, marches as under the conduct of the Angel of GOD's presence, and longs to arrive at its rest. But, alas! it is held in the wilderness too; and therefore cannot be fully quiet, but sends forth spies to view the land, the scouts of faith and hope, like CALEB and JOSHUA, those men of another spirit; and these go and walk through the holy land, and return home to the soul, and come back, not as NOAH's dove with an olive-leaf in her mouth; but with some clusters in their

hands; they bring the soul a taste of the good things of the kingdom, of the glories of her eternal state: yea, the soul itself marches up to possess the land, and goes out to meet the **LORD**,—to seek him whom her soul loveth. Religion is a sacred fire, kept burning in the temple of the soul continually, which being once kindled from heaven, burns up heaven-wards, as the nature of fire is. In this chariot of fire it is that the soul is continually carried out towards **GOD**; and when it finds itself firmly seated and swiftly carried herein, it no longer envies the translation of **ELIJAH**. The **SPIRIT** of sanctification is in the soul as a burning fire shut up in the bones, which makes the soul weary with forbearing, and so powerful in longings, that it cannot stay; it is more true of the **SPIRIT** of **GOD** than of the spirit of **ELIHU**, that (*Job xxxii. 18*) the spirit within constraineth the soul, so that it is ready to swoon and faint away for very vehemence of longing.

O beautiful and blessed sight!—a soul working towards **GOD**, gasping, and longing, and labouring after its proper happiness! Well, the sinking soul is relieved; **CHRIST JESUS** embraces her in the arms of his mercy; and now she recovers; her hanging hands lift up themselves, and the beauties of her fading complexion are restored; now she sits down “under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet unto her taste.” See here the fairest sight on this side heaven; a soul resting, and glorying, and spreading itself in the arms of **GOD**, growing up in him, growing great in him, growing full in his fulness, and perfectly transported with his pure love! O my soul, be not content to live by any lower model. “Did not our hearts burn within us,” said the two disciples one to the other, “whilst he talked with us?” But the soul, in which the sacred fire of love is powerfully kindled, not only burns towards **GOD**, whilst he is more familiarly present with it, and, as it were, blows upon it, but if he seem to withdraw from it, it burns after him still; “My beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: I sought him; I called him.” (*Cant. v. 6.*) And if the fire begin to languish, and seem

as if it would go out, the holy soul is startled presently, labours ἀναζωπυρεῖν, as the Apostle speaks, to revive it, and blow it up again, and calls upon itself to awake, to arise and pursue, to mend its pace, and to speed its heavy and sluggish motions. This active principle in the soul maintains a continual striving, a holy struggling, a stretching forth of the soul towards God, a bold and ardent contention after the supreme good: religion hath the strength of divinity in it; its motions towards its object are quick and potent. That elegant description which the Prophet makes of the wicked heart, with some change, may express this excellent temper of the godly soul; it is like the working sea which cannot rest; and although its waters do not cast up mire and dirt, yet, in a holy impatience, they rise and swell, and mount towards heaven. In a word, no man is so ambitious as the humble, none so covetous as the heavenly-minded, none so voluptuous as the self-denying: religion gives a largeness and wideness to the soul, which sin, and self, and the world, had straitened and confined: but his ambition is only to be great in God, his covetousness is only to be filled with all the fulness of God, and his voluptuousness is only to drink of the rivers of his pure pleasures: he desires to taste the God whom he sees, and to be satisfied with the God whom he tastes. How are all the faculties of the soul awakened to attendance upon the LORD of life! It hearkens for the sound of his feet coming, and for the noise of his hands knocking at the door: it stands upon its watch-tower waiting for his appearing, waiting more earnestly than they that watch for the morning, and rejoices to meet him at his coming; and having met him, runs into his arms, holds him, and will not let him go, but brings him into the house, and entertains him in the guest-chamber. The soul complains that itself is not large enough, and there is not room enough to entertain so glorious a guest, no, not though it have given him all the room that it hath; it entertains him with the widest arms, and the sweetest smiles; and if he withdraw. fetches him again with the

deepest groans, saying, "Return, return, O Prince of Peace, and make me an everlasting habitation of righteousness unto thyself."

These earnest breathings after God, spring from the feeling apprehensions of our own indigency and insufficiency, and the powerful sense of divine goodness and fulness; they are produced by the divine bounty and self-sufficiency, manifesting themselves to the spirits of men who are filled with a deep sense of their own poverty. The clearer the soul's apprehensions are of its object, and the deeper its sense is of its own unlikeness to him, and distance from him, the more strong and impatient are its breathings; insomuch that not only fear, as the Apostle speaks, but even love itself sometimes seems to itself to have a kind of torment; which made the Spouse, in the Canticles, cry she was sick of love, that is, sick of every thing that kept her from her Love, sick of that distance at which she stood from her beloved LORD. The godly soul, being transported with the infinite sweetness and goodness of God, longs to be that rather than what itself is, and beholding how it is estranged from him, bewails its distance, and cries out within itself, "O when shall I come and appear before God!" O when will God come and appear gloriously to me and in me! O that mortality were swallowed up of life! Heal the godly man of all his afflictions, grievances, and adversities, so that he may have nothing to trouble him; yet he is not quiet, he is in pain because of the distance whereat he stands from God: give him the whole world, and all the glory of it, yet he has not enough; he still cries, and craves, "Give, give," because he is not entirely swallowed up in God: he openeth his mouth wide, as the Psalmist speaks, and all the silver and gold, peace, health, liberty, and preferment, that you cast into it, cannot fill it; because they are not God, he cannot look upon them as his chief good. In a word, a godly man doth not so much say, in the sense either of sin or affliction, "O that one would give me the wings of a dove, that I might fly away, and be at

rest!"—as in the sense of his dissimilitude to, and distance from GOD, "O that one would give me the wings of an eagle, that I might fly towards heaven!"

CHAP. V.

An expostulation with Christians concerning their sluggish temper: an essay to convince them of it by some considerations; which are, 1. The activity of worldly men. 2. The restless appetites of the body. 3. The strong propensions of every creature towards its own centre. Five marks of a slothful professor. The active nature of Christian Faith. A short essay to awaken Christians to greater vigour and activity.

WE have seen in what respects religion is an active principle in the soul where it is seated. By this property of true religion we shall be able to discover much that is false and counterfeit in the world. If religion be no lazy, languid, sluggish, passive thing, but life, love, the spirit of power and freedom, a fire burning, and a well of water springing up, what shall we say of that heavy, sluggish, spiritless kind of religion, with which most men are content? Shall we call it a spirit of life, and yet allow of a religion that is cold and dead? Shall we call it a spirit of love and power, and yet allow of it, though it be indifferent, low, and impotent? Or will such pass current with the wise and holy GOD, if we should put a favourable judgment upon it? And why should it ever pass with men, if it will not pass with GOD? But, indeed, how can this inactivity and sluggishness pass for religion amongst men? Who can think you are in pursuit of the Infinite and Supreme Good, that sees you so slow in your motions towards it? Who can think that your treasure is in heaven, that sees your heart so far from thence? The more any thing partakes of GOD, and the nearer it comes to him who is the fountain of life, and power, and virtue, the more active, powerful, and lively will it be. We read of an

atheistical generation in *Zeph.* i. 12, who fancied to themselves an idle and slothful God, that minded not the affairs of the world at all, saying, "The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil;" which was also the false and gross conceit of many of the heathen. It is almost as absurd to fancy an idle saint, as an idle Deity.

That I may more powerfully convince and awaken the lazy and heavy spirit of many professors, I will briefly touch upon a few particulars.

1. The children of this world, earthly and sensual men, are not so slothful, so lazy, so indifferent in the pursuit of earthly and sensual objects. You say you have laid up your treasure in heaven; we know they have laid up their treasure on earth. Now, who is it that behaves himself most suitably towards his treasure? You or they? You say you have a treasure in heaven, and are content to be able to say so, but make no haste to be fully and feelingly possessed of it, or to enjoy the benefit and sweetness of it. But they "rise up early, and sit up late," and either pine themselves, or eat the bread of sorrow, to obtain earthly and perishing inheritances; they circuit the world, travel far, sell all to purchase that part which is of so great price with them: and when they have accomplished it, oh how do they set their heart upon it, bind up their very souls in the same bags with their money, and seal up their affections with it; and even then they are not at rest, but find a gnawing hunger upon their hearts after more, still adding house to house, and land to land, and one bag to another: the miser is ready to sit down and wring his hands, because he has no more hands to scrape with; the voluptuous epicure is angry that he has not the neck of a crane, the better to taste his dainties; and ambitious ALEXANDER, when he domineers over the known world, is ready to sit down and weep, because there are no more worlds to conquer. What Christian can help being ashamed of himself when he reads this? Where is the like eager and ardent disposition to be found

in a Christian towards God himself? Let us now confess the truth, and every one judge himself.

2. This dull and earthly body is not so indifferently affected towards meat and drink, and rest, and the things that serve its necessities, and gratify its temper. Hunger will break down stone walls, and thirst will give away a kingdom for a cup of water; sickness will not be eased by good words, nor will a drowsy brain be bribed by company or recreation: no, no, the necessities of the body must and will be relieved with food, and physic, and sleep; the restless appetite will never cease crying to the soul for supplies, till it arise and give them. Behold, O my soul! consider the mighty and incessant appetites of the body after sensual objects, after its suitable good and proper perfection, and be ashamed of thy sluggish inclinations towards the highest good, a god-like perfection!

3. No creature in the whole world is so languid, slow, and indifferent in its motions towards its proper rest and centre. How easy were it to call heaven and earth to witness the free, cheerful, eager addresses of every creature, according to its kind, towards its own centre and happiness? The sun in the firmament rejoices to run its race, and will not stand still one moment, except it be miraculously overpowered by the command of God himself; the rivers seem to be in pain, till by a continued flowing, they have accomplished to themselves a kind of perfection, and be swallowed up in the bosom of the ocean, except they be benumbed with cold, or otherwise overpowered by foreign violence. I need not instance animals and plants; all which, with a natural vigour, grow up daily towards a perfect state. Were it not a strange and monstrous sight to see a stone settling in the air, and not working towards its centre? Such a spectacle is a soul settling upon earth, and not endeavouring a nearer union with its God. Wherefore, Christians, either cease to pretend that you have chosen God

for your portion, centre, and happiness, or else arise and cease not to pursue the closest union with him, of which your souls are capable: otherwise I call heaven and earth to witness against you; and the day is coming when you will be put to shame by the whole creation. Does even the meanest creature of God pursue its end with ardent and vehement longings; and shall a soul, the noblest of all creatures, stand folding up itself in itself, or choking up its wide and divine capacity with dust and dirt? Tell it not at Athens, publish it not at Rome, lest the Heathen Philosophers deride, and hiss us out of the world.

But you will ask me when a Christian may be said to be sluggish and inactive?

I will briefly show this in a few particulars. I pray take it not ill, though the greatest part of Christians be found guilty; for that is no other than what CHRIST himself hath prophesied.

1. The active spirit of religion will not suffer men to take their rest in a constant course of external performances; and they are but slothful souls that place their religion in any thing without them. By external performances, I mean not only open, and public, and solemn services, but even the most private performances that are in and by the body. It is not possible that a soul should be happy in any thing that is extrinsical to itself, no, not in God himself, if we consider him only as something without the soul. The Devil himself knows and sees much of God without him; but, having no communication of a divine nature, being perfectly estranged from the life of God, he remains perfectly miserable. I doubt it is a common deceit in the world, for men to toil and labour, in bodily acts of worship and religion, and think, with those labourers described in the Parable, that, at the end, they must needs receive great wages, because they have borne the heat and burden of the day. Alas that ever men should so grossly mistake the nature of religion, as to sink it into a few bodily acts, and carcass-services, and

to think that it is nothing else but running the round of duties and ordinances, and keeping up a constant set and course of actions ! Such an external legal righteousness the Apostle PAUL, after his conversion, could not be content with, but counted it all loss and dung, in comparison of that god-like righteousness which was now brought into his soul, that inward and spiritual conformity to CHRIST, which was now wrought in him. (*Phil.* iii. 9, 10.) I know, indeed, men will be loth to confess that they place their religion in any thing without them ; but, I pray, consider seriously wherein you excel other men, save only in praying or hearing, or some other outward acts, and judge yourselves by your nature, and not by your actions.

2. The active spirit of religion, where it is in the soul, will not suffer men to take up their rest in a mere pardon of sin ; and they are but slothful souls that could be so satisfied. “Blessed is the man” indeed “whose iniquities are pardoned :” but if we could suppose a person to be acquitted of the guilt of all sin, and yet to lie bound under the dominion of lust and passions, and to live without GOD in the world, he would be far from true blessedness. A real hell will arise out of the very bowels of sin and wickedness, though there should be no reserve of fire and brimstone in the world to come. It is utterly impossible that a soul should be happy out of GOD, though it had the greatest security that it should never suffer any thing from him. The highest care indeed of a slavish spirit, is to be secured from the wrath and vengeance of GOD ; but the breathings of the ingenuous and holy soul are after a divine life, and god-like perfections. This right and gracious temper you may see in DAVID, (*Psal.* li. 9—12,) which is also the temper of every truly religious soul.

3. The active spirit of religion, where it is in the soul, will not suffer men to take up their rest in mere innocency, or freedom from sin ; and they are slothful souls that count it happiness enough to be harmless. Men are

much mistaken about holiness: it is more than mere *innocency*, or freedom from the guilt or power of sin; it is not a negative thing; there is something active, noble, divine, powerful, in true religion. A soul that rightly understands its own penury and self-insufficiency, and the emptiness and meanness of all creature-good, cannot possibly take up its rest, or place its happiness, in any thing but in a real participation of God himself; and therefore is continually going out towards that God from whom it came, and labouring to unite itself more and more unto Him. Let a low-spirited, fleshly-minded Pharisee take up with a negative holiness and happiness, as he doth, in *Luke* xviii. 11; "God, I thank thee, that I am not" so and so: a noble and high-spirited christian cannot take up his rest in any negation or freedom from sin. Every godly soul is not so learned, indeed, as to be able to describe the nature and proper perfection of a soul, and to tell you how the happiness of a soul consists, not in cessation and rest, as the happiness of a stone doth, but in life, and power, and vigour, as the happiness of God himself doth: but yet the spirit of true religion is so excellent and powerful in every godly soul, that it is still carrying it to the fuller enjoyment of a higher good; and the soul finds and feels within itself, though it cannot discourse philosophically of these things, that though it were free from all disturbance of sin and affliction, yet still it wants some supreme good to make it completely happy, and so bends all its power thitherward. This is the description which you will every where find in Scripture of the true spirit of holiness, which hath always something positive and divine in it, as in *Eph.* iv. 22, 24: "Put off the old man; put on that new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Accordingly, a godly soul, to use the Apostle's words, though he "know nothing by himself," yet doth not thereby count himself happy.

4. The active spirit of true religion, when it exists in the

soul, will not suffer men to take up their rest in any measures of grace received ; and so far as the soul doth so, it is sluggish and less active than it ought to be. The nature of religion, when it affects the soul rightly and powerfully, is to carry it out after a more lively resemblance of God. A mind rightly sound is most sick of love ; and the nature of love is, not to know when it is near enough to its object, but still to long after the most perfect conjunction. This “ Well of Water,” if it be not violently obstructed, is ever springing up, till it be swallowed up in the ocean of divine love. The soul that is rightly acquainted with itself and its God sees something still wanting in itself, and to be enjoyed in him, which prevents it from being at rest ; and it is still springing up into him, till it come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of its LORD. In this holy, loving, longing, striving, active temper, we find the great Apostle. (*Phil.* iii. 12—14.) And the more of divine grace any soul hath imbibed, the more thirsty is it after much more.

5. The active spirit of true religion, where it is powerfully seated in the minds of men, will not suffer them to settle into a love of this animal life, nor indeed suffer them to be content to live for ever in such a kind of body as this ; and that man is in a degree lazy and slothful that doth not desire to depart and be with his LORD. The godly man, viewing God as his perfect happiness, and finding that his being in the body separates him from God, most ardently longs that mortality may be swallowed up of life. I know not how much, but I think he hath not very much of God, neither sight of him, nor love of him, that could be content to abide for ever in this imperfect state, and never be perfect in the full enjoyment of him. And, it seems, that they in whom the love of God is rightly predominant, do look earnestly “ for the mercy of our LORD JESUS CHRIST unto eternal life ;” as without doubt they ought to do : (*2 Pet.* iii. 12 :) “ What

manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of GOD ! ”

Let this suffice by way of general reprehension.

The consideration of the active nature of true religion may well serve to correct a mistake about that noble grace of faith. How dishonourably do some speak of this excellent and powerful grace, when they make it to be a slothful, passive thing ; an idle kind of waiting, or sitting still ; which, in deed and in truth, is life and power. Be not mistaken in so high and eminent a grace : true faith not only accepts the imputed righteousness of CHRIST [i. e. of CHRIST'S merit] for justification, but by a lively dependance upon GOD, drinks in divine influences, and eagerly imbibes grace, and virtue, and life, from the fountain of grace, for its more perfect sanctification. Faith is not a lazy languid thing, content to wait for salvation till the world to come ; but it is even now gasping after it, and accomplishing it too, in a way of mortification, self-denial, and growing up into GOD : it is not content to be a candidate waiting for life and happiness, but is actually drawing down heaven into the soul, attracting GOD to itself, imbibing divine grace into the heart : its motto is that of the famous painter, *Nulla dies sine linea* ; it longs to find some divine lineament, some line of GOD'S image, drawn upon the soul daily. Faith is a giving grace, as well as a receiving one ; it gives up the whole soul to GOD, and is troubled that it can give him no more : it binds over the soul afresh to GOD every day, and is troubled that it cannot bind it faster and closer to him. The believing soul is wearied because of murderers,—murdering loves, lusts, cares, earthly pleasures ; and calls mightily upon CHRIST, to come and take vengeance upon them : it is wearied because of those robbers that are daily stealing away precious time from GOD, which is due unto him ; and calls upon CHRIST, to come and scourge these thieves, these buyers and sellers, out of his own temple. In a word, the godly soul is

active, and faith is the very life and action of the soul itself.

Lastly, let me from hence exhort all Christians to be zealous, fervent in spirit, serving the LORD, and longing after him. "Stir up the grace of GOD that is in you;" Quench not, i. e. blow up, inflame the influences of the SPIRIT of GOD in you. Awake, christians, out of your lethargy, and rejoice, as the sun, to run the race that is set before you, and, as a mighty man refreshed with wine, to fight your spiritual battles, against the armies of uncircumcised, profane, and earthly passions. View GOD as your centre, the enjoyment of him as the happiness, and full conformity to him as the perfection of your souls; and then say, "Awake, arise, O my soul, and hide not thy hand in thy bosom, but throw thyself into the very heart and bosom of GOD; lay hold upon eternal life." Observe how all things in the world pursue their several perfections with unwearied and impatient longings, and say, "Come, my soul, and do thou likewise." Converse not with GOD so much under the notion of a lawgiver, but as with love itself; nor with his commands, as having authority only in them, but as having goodness, and life, and sweetness, in them. Consider your poverty as creatures, and how utterly impossible it is for you to be happy in yourselves, and say, "Arise, O my soul, from this weak and tottering foundation, and build thyself up in GOD; cease to confine thyself within the straits of self-sufficiency, and come to expand thyself upon infinite goodness and fulness." Pore not upon your attainments; do not sit brooding upon your present accomplishments; but forget the things that are behind, and say, "Awake, O my soul; there is yet infinitely more in GOD; pursue after him for it, till thou hast obtained as much of the divine nature as a created being is capable of receiving. In a word, take heed you live not by the lowest examples, (which thing keeps many in a dwindling state all their days,) but by the highest. Seek after DAVID's temper, waiting for GOD more than they that watch for the morning, breaking

in heart for the longing that he had to the LORD ; and say, “ Arise, O my soul, and live as high as the highest ; it is no fault to desire to be as good, as holy, as happy, as an angel of God. And thus, O my soul, open thy mouth wide, and God hath promised to fill thee ! ”

CHAP. VI.

Religion considered in the consequent of “ not thirsting.”
Divine grace gives a solid satisfaction to the soul. This confirmed by some scriptures, and largely explained. There is a raging thirst in every soul of man, after some ultimate and satisfactory good. Every natural man thirsteth principally after happiness in the creature. No man can find that soul-filling satisfaction in any creature-enjoyment, which every natural man principally seeks therein. Grace takes not away the soul’s thirst after happiness, but much inflames it. The godly soul thirsts no more after rest in any worldly thing, but in God alone. In the enjoyment of God the soul is at rest.

HITHERTO we have taken a view of true religion as to its origin, nature, and properties. We are now to consider it in the certain and genuine consequent of it ; and that is, *Satisfaction, or not Thirsting* : “ Whosoever drinketh of the Water that I shall give him shall never thirst.”

1. “ *Whosoever drinketh of the Water that I shall give him shall never thirst* ” after any other Water. No worldly liquor can be so attempered to the palate, as to give it a universal satisfaction : but this heavenly water is so fitted to the palate of spirits, and brings such satisfaction along with it, that the soul thirsts no more after any other thing, neither through necessity, nor for variety. The more the soul drinks of this water, indeed, the more it thirsts after fuller measures of the same ; and not only receives divine grace and influences, but even longs to be itself received up into the divinity. Its thirst, likewise, after all created

good, all the waters of the cistern, is hereby overcome and mortified.

2. “*Whosoever drinketh of the Water that I shall give him*” shall never be at a loss more,—never be uncertain or unsatisfied, as to his main happiness: he shall not range up and down the world in unfixedness and suspense any more; he shall not run up and down to seek satisfaction and rest any more. From an internal dissatisfaction of the body spring violent and restless motions, and runnings up and down, by which thirst is contracted; so that thirst comes to be used for dissatisfaction, which is the remote cause of it; and, by a metaphor, the same phrase comes to be applied to the soul. Thirst, then, is a dissatisfaction, or spiritual disquiet, which causes the soul to range up and down, seeking something wherein ultimately to acquiesce. And in this sense, our LORD’s declaration is most true,—“Whosoever drinketh of the Water that I shall give him shall never thirst.”

It is not of much importance by which of these two ways we explain the phrase here, “not thirsting;” for, according to either of them, it will result, that,

Divine Grace, or true Christian Religion, gives a real satisfaction to the soul. It cannot be doubted, that the promise made in *Isa. xlix. 10*, is to be performed unto believers in this life; for so the foregoing verses must necessarily be understood, and there we have the doctrine expressly asserted: “They shall not hunger nor thirst; for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.” To which those words of our SAVIOUR are parallel, (*John vi. 35,*) “He that believeth on me shall never thirst:” which doctrine is enlarged in *John vii. 38*; “He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” What greater security from thirst can be desired, than that one should be led by springs of water? Yes, one may be led by the springs of water, and yet not be suffered to drink of them: there-

fore, to put all out of fear, the godly soul shall contain within himself a spring of water ; he shall have rivers of living water in himself ; and, for his fuller security, these rivers shall be ever flowing too. Having given the meaning of the words in this shorter position, I shall endeavour to unfold it in these six propositions.

1. *There is a raging thirst in every soul of man after some ultimate and satisfactory good.* The God of nature has implanted in every created nature, a secret, but powerful tendency towards a centre, which dictate, arising out of the very constitution of it, it cannot disobey, until it cease to be such, and utterly apostatize from the state of its creation. And the nobler any being is, the more excellent is the object assigned to it, and the more strong and uncontrollable are its motions thereto. Wherefore the soul of man must needs also have its own proper centre, which must be something superior to, and more excellent than itself, able to supply all its indigencies, to fill all its capacities, to overcome all its cravings, and to give a perfect satisfaction ; which therefore can be no other than uncreated goodness, even God himself. It was not possible that God should make man of such faculties, and those faculties of that capaciousness which we see in them, and then appoint anything below himself to be his ultimate happiness. Now, although it be sadly true, that the faculties of the soul are miserably maimed, depraved, benighted, and distorted ; yet I do not see that the soul is utterly *unnatured* by sin, so as that any other thing should be obtruded upon it for its centre and happiness, than the same infinite good which from the beginning was such, or so as that its main motions should be ultimately directed to any other than its natural and primitive object. The natural understanding has not, indeed, any clear or distinct sight of this blessed object ; but yet it retains a dark and general apprehension of Him, and may be said, even in all its pursuits of other things, to be still groping in the dark after Him : neither is it without some secret and latent sense of God, that the will of man chooses or embraces any

thing for good. The Apostle hesitates not to affirm that the idolatrous Athenians themselves worshipped God, (*Acts xvii. 23.*) though at that time, indeed, they knew not what they worshipped: their worship was secretly and implicitly directed unto God, and did ultimately resolve itself into Him, though they were not aware of it: —“whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you.” Now, that he declared God unto them appears abundantly by the following verses; and what he says in point of worship, the same I may say in point of love, trust, delight, dependance, and apply it to all sorts of idolaters, as well as image-worshippers. For that peace, happiness, and satisfaction, at which these mistaken souls aim, what is it other than God, though they attribute it to something else which cannot afford it, and so commit a real blasphemy? For they who ascribe a filling and satisfying virtue to riches, pleasure, or honours, do as truly, though not so loudly, blaspheme, as they who cried out concerning the calf of gold, (*Exod. xxxii. 4.*) “These be thy gods, O Israel!” &c. And in this sense, one may safely affirm, that the most professed atheist in the world secretly pursues the God whom he openly denies, whilst his will is catching at that which his judgment renounces, and he allows that Deity in his lusts whom he will not own in heaven. Yet let not any one think that this ignorant and unwary pursuit of God can pass for religion, or be acceptable in the sight of God; for, as it is impossible that any man should stumble into a happy state, without foresight and free choice, and be in it without any kind of sense or feeling of it, so neither can God accept the blind for sacrifice, or be pleased with any thing less than reasonable service from a reasonable creature. As the Athenians, worshipping God by altars and images, are counted “superstitious,” not devout, so the whole generation of gross and sensual souls admiring, loving, and ignorantly coveting after God in the pictures and images of true goodness, are, indeed, truly blasphemers and idolaters, but religious they cannot be.

2. *Every natural man thirsts principally after happiness and satisfaction in the creature.* The fall of the soul consists in its sinking into the animal life; and the business of every unrenewed soul is, in one kind or other, still to gratify the same life: for although, as I have shown, GOD is in the bottom of these men's cares, and loves, and desires, and implicitly in all their thirstings, yet I may well say of them, as GOD said of the Assyrian Monarch, when he executed his pleasure in correcting his people Israel, (*Isa. x. 7.*) "Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so." GOD is not in all their thoughts, whilst they pursue that in the creature which really none but GOD can be unto them. They ultimately direct, as to their intention, all their cares, and covetings, and thirstings, to some created object; all which are calculated for the animal life, the gratification and accomplishment of their own base lusts. This is very apparent in the idolatry of the pagans, whose lusts gave being to their gods; and so their deities were as many as their concupiscences and filthy passions. To sacrifice to their own revenge and sensuality, under the names of Mars, Bacchus, and Venus, what was it else, but to proclaim to all the world, that they took the highest contentment and satisfaction in the fulfilling of such kind of lusts? This was unto them their god, or supreme felicity. The case is the same, though not so professedly, with all carnal Christians, who, although they profess the true GOD, yet, in truth, make him only a pander to their own lusts and base ends; though they "name the name of CHRIST," yet, in very deed, they deify their own passions, and sacrifice to the gratification of their animal powers.

I need not here declaim against covetous, luxurious souls, the Apostle having so expressly prevented me by his plain and punctual arraignment of such men, in *Phil. iii. 19.* and *Col. iii. 5*; where he charges them with placing a deity in their bags and bellies: otherwise I durst appeal to all the world, that are not parties, yea, to the parties themselves, whether it be GOD, or themselves, that these

persons intend to serve, and please, and gratify ; whether it be a real assimilation unto God, and the true honour of his name, or some lust or humour of self-pleasing, self-advancing, and self-enjoying, unto which they sacrifice their cares and pains, and the main thirstings of their souls. It will be easily acknowledged, that the covetous, voluptuous, and ambitious, sacrifice all they are, and do, to the latter ; but it is not yet agreed among men who are such : and this is no wonder ; for it is as natural for the animal self-life to shift off guilt, as it is to contract it ; and the pride of the natural man is no less conspicuous in his endeavours to seem innocent of what he is indeed guilty, than his covetousness and voluptuousness are apparent in the matter wherein his guilt consists. It is not only these, and some of the most gross and profane sort of persons, who are guilty in this kind, though they, indeed, are most visibly guilty ; but the whole generation of mere animal men, who have no principle of divine life implanted in them, spend all their days, bestow all their pains, and enjoy all their comforts, in a real strain of blasphemy from first to last. What a blasphemous kind of philosophy was that which professedly placed the supreme good of man in the fruition of pleasures ? And, indeed, all those kinds of philosophy, which placed it in things below God himself, and the enjoyment of him, were no less profane, though they may seem somewhat less beastly : for whether the Epicureans idolized their own senses, or the more exalted Stoics deified their own faculties, placing their main content in their self-sufficiency, it is apparent that both the one and the other sect still moved within the low and narrow sphere of natural self, and grasped after a deity in the poor dark shadows and glimmering representatives of him. But I am speaking to Christians : and, amongst these, let no man tell me how orthodox are his opinions, how pure and spiritual his forms, how numerous and specious his performances, how rightly he pays his homage, and prays to one living God, by one living Mediator ; I do, with delight, observe these things wherever they are ;

but yet all this does not constitute a Christian : for still that saying of the Apostle must hold good, (*Rom. vi. 16,*) "His servants ye are to whom ye obey;" and I may add, by a somewhat like phraseology, "His children ye are whom ye resemble; his creatures ye are, as far as you can make yourselves so, whose sufficiency and sovereignty are most magnified in your hearts; his worshippers ye are whom ye most love, trust in, delight in, depend upon; in a word, that is your God, which your soul doth mainly rest and wrap up itself in." Whosoever, then, says in his heart concerning any thing that is not God, what the rich man in the Gospel said concerning his goods, "Soul, take thine ease" in them, "and be merry," the same is an idolater and blasphemer: and this I affirm to be the language of every unregenerate soul of man.

3. *No man can find that happiness, and soul-filling satisfaction, in any creature, which every natural man seeks therein.* Here two things are to be considered, viz. the enjoyments of men, or what they possess, and the satisfaction which the natural man seeks in such possessions. For the first of these, I do not believe that ever any natural man had his fill of such possessions, I mean as to the quantity of them; he never had so much of them as to be able freely to say, It is enough. The rational soul has a strong and insatiable appetite, and wheresoever it imagines its satisfying enjoyment to be had, it is exceedingly greedy and rapacious; whether the same will ever be able to satisfy it or no, it matters not. The animal life is that voracious idol, not like *Bel* in the story, which only seems to eat up, but which does really devour all the fat morsels, and sensual pleasures, that are sacrificed to it, and yet is not filled therewith. The whole employment of the natural man is nothing else, but, as the Apostle elegantly describes it, (*Rom. xiii. 14,*) "to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof;" wherein yet, to speak the truth, he loses his labour; for he sacrifices all to an idol that can never be

satisfied, and pours it into a gulf that has neither bottom nor bounds, but which swallows up all, and is rather made to thirst, than to cease from thirsting, by all that is or can be administered unto it. I consider that declaration of SOLOMON, (*Eccles. i. 8,*) to be a clear proof in general of what I affirm, “The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing:” the eye of man, as little as it is, is bigger than the whole visible world, which, although it may be wearied with looking upon various objects, yet still desires new ones, and can take them in without surfeiting; so that, although the acts of the eye be contracted and finite, yet the lusts of the eye seem to have a kind of infinity in them. And, indeed, by the unsatiableness of the eye and ear, is meant the greediness of the flesh or animal life, as MR. CARTWRIGHT has well observed upon *Prov. xxvii. 20*: “Hell and destruction are never full, so the eyes of man are never satisfied;” where, by not being satisfied, is meant not having enough in quantity. And, indeed, I need not descend to particular instances; for I suppose no natural man could ever heartily say he had enough of riches, promotions, applause, sensual delights, eloquence, policy, or victory, or of any other thing which is accommodated to the gratification of the flesh, no more than any godly soul sojourning upon earth could ever be yet able to say he had enough of God and eternal life. So that, in a word, I know not how to apply any description to this insatiable and devouring principle more properly than that which the Prophet makes of hell: (*Isa. v. 14* :) “She enlargeth herself, and openeth her mouth without measure; and all glory, multitude, and pomp, descend into it.”

But be it imagined that the enjoyments of some natural men are enough in respect of quantity, yet still there is wanting a sincere satisfaction of soul in such possessions; for no natural man finds, in those things, that real happiness which he so earnestly seeks. SOLOMON reduces all pleasure and contentment which can be found in multiplied riches to a very small sum: (*Eccles. v. 11* :)

“What good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?” And, alas! what is the sight of the eye to the satisfaction of the soul? The whole world is utterly too small for the wide and deep capacity of an immortal spirit; so that the world can no more satisfy a soul, than a less can fill a greater, which is impossible. Whatever is in the world, out of God, is described by the Prophet (*Isa. lv. 2.*) to be “not bread,”—there is the unsuitableness; and, “not to satisfy,”—there is the insufficiency of it, as to the soul of man: on the other hand, this soul of man is so vastly capacious, that though it be also ever so greedy and rapacious, snatching on the right hand, and catching on the left hand, as the Prophet describes the people, (*Isa. ix. 20.*) yet still it is hungry and unsatisfied. This ravenous and insatiable appetite of the sensual soul is elegantly described by the Prophet, in the similitude of a whorish woman, who prostitutes herself to all comers, and “multiplieth her fornications,” yet is “insatiable,—is not, cannot be, satisfied.” (*Ezek. xvi. 28, 29.*) The soul may indeed feed, yea, and surfeit upon, but it can never satisfy itself from itself, or from any created good: nothing can ultimately determine the motions of a soul, but something superior to its own essence; and whilst it misses of this, it is, as it were, divided against itself, perpetually struggling, and fluctuating, and travelling in pangs with some new design or other to be at rest; like the old lioness in the parable of *Ezekiel*, breeding up one whelp after another, to be a lion wherein to confide, but disappointed in all; adorning something for a god to-day, which it will be ready to fling into the fire to-morrow, after their manner of creating gods to themselves, whom the poet describes as saying, *Hodie mihi Jupiter esto; cras mihi truncus eris ficulnus, inutile lignum.*

Neither the quantity, variety, nor duration, of any created objects can possibly fill up that large capacity with which God has endued the rational soul; but having departed from its centre, and not knowing how to return,

it wanders up and down, as it were, in a wilderness : and having an imperfect glimmering sight of something better than what itself, as yet, either is or has, but not being able to attain to it, is miserably tormented, even as a man in a thirst which he cannot quench ; yea, the more he runs up and down to seek water, the more is his thirst increased whilst he misses of it : so this distempered and distracted soul, whilst it seeks to quench its thirst at the creature-cistern, does but inflame it, and in a continual pursuit of rest becomes most restless. That every unregenerate soul is in such a distressed, weary, restless state as I have been describing, appears most evidently by those gospel-proclamations ;—one in *Isa.* lv. 1, “ Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters ;” where, by the thirsters, are meant these unfixed, unsatisfied souls, as appears by the second verse ;—the other in *Matt.* xi. 28, “ Come unto me, all ye that labour,” &c., where the promise of giving rest plainly implies the restless state of the persons invited. There is a certain horror and anguish in sin and wickedness, even long before it be swallowed up in hell ; a certain vanity and vexation folded up in all earthly enjoyments, though they do not always sting and pierce the soul alike : so true is that declaration of the Prophet, “ There is no peace to the wicked.”

4. *Grace takes not away this thirst of the soul after happiness, and plenary satisfaction.* Love and desire, and a tendency towards blessedness, are so woven into the nature of the soul, and inlaid in the very essence of it, that she cannot possibly put them off ; although it is the work of grace to change and rectify them, as we shall see under the next head. The soul of man is a kind of immaterial fire, an inextinguishable activity, always necessarily catching at some object or other, in conjunction with which she expects to be happy : and therefore, if she be rent from herself and the world, and be mortified to the love of fleshly and animal lusts, she will certainly cleave to some higher and more excellent object. Grace does not

stupidify the soul as to its sense of its own indigency and poverty, but makes it more abundantly sensible and importunate. There are more strong motions, and more powerful appetites, in the godly soul towards its true happiness, than in the ungodly and wicked. For the understanding of the regenerate soul is so enlightened, that it presents the will with an amiable and satisfactory object; which object, therefore, being more distinctly apprehended, also lays hold upon the soul, and attracts her unto itself. *Oculi sunt in amore duces*, is most true of the eye of the soul, I mean the understanding, which first affects the heart. The first and fundamental error of the rational soul seems to lie in the understanding; the very root of the degenerate soul's distemper; and if this were thoroughly restored and healed, so as to present the will with proper representations of **God**, it might be hoped that this ductile faculty would not be long before it clave unto him entirely; nay, some have doubted whether it could possibly resist the dictates of it. Now, in the regenerate soul, this faculty is repaired; the Spirit of Regeneration first spreads itself upon the understanding, and awakens in it a sense of self-indigency, and of the perfect, all-sufficient, and satisfactory fulness of **God**, in whom it sees all beauty, sweetness, and loveliness, in an infinitely ineffable manner, which is so far from allaying the essential thirst of the soul, that it gives a mighty edge and ardour to its inclinations, puts it upon a more bold and earnest contention towards this glorious object, and charms the whole soul into the very arms of **God**. Therefore "not thirsting," in the text, must not be understood absolutely, as if grace utterly extinguished the natural activities of the soul; but the regenerate soul does not thirst in that sense, according to which thirst implies the want of a suitable good, or dissatisfaction. In this notion of thirst, grace does indeed quench it; but, as to this most essential thirst, this natural out-going of the soul after rest and happiness, it is so far from being extinguished by divine grace, that it is greatly inflamed thereby. Hence.

DAVID borrows the strongest inclinations that are to be found in the whole creation, to represent the devout ardours of his own soul: "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O GOD. O GOD, thou art my GOD, early will I seek thee; my soul thirstest for thee; my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is. I stretch forth my hands unto thee; my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land:" yea, he seems like one that would swoon away for very longing; "Hear me speedily, O LORD, my spirit faileth; hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit; I lift up my soul unto thee, I flee unto thee:" &c.

5. *The godly soul thirsts no longer after happiness in any creature, nor rests in any worldly thing, but in GOD alone.* Divine grace allays the thirst of the soul after other waters, filthy pools, of which it could never yet drink deep, or by which, if it drunk ever so deep, it could not be quenched; it determines the soul to one object, whereas before it was rent in pieces amongst many. It does not destroy any of the natural powers, nor dry up the innate vigour of the soul, but takes it off from the pursuit of all inferior ends, and causes it to spend all those powers not less vigorously, but far more rationally and satisfactorily, upon the infinitely amiable and self-sufficient GOD. When the soul has once met with this glorious object, it will no longer spend itself upon the creature; that is too poor and insufficient for it. The soul which understands its own nature and capacity, and once comes to view itself in GOD, will see itself too large to be bounded by the narrow confines of any creature, and too free to be chained to any earthly object whatever. The world indeed may, yea, and will labour to divert the soul;—"What is thy beloved more than another beloved," that thou art so fond of him? "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" "Be content, here is hay and provender; stay with me this night; let us dally and make merry together

a little longer." But these songs are sung to a deaf ear; they cannot enchant the wise and devout soul, which hath her senses rightly awakened, and exercised to discern between good and evil. She replies, "Oh no, I am sick of love, and sick of every thing that keeps me from my beloved; and therefore, however you may go about to defile me through fraud or force, through surprise or violence, yet I will not give up myself unto you." The gracious soul has now discovered the most beautiful, perfect, and lovely object, even Him, whose name is LOVE; which glorious vision has so withered the choicest flowers in nature's garden, that they have now no more form nor comeliness, beauty nor fragrancy. She has tasted the perfect sweetness of the fountain, which has so imbittered all-cistern waters, that she finds no more thirstings in herself after them. This is what our Saviour promises here,—“shall never thirst.” A godly soul cannot possibly be put off with any thing short of God: give him his God, or he dies; give him ever so much fair usage in the world, ever so much of earthly accommodations, they are not accommodated to his wants and thirst, if they have not that God in them, out of whom all worldly pleasures are even irksome and unpleasant, and all fleshly ease tedious and painful.

Though all holy souls may not be alike weaned from the world, and may not equally love God, yet no one of all those, in whom this divine life is found, takes his rest in any creature-communion whatever. No religious soul can be content to exchange the presence of God, and acquaintance with him, for any thing, or for all things besides; no such person could be content, for all the world, (the glory of heaven not excepted, if that might be supposed,) to be wicked and ungodly: so that, by “thirsting” here, we must not understand some weak wishings, and fainter propensions of the soul towards created objects; but the most quick and powerful breathings, the highest and strongest ardencies, the predominant and victorious motions and desires of the soul, which do, as it were, fold

up the whole soul, and lead all its powers into a grateful captivity. Thus shall he “thirst no more,” who hath once drunk of these waters which flow forth from the presence of the LORD of Life, and which the blessed REDEEMER is here said to give. He thirsts after his happiness in GOD alone, that is, in the enjoyment of HIM. We have already seen, that grace does not destroy the natural longings of the soul after a satisfactory good, but rather enhances them, and that the godly soul is most thirsty of all, but not with a creature-thirst; it remains that his thirsting after rest and happiness terminates on GOD alone.

You may, in *Psal.* lxxiii. 25, view the term or end of the godly man’s ambition: “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.” These words express, in a lively manner, the godly man’s end, and aim, and object, and happiness, and indeed his all. Or, if we translate, perhaps more fitly, with MOLLERUS, yet they afford us the same doctrine, “Who will give me to be in heaven, and with thee? On earth I desire nothing.”

Thus have we dispatched the fifth proposition, viz. That the godly soul thirsts no more after happiness in any creature, nor rests in any worldly thing; and come to the sixth and last, which is this:

6. *In the enjoyment of GOD, the soul is at rest, is fully satisfied; so satisfied, as to be perfectly suited with an object transcendently adequate to all its faculties; and so satisfied, as to have peace, and joy, and triumph in him.*

For the better understanding of the *first* of these, it should be remarked, that the reasonable soul, and the faculties of it, are of a vast, large, and noble capacity. It is universally granted by all, who are not Sadducees, that the capacity of angels is very great and noble; and that the condition of the human soul is not much inferior to it, may, I think, be gathered from the Psalmist’s words, (*Psal.* viii. 5,) “Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels.” Although the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews applies these words eminently to CHRIST,

(*Heb. ii. 9.*) yet I see no reason why they may not be well applied to the excellent condition of man by creation: but whether or not the souls of men be so near of kindred to the angels, yet, that they are capable of a most noble and excellent happiness, and much allied to God himself, appears from such texts of Scripture as require them to be "holy, as God is holy," to be "perfect, as their heavenly FATHER is perfect." Neither need it seem to any incredible, that the rational soul should be so capacious; for we are no more to judge of the angelical temper and noble actions of the separated soul, by what we see it to be and do in this body of flesh, than one can judge of the courage and power of a renowned warrior at the head of an army, by what we discern in him when he lies bound in chains.

In the next place, it will be easily inferred, that all created good is too scanty and insufficient for this capacious spirit of man; nay, it cannot contract itself so, as to be accommodated to any worldly good, without pain and anguish. From both these principles it will be naturally and necessarily concluded, that God alone is that adequate object which can satisfy and fill the soul of man. The enjoyment of God is that ultimate end, and perfect good, that alone is able to fix the spirit of man; which otherwise, not meeting with its proper object, would be tossed to and fro, and labour under perpetual disquiet. God is that almighty goodness and sweetness, who alone is able to draw out all the appetites of the soul unto himself, satisfy all its cravings, charm all its restless motions, and cause all its faculties to conspire together how to give up themselves entirely to himself.

Secondly, From this conjunction with omnipotent goodness, arises pure peace, yea, joy and triumph, to the religious soul. For the clearer understanding of this, I should premise, what some have wisely observed, that there is a natural congruity between God and the soul, it being a spiritual substance, and he being a spiritual good, who alone is suitable unto her. Hence it is that sin and

wickedness are so often styled the defilement of the soul : now, we know, that whatsoever defileth is adventitious and improper ; and hence it is that sin many times stings and wounds the consciences of those that take most pleasure in it, because it is perfectly contrary to this noble and inbred sense of the soul. Allowing then this natural sympathy which the soul of man has with its Creator, it will be easy to give an account of that peace, joy, and triumph, of which the soul must needs be possessed, when it finds and feels itself in conjunction with its centre, and in the nearest union with its Creator. It need not seem strange, that the soul should highly congratulate itself on its arrival at its own haven ; nay, it were strange if it should not dissolve into secret joy and pleasure in the hearty entertainment of so blessed a guest as God is. Indeed it were unreasonable to imagine, that the conjunction of so noble and discerning faculties with so perfect and proper an object, should not beget the greatest and sincerest delight.

The delights of an earthly and sensual mind are low and filthy, in comparison of the pleasures of the refined and purified soul, which must needs live most gracefully, triumphantly, and deliciously, when it converses with God most intimately. A godly soul, being in its right senses, cannot fail of tasting a sweetness in these pure and divine accomplishments wrought in it by the eternal SPIRIT of righteousness ; which pleasure arises in the soul from its sensible union with God in the SPIRIT, and enjoyment of Him : by which enjoyment of God, you will easily perceive that I do not mean the bare pardon of sin, or an abstract justification ; for this is not the attainment that is perfective of the soul, neither could it alone, if we could suppose it to be alone, fill up the capacities of the soul, or make it happy, however the rapturous joys of the unprincipled hypocrite spring principally from the false apprehension of this ; but, by it, I mean the soul's being really regenerated into the image of God, consisting in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, and its

implantation into the root CHRIST JESUS, by which it partakes of his life, power, and SPIRIT.

And yet, besides this, I conceive, there is a more direct account to be given of those joys which the renewed soul so plentifully reaps upon its return to GOD: for “the GOD of hope” filleth the godly soul “with all peace and joy in believing.” (*Rom. xv. 13.*) CHRIST does on purpose speak words to the hearts of his disciples, that their “joy may be full.” (*John xv. 11.*) But whether the gracious Father of spirits does immediately from himself inspire the holy soul with divine joys and pleasures, or whether he bring them to his holy mountain, into his house of prayer, and by that, or any other means, make them joyful, and of glad heart, sure it is that he frequently puts a gladness into their hearts beyond that of the harvest or the vintage, and makes them to rejoice with “joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

Having now unfolded the meaning of the gracious soul's not thirsting any more, I should pass to the last thing contained in the text; but finding myself oppressed in spirit, when I compare the temper of Christians with it, I must have leave to stay a little, and breathe. And what shall I breathe but a sad and bitter complaint over that low, earthly, selfish, greedy spirit, which actuates the world at this day, yea, and the generality of professors of that sacred religion, which we call Christianity. Alas! what a company of thieves and murderers,—I mean, base and sensual loves,—lodge in those very souls, which should be temples consecrated to the name, and honour, and inhabitation of the eternal GOD, the SPIRIT of truth and holiness. Oh, what pity is it that the precious souls of men, yea, and of Christians, that are all capable of such a glorious liberty, so high and honourable a happiness, should be bound down under such vile and sordid lusts, feeding upon dust and gravel, to whom the hidden manna is freely offered, and GOD himself is ready to become a banquet! And O what a shame is it for those who profess themselves children of GOD, disciples of the

most holy JESUS, and heirs of his pure and undefiled kingdom of heaven, to roll themselves in filthy and brutish sensualities, to set up that on high in their souls, which was made to be under their bodies, and so to love and live as if they studied to have no affinity at all, but would be as unlike as they could, to that GOD and REDEEMER, and unfit for that inheritance! How often shall it be protested to the christian world, by men of the greatest devotion and seriousness, that it is vain to dream of entering into the kingdom of heaven hereafter, except the kingdom of heaven enter into their souls during their union with these bodies? How long shall the SON of GOD, who came into the world on purpose to be the most glorious example of purity, self-denial, and mortification, how long shall He lie by, in his word, as an antiquated pattern, only cut out for the apostolical ages of the world, and only suited to some few morose and melancholy men?

With what face can we pretend to true religion, or a feeling acquaintance with GOD, and the things of his kingdom, whilst the continual bleatings and lowings of our souls after created good betray us so manifestly, and proclaim before all the world, that the beast, the brutish life, is still powerful in us? “If ye seek me,” says CHRIST to his followers, as well as he did once to his persecutors, “then let these go;”—let go your hold of earthly objects, let these worldly joys and toys vanish; “withhold your throat from thirst, and your feet from being unshod,” and come follow me only, and ye shall have treasure in heaven; for he that will not deny all for me, is not worthy of me. But, ah sad and dreadful fall, which has so miserably cramped this royal offspring, and made the King’s son to be a lame MEPHIBOSHETH! How are the sons of the morning become children of darkness, and the heirs of heaven vassals and drudges to earth! How is the King’s daughter unequally yoked with a churlish NABAL, who continually checks her divine and generous motions! How unhappily art thou matched, O

my soul! And yet, alas! I see it is too properly a marriage; for thou hast clean forgotten "thine own people, and thy father's house." Take up, take up a lamentation, thou virgin-daughter of the God of Zion: some time, indeed, a virgin, but now, alas! miserably married to an unworthy mate, that can never be able to match thy faculties, nor maintain thee according to the grandeur of thy birth, or the necessary pomp of thy expenses, and way of living! Nay, thou art not only become a miserable wife; but, in so being, thou art also a wicked adulteress, prostituting thyself to the very vilest of thy lawful husband's servants: if thou be not incestuous, it is no thanks to thee, there being nothing in this world so near of kin to thee, as to make way for incest. "Return, return, O Shulamite, return, return; put away thine adulteries from between thy breasts, and so shall the King yet again greatly desire thy beauty;" for so He hath promised, (*Jer.* iii. 21,) that when there shall be a voice heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel, because they have perverted their way, and forgotten the LORD their God, and the backsliding children shall return, then He "will heal their backslidings."

CHAP. VII.

The End of religion, Eternal Life, considered in a double notion: I. As it signifies the essential happiness of the soul; II. As it takes in many glorious appendages. The former more fully described; the latter more briefly. The noble and genuine breathings of the godly soul after, and springing up into, the former. In what sense the godly soul may be said to desire the latter.

I AM now come to the last thing by which this noble principle is described, viz. the Term or End of it; and that is, *Everlasting Life*. This is the highest pitch of per-

fection, unto which the new creature is continually growing up; which the Apostle PAUL has expressed with as much grandeur of eloquence as words are able to convey, calling it “the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST.” This is that unbounded ocean, into which this living fountain, by so many unwearied streamings, perpetually endeavours to empty itself, or rather in which it embosoms itself. Now, as to what this is, we must confess with the Apostle JOHN, and indeed we have more reason to make such a confession than he had, that “it doth not yet appear,” viz. neither fully, nor distinctly. But yet we may a little inquire into it; and though it surpass all created comprehensions to take the just dimensions, and faithfully give in the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of it; yet we may essay to walk about this heavenly *Jerusalem*, as the Psalmist speaks of the earthly, “to tell the towers thereof, mark her walls, and consider her palaces,” that we may tell it to the generation following.

I. First, then, we will consider “eternal life” in the most proper notion of it, as it implies the essential happiness of the soul; and thus it is no other than the soul’s pure, perfect, and established state. By calling it a State, I designedly disparage the gross notion of a Place, as that which scarcely deserves to enter into the description of such a glory, or, at best, will obtain but a very low room there: by referring to its Purity, I purposely explode that carnal ease, rest, and affluence of sensual delights, of which last Mahometans, and of the former too many professed Christians, generally dream, and judge heaven to consist. So, then, I take “eternal life,” in the most proper notion of it, to be full, and perfect, and everlasting enjoyment of GOD, communion with him, and a most blissful conformity of all the powers and faculties of the soul to that eternal goodness, truth, and love, as far as it is, or may become, capable of the communications of the divinity. This life was purchased by our blessed LORD and SAVIOUR in the days of his flesh, and is here promised to every believing

soul. Now, in as much as we are ignorant both of the present capacity of our own faculties, how large they are, and much more ignorant, how much more large they may be made, on purpose to receive the more plentiful communications of the divine life and image, therefore can we not comprehend either the transcendent life, happiness, and glory, or that degree of sanctity and blessedness to which the believing soul may be advanced in another world. The happiness and eternal life of the soul consist in the possession or fruition of God; and this necessarily imports the proper perfection of every faculty. Nothing can be the happiness of a spirit, that is either inferior or extrinsical to it; it must be something divine, and that wrought into the very nature and temper of it. I hesitate not to affirm, that if the soul of man were advanced, so as to receive adoration or divine power, yet, if it were, in the mean time, void of divine dispositions, and a god-like nature, it were far from being made happy.

II. There is another notion of "eternal life," which is, not barely the essential happiness of the soul, but *that* with the addition of many suitable and glorious circumstances, attended with the appendages of a glorified body, the vision of CHRIST, the amicable society of Angels, freedom from temptations, and the knowledge of the secrets of nature and providence: to which may be also added, though of a lower degree, open absolution, or a visible deliverance of the saints out of the overthrow of the wicked, at the conflagration of the world, power over Devils, eminence of place, enjoyment of friends, and the like.

Now, let us briefly consider what tendencies there are in the religious soul towards each of these.

I. I suppose, then, that "eternal life" in the first sense of it, is intended here, namely, the essential happiness of the soul, or its perfect and everlasting enjoyment of God. For the description is here made of religion itself, or that principle of divine life which CHRIST JESUS implanted in the soul; and, though we

should allow, that many of those high scriptural phrases, which are brought to describe the future condition of believing souls, principally respect the appendages of its essential happiness, (as a kingdom, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, an inheritance reserved, a place prepared, and the like,) yet it seems very unnatural to interpret this phrase, "life," and "eternal life," any otherwise than of that which I call the essential happiness of the soul. But if we interpret it of this, the sense is very fair and easy: thus, this principle of divine life is continually endeavouring to grow up to its just altitude, and to advance itself unto a triumphant state, even as all other principles of life naturally tend towards a final accomplishment, and ultimate perfection. Now, this "eternal life" is not a thing specifically different from religion, or the image of God, or the divine life, but indeed the greatest height and perfection of it: even as the light of the sun at noon-day is not a light really distinct from what it was in the first dawns of the morning, but only a different degree;—which seems to be the very similitude by which the SPIRIT of God illustrates the matter in hand. (*Prov. iv. 18.*) Man has not two distinct kinds of happiness in the two distinct worlds, in which he is made to live; but one and the same thing is his blessedness in both, which must needs be the enjoyment of God. The translation made of the text is very suitable to this notion; for this divine principle is said to spring up, not unto, but into everlasting life; as if it were said, it springs up till it be swallowed up into the perfect knowledge, love, and enjoyment of God. Even as youth is swallowed up in manhood, so this grace is swallowed up in glory; and then is not so much abolished, as perfected.

By this phrase, the genius of true religion, and the excellent temper of the truly religious soul, are most strikingly described. This is the soul which, being in some measure delivered from its unnatural bondage, and freed from its unhappy confinement, now spreads itself in God, lifts up itself unto him, stretches itself upon him,

and is not content with a heaven merely to come, but brings down a heaven into itself, by carrying up itself unto, and after, the God of heaven. God is become great, and He only is great, in the eye of such a Christian; he is indeed become all things to him : whilst this principle is predominant in him, he knows no interest but to thrive and grow great in God ; no will, but to serve the will, and comply with the mind of God ; no end, but to be united to God ; no business, but to display and reflect the glory and perfections of God upon earth : the business of his life is to serve him ; the ambition of his soul to be like him ; and his happiness in this world to be united to him, and in the world to come, to be swallowed up in him ; in this world to know, and love, and rest, and delight in, and enjoy God more than all things, and in the world to come to enjoy him still more. Faith, hope, and love, are uniting and springing graces, and this eternal life is the end and perfection of them all : not that any one of them, I conceive, shall be utterly abolished ; but faith will be ripened into the most firm and undisturbed confidence, affiance, and acquiescence in God ; hope will be advanced into a more cheerful, powerful, and confident expectation, having for its object the perpetuation of the soul's felicity ; and love will become much more loving, and more clearly distinguishable from the imperfect languishings of this present state, when it shall grow up into pure delights and complacencies, resting and glorying in the arms of its adequate, satisfactory, and eternal object. The faith of the hypocrite, and indeed his hope too, are still springing up into self-preservation, deliverance, liberty, a splendid and pompous state of the church, (that is, of his own party,) or some such thing as will gratify the animal life, —and there it terminates : but the faith of the religious soul springs up into eternal life ; it knows no term but “the salvation of the soul ;” (1 *Pet.* i. 9 ;) as his hope knows no accomplishment but a state of god-like purity and perfection. (1 *John* iii. 3.) The merely natural man lives within himself, within a circle of his own, and

cannot get out ; whether he eat, or drink, or pray, or be zealous for the popular pulling down of the political anti-christ, he is still in his own circle, he is still sacrificing in all this to that great *helluo*, (glutton,) the animal life : but the godly man is disinterested of self, and thus is still contriving the advancement of a nobler life within himself, and moving towards God, as his supreme and all-sufficient good. Give him the whole world, still he cannot fix nor centre here : God has put into him a holy, restless appetite after a higher good. The hungerings of the godly soul are not, cannot be satisfied, till it come to feed upon the hidden manna, nor its thirstings quenched, till it come to be swallowed up in the unbounded ocean of life and love.

2. The second and more improper notion of eternal life, is that which takes in the circumstances or appendages of it. And here we must allow, that the Holy Scripture openly reveals these circumstances, of some of which it seems to make great account. Again, we will allow, that many of those phrases which the Scripture uses to describe the blessed state of the other world, principally respect these appendages of the soul's essential happiness : such perhaps are the "crown of righteousness ;" (2 *Tim.* iv. 8;) "the prize of the high calling ;" (*Phil.* iii. 14;) "the house which is from heaven ;" (2 *Cor.* v. 2;) "a kingdom," "an incorruptible inheritance," "a place prepared," "mansions," "a reward," "praise and honour and glory at the appearing of JESUS CHRIST." (1 *Pet.* i. 7, &c.)

But, these things being conceded, it does not appear how far the religious soul springs up into these additional glories, and thirsts after them. I know there are many that speak very highly of these appendages, and allow the godly soul a very high valuation of them : and this they principally infer from the example of CHRIST himself, as also those of MOSES and PAUL. Give me leave, therefore, to suggest something, not to enervate, but to moderate, the argument drawn from these persons ; and, after that, I

shall briefly lay down what I conceive to be most scriptural and rational in this matter.

As for the example of CHRIST, it seems to make not much for them in this matter. For although that text is very plain, which says, that "for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross," and this joy seems as plainly to be his session "at the right hand of the throne of God," (*Heb. xii. 2.*) yet, if by this joy we understand a more full and glorious possession of God, and a more excellent exaltation of his human nature to a more free fruition of the divine, then it cannot be applied to any thing but the springing up of the gracious soul into its essential happiness. Or, if by this joy and throne we understand the powers, with which CHRIST foresaw he should be vested, of leading captivity captive, trampling under his feet the powers of hell and darkness, and procuring gifts for men, which seems to me to be most likely, then it belongs not at all to men, neither can this example be drawn into imitation.

As for the instance of MOSES, who is said to have had "respect to the recompence of the reward," (*Heb. xi. 26.*) it is not granted, that that "recompence of reward" relates principally to these appendages of the soul's essential happiness: but, though I should also allow that, yet all that can be inferred from it is but a respect which MOSES had to this recompence, or some account which he in his sufferings made of it; which was a very warrantable contemplation.

The Apostle PAUL, indeed, does openly profess that he looked for and desired the coming of CHRIST from heaven, upon the account of that glorious body with which he would then clothe him; (*Phil. iii. 20, 21.*) and so he certainly might, and yet not desire it principally and primarily, but secondarily, and with reference.

And this leads me to the general answer. Some of these circumstances which I have named, especially that of the glorified body, may be reduced to the essential happiness of the soul, or included in it, so as that the

soul could not otherwise be perfectly happy. It is the opinion of all divines, that a Christian is not completely happy, till he consist of a soul and body both glorified. And, indeed, considering the dear affection and essential aptitude for a body, which God has planted in the human soul, we cannot well conceive how she should be perfectly happy without one: and this earthly body is, alas! an unequal yoke-fellow, in which she is half-stifled, and rather buried than conveniently lodged; so that it seems necessary even to her essential happiness, that she should have some more heavenly and glorious body, wherein she may commodiously and pleasantly exert her innate powers, and by which she may express herself in a spiritual and nobler manner, suitable to her own natural dignity and vigour, and to her infinitely amiable and most beloved object.

Concerning the rest of the circumstances which cannot be thus reduced, I conceive that such of them as are necessary to the essential happiness of the soul, by way of subserviency, may be viewed, and desired, and thirsted after, secondarily, and with reference; that is, under this notion only, as they are subservient to that essential blessedness. I confess I do not understand under what other notion a religious soul can lift up itself unto them; I mean, so far as it is holy and religious, and acts suitably to that divine principle which the Father of Spirits, or rather the Father of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, has implanted in it.

As a result from the whole discourse, especially from this last part of it, let me earnestly entreat all the professors of this holy religion, which the blessed Messiah, CHRIST JESUS, hath so dearly bought for the world, and so clearly revealed in it, not to value themselves by any thing which the power of natural self-love may exert or desire, perform or expect,—nor by any thing below the image of God, and the internal and transforming manifestations of CHRIST JESUS in them, the perfection of which is eternal life, in the most proper and true notion

of it. I have often suggested the same lesson in this short treatise, but I can never inculcate it often enough; nay, the eloquence of angels is not sufficient to imprint it upon the hearts of men. Possibly it may startle some, (God grant it may effectually!) and make the ears of many that hear it to tingle, but yet I will proclaim it, *It is possible for a man to desire not only the things of this world, but even heaven itself, to consume it upon his lusts; and he may as truly be making provision for the flesh, to fulfil it in the lusts thereof, in longing after a kind of heaven, as in eating, and drinking, and rising up to play.* Certainly a truly christian spirit, rightly invigorated and actuated by this divine and potent principle, religion, cannot look upon heaven as merely future, or as something perfectly distinct from him; but he eyes it as life, eternal life, the perfection of the purest and divinest life communicable to a soul, and is daily thirsting after it, or rather, as it is said in the text, growing up into it. I know that heaven is sometimes called a rest, in opposition to the dissatisfaction of the uncentered and unbelieving soul; but, in opposition to a sluggish, inert, and dormant rest, it is here said to be *Life, Eternal Life.* Let us show ourselves to be living Christians, by springing up into the utmost consummation of life: let it appear that CHRIST JESUS, the Prince of Life, who was manifested on purpose to take away our sins, (1 *John* iii. 5,) hath not only covered our shame, and, as it were, embalmed our dead souls, to keep them from putrefaction, and strewed them with the flowers of his merits, to take away their noisomeness from the nostrils of his Father, but hath truly advanced, re-instated, and made to flourish, the souls that sin had so miserably degraded and deflowered. Deliver yourselves, O immortal souls! from all those unsuitable and unseemly cares, studies, and joys, from all those low and particular ends and lusts, which do not only pinch and straiten, but even debase and debauch you: let it not be said, that the King of Sodom made ABRAHAM rich; that your delight, happiness, and contentment, are derived

from any prosperous, plentiful, pompous state, either in the world that now is, or that which is to come: but let it be derived from the righteousness of faith, and your vital union with the FATHER and the SON; to whom, in the unity of the SPIRIT, be honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

COMMUNION

WITH

G O D.



BY SAMUEL SHAW,

Some time Minister of Long-Whatton, in Leicestershire.

COMMUNION WITH GOD.

1 JOHN i. 3.

*Our Fellowship is with the FATHER, and with his SON
JESUS CHRIST.*

THESE words express the way of a Christian's living, and that kind of converse whereby a good man is distinguished from all other men.

A good man is not distinguished from other men by any thing without him ; by any church-privileges, which are common to hypocrites and sincere Christians ; by any external visible performances, in which the disciples of the Pharisees may be more specious than the disciples of CHRIST ; much less by any corporal or temporal enjoyment, ornament, strength, beauty, riches, or descent ; nor by any carnal relation, though it were to ABRAHAM ; (as the Jews boasted of their Father ABRAHAM ; (*John* viii. 33 ;)) but by something internal, and substantial,—by a relation to GOD. The character of a good man must be fetched from his correspondence to the Chief Good ; and the happiness of a soul must be judged of by its relation to Life, and Love, and Blessedness itself. Things external, corporal, and temporal, make some difference amongst men, but it is but nominal and titular, in comparison. Men are really and substantially made to differ by the relation that they have to GOD. This is the most certain and proper mark of a good

man, viz. Communion with God: in all other things he may be like other men, but in this he differs from and excels them all.

The ground of my discourse then shall be this short and plain proposition, viz.

“A godly man hath communion with God.”

In order to the more distinct treatment of this subject I must briefly premise a few things.

1. *The gracious and loving God made nothing miserable of all that he made.* There are no slaves born in his great house of the world. He made all things out of himself, and he hath no idea of evil in himself, so that it was not possible that he should make any thing evil or miserable. Every thing was good, (*Gen. i.*) and so in some sense happy. He was free to make the world, or not; but making it, he could not make it evil or miserable. Every thing is the product of almighty love and goodness.

2. *The happiness of every creature consists in its acting agreeably to that nature which God bestowed upon it, to those ends which he propounded to it, and to those laws which he has given it.* These laws were contrived with the greatest suitableness to that nature, and suberviency to those ends. Every creature is in its kind happy, while it acts agreeably to that nature which the wise Creator implanted in it.

3. *The happiness of the creature is higher or lower, greater or less, according as it comes nearer to God, or is further off from him; according as it receives more or less from him; according to what communion it hath with him.*

4. *There can be no communion without likeness.* The sun shines upon a stone-wall, as well as upon man, but a stone-wall has no communion with the sun, because it has no eyes to see the light of it as man has, nor can receive the benign influences of its heat as the herbs do. A log of wood lieth in the water as well as the fish, but it has no communion with the water, nor receives advantage

by it as the fish does. GOD is present, according to his infinite essence, with the Devils as well as with the Angels; but the former have no likeness in nature to him, and so no communion with him, as the latter have.

5. *GOD has given a more large and excellent capacity to man, than to any other of his creatures upon earth.* GOD has endued man with reason, and so made him capable of a higher life, and a more excellent communion with his Maker, than all the rest. Of all sublunary creatures, the rational soul alone is capable of knowing, loving, serving, enjoying, and imitating GOD, and so of having a glorious communion with him. The sun, in all its glory, is not so excellent a being as any soul of man, upon this account. And although man, by his fall, lost his actual communion with GOD, yet he is a reasonable creature still; he has not lost his capacity of receiving influences from him, and enjoying communion with him. The world, when it is at the darkest, is yet capable of being enlightened.

6. *When the nature of man is, by divine grace, healed of its depravity, and restored to its former rectitude, so as to act suitably to the end for which it was made, and to spend itself upon its proper object, then man comes to have a right communion with GOD, and to be happy.* All rational souls are capable of holding communion with GOD; but all do not hold communion with him: but they that know GOD, and live like him, these are his children, and these only converse with him. When the SPIRIT of GOD informs these rational souls, infuses through them the strength of a divine life, and stamps the lively impressions of divine perfections upon them, rendering their hearts, wills, and ways, conformable to that glorious pattern, that infinite good, then do they enjoy a proper communion with him, and are truly blessed; though they are not completely blessed, till this conformity be perfected according to what those souls are capable of.

This is the true notion of man's communion with GOD, which we cannot fully describe, till more fully enjoyed. That soul which truly lives and feeds upon GOD, tastes

more than it can tell ; and yet it can tell this, that this is the most high, excellent, noble, glorious life in the whole world.

This communion, as also the intimacy and closeness of it, are described variously in the Holy Scriptures ; as by the similitude of members being in the body, (*1 Cor. xii. 27,*) and of branches being in the vine ; (*John xv. 1, 2 ;*) by being formed according to GOD'S image, (*Rom. viii. 29,*) and changed into his image ; (*2 Cor. iii. 18 ;*) by GOD'S dwelling in the soul, and the soul in him ; (*1 John iv. 16 ;*) by CHRIST'S being formed in the soul ; (*Gal. iv. 19 ;*) by the soul'S having CHRIST ; (*1 John iv. 16 ;*) by CHRIST'S supping with the soul, and the soul with him. (*Rev. iii. 20.*) Because nothing is more one with us, than that which we eat and drink, being incorporated into us ; therefore is this spiritual communion between GOD and the soul oft-times, in Scripture, described by our eating and drinking with him.

Thus GOD was pleased to allow his people under the Law, when they had offered up a part of their beasts in sacrifice to him, to sit down and feast upon the rest, as a token of that familiarity and oneness that were between him and them. By the like action our Saviour shadowed out the same mystery, when, in the Sacrament of his Supper, he appointed them to sit down to eat and drink with him, to intimate their feeding upon him, and most close communion with him : and the state of glory is thus shadowed out too. (*Matt. viii. 11 ; Rev. xix. 9.*) And, which is worth noting, I think the sacramental eating and drinking have some reference to that most intimate communion of the saints with GOD in glory : our Saviour himself seems to imply as much in that speech of his, (*Luke xxii. 30,*) " That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom ; " in which words he seems plainly to allude to the sacramental eating and drinking, which he had a little before instituted.

I have already, in part, showed you wherein the soul'S communion with GOD consists : but, to give you a more

distinct knowledge of this great mystery, I shall unfold it in these three particulars.

1. *A godly soul hath communion with GOD in his Attributes.* When the soul of man is moulded and formed into a resemblance of the divine nature, then has it a true fellowship with him. Now this communion with GOD in his attributes is to be seen in two ways.

(1.) *When the soul is in its measure, according to the capacity of a creature, all that which GOD is.* This is the communion which the Angels have with GOD: their beholding of the face of GOD is not to be understood of a mere speculation, or an idle gazing upon the Deity; but they see him, by receiving his image upon themselves, and reflecting his glory and brightness; they partake of the goodness, purity, wisdom, and righteousness of GOD, which makes them such glorious spirits; and the want of this makes the others, whom we call Devils, to be what they are. Thus godly men shall have communion with GOD,—they shall see GOD. (*Matt. v. 8; Heb. xii. 14.*) Yea, thus they have communion with him in some measure; they not only see GOD in the world, as the Devils do, and see him in the Word, but they see him in themselves, in the frame of their own souls; they find themselves moulded into his image, and a resemblance of him drawn upon them. This is a beautiful vision of GOD, true and real, though not full and complete. This is described in Scripture, by being “holy, as GOD is holy,” (1 *Pet. i. 16*;) and “perfect, as GOD is perfect.” (*Matt. v. 48.*) This our SAVIOUR exhorts us to seek after; (*Matt. xi. 29*;) “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart:” and the Apostle says, (*Eph. v. 1*;) “Be ye followers of GOD, as dear children.” When the nature and perfections of GOD, his holiness, righteousness, and wisdom, are copied out upon our natures, and the same spirit is in us which was in CHRIST JESUS, then have we a communion with GOD, which blessed communion, when the soul becomes all that which GOD is, arises from a conformity of nature.

(2.) *When the soul, in its actions as a creature, rightly answers to the attributes of the Creator*;—as when the soul answers to the goodness of God with suitable affections of love, and joy, and delight; when it corresponds to the sovereignty and wisdom of God by the acts of self-denial and resignation; and when it converses with the righteousness of God by patience and a holy acquiescence. When the soul rightly exerts those acts which are proper and suitable to the nature of God, then it may be said to hold communion with him in his attributes; the actions and motions of the soul corresponding to the divine nature and attributes. This suitability of the soul, I intend especially with reference to the incommunicable attributes of God, where there is no place for imitation, though it holds good in the rest also.

2. *A godly soul hath communion with God in his Word.* To read or hear the word, is not to hold a real communion with God therein: many do so that are strangers to God: a man may read my letters, and yet correspond with my enemy. That son, in the Gospel, who heard his father's command, and answered, "I go, Sir," but went not, had no right communion with his paternal authority. But when the soul is ennobled into such a frame as this word doth require, then it holds communion with God in his word: for example; when the soul puts forth those acts of humiliation, holy fear, reverence, and godly trembling, which suit the nature of a divine threatening, when the soul answers to the command of God with suitable resolutions, repentings, reformations, and real obedience, when it entertains the promise with suitable acts of holy delight, joy, and refreshment, and acquiesces in the same; then doth it truly converse with God in his word.

3. *A godly soul has communion with God in his Works:* And that is, when the soul answers to the several Providences of God with suitable affections and dispositions. The godly soul not only views and observes the hand of God

in all things that fall out, but complies with those providences, and is moulded into that frame, and put upon those duties, which providences call for. Then does the soul rightly hold communion with God in his works, when it is humbled under humbling Providences; and is refreshed, strengthened, and made to grow up under prosperous Providences, like those of whom we read in *Acts ix. 31*, who, having rest given them, were edified, comforted, and multiplied. When the soul rightly comports with every Providence, and the will is moulded into the will of God, then do we hold communion with him in his works. This theme is large, because the works of God are manifold; works of creation, redemption, and preservation; works towards other men, and towards ourselves; towards our outward and inward man. A godly soul has communion with God in all these; though perhaps not equally in all, yet sincerely and truly.

By what has been said, you understand that real fellowship with God is not a bare communion of names; to have the name of God called upon us, and to be called Christians, or the people of God, or to name the name of God, and to cry, LORD, LORD, does not make any one really and truly the better man, nor make a soul really happy. It is not enough to cry, "The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD," to make our boast in the law, or to call ourselves the children of ABRAHAM, as the *Jews* did in JOHN THE BAPTIST'S time. These privileges and professions are extrinsic to the soul, and do nothing towards the true ennobling of it. But real fellowship with God is a communion of hearts and natures, of will and affections, of interest and ends. To have one heart and will, the same interest and ends with God, is to be truly godly: a god-like man is the only godly man: a christ-like nature brought into the soul does alone denominate a man a true Christian. It is not speaking together, but loving and living together, which brings God and the soul into one: "I live, yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me. (*Gal. ii. 20.*) And thus, I suppose, you have

a fair account why the Apostle JAMES, (*chap. ii.*), does so much prefer works before faith ; (for indeed no faith is worth any thing, save only that which joins the soul to the object, and makes the thing believed one's own ;) as also why the Apōstle PAUL prefers love before a faith of miracles. Though indeed a justifying faith is the most miraculous, yet that faith which unites the soul and God together is more excellent, and more miraculous, than the faith that removes mountains.

Before I apply the doctrine, give me leave to lay down some rules tending further to explain and clear it.

1. *This must be admitted, which I touched upon before, that "there can be no communion between GOD and man, but by a likeness of nature, a new and divine principle implanted in the soul."* A beast has no communion with a man, because reason, the ground of such communion, is wanting. Of all the creatures, there was none found that could be a meet help for ADAM, that could be taken into the human society, till EVE was made, who was a human person. So neither can there be any conjunction of the soul with GOD, but by oneness of Spirit : (1 Cor. vi. 17 :) "He that is joined unto the LORD is one spirit."

2. *There can be no communion with GOD but by a Mediator ; no Mediator but CHRIST JESUS, who is GOD-MAN.* Two cannot walk together, nor hold communion, except they be agreed ; and there can be no agreement made between GOD and man, but by CHRIST JESUS. Therefore it is said by the Apostle, "Our communion is with the FATHER and the SON," as if he had said, with the FATHER by the SON ; and faith, whereby the soul and GOD are united, is still said to be faith in CHRIST.

3. *A soul's communion with GOD cannot be interrupted by any local mutations.* It is a spiritual conjunction, and is not violated by any confinement : the walls of a prison cannot separate GOD and the godly soul ; banishment cannot drive a soul from GOD. The blessed Angels, when they are dispatched into the utmost ends of the world upon the service of GOD, are even then beholding the face of GOD, and enjoy as intimate communion with him

as ever: the case is the same with all godly souls, whose communion with God does not depend upon any local situation; it is not thousands of miles that can create a distance between God and the soul. Indeed nothing but sin does it, or can do it: "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God." (*Isa. lix. 2.*) Nothing but sin is contrary to this divine fellowship, and so nothing but that can interrupt this spiritual society. To speak properly, sin does not so much cause the soul's distance from God, as itself is that distance. Man and wife remain one, though at a hundred miles' distance; and believing souls maintain a certain spiritual communion one with another, though in several parts of the world. The society or communion of godly souls one with another, so far as it is spiritual, cannot be interrupted by bodily distance; much less the fellowship of God with the soul which carries about with it, and in it, a divine nature, the image of God, a holy god-like disposition, whithersoever it goes.

4. *This communion with God is much better than all outward acts, duties, and ordinances, whatsoever.* God himself long since decided this matter, that a broken and contrite heart is better than all sacrifices; (*Psal. li. 17*;) that to obey is better than sacrifice; (*1 Sam. xv. 22*;) that mercy is better than sacrifice; (*Hos. vi. 6*;) that to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with God, is to be preferred before thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil. (*Mic. vi. 7, 8.*) It holds in reference even to gospel-duties, though they may seem more spiritual than the oblations of the law. A real communion with God, a communion of hearts and natures, of wills and affections, of interests and ends, is infinitely more excellent than all hearing, praying, celebration of sabbaths or sacraments; (*James i. 25*;) as the end is more excellent than the means,—for so stands the case between them.

5. *Though communion with God concerns the whole soul, and all the faculties, affections, and motives of it, (for it*

is God's spreading his influences, and exercising his sovereignty, over all the powers of the soul, and their mutual spending of themselves upon him, and conforming to him,) yet the great acts of the soul, whereby it holds communion with God, are loving and believing. Love is the joining and knitting of the soul to God; faith is the soul's labouring after more intimate conjunction with him, receiving influences from him, and participations of him. We may say that faith fetches in supplies from heaven, and love enjoys them; faith receives sweetness and virtue from CHRIST, and love feeds upon them. Certainly these two eminent graces grow, live, and thrive together, and are inseparable companions. It is somewhat difficult to distinguish them, or to assign to each its proper place and work in the soul; they seem mutually to act, and to be acted upon by each other: perhaps the Apostle might have respect to this mystery, when he speaks so doubtfully, (*Gal. v. 6.*) *πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη*, which words may be translated, either faith acting by love, or faith acted by love. We know, indeed, that in the state of perfect communion, which we call glory, love shall abide and flourish more abundantly, and there shall be no room for faith there, as to the principal act of it; but which of them has the greater part in maintaining our communion with God in this world, it is not easy to determine. The soul is the most proper temple wherein God dwelleth, according to that declaration of the Apostle, (*2 Cor. vi. 16.*) "Ye are the temple of the living God:" faith and love are the *Jachin* and *Boaz*, the two great pillars which keep up the soul as a temple; take away these, and it remains a soul indeed, but the soul does not remain a temple to the LORD.

6. *The communion that is between God and the soul is altogether different from that communion that is between creatures.* I might show you how it excels that, in many respects; but I shall not insist upon any of those particulars, nor indeed upon any of those many differences that are between them, save only upon this one: the

communion that is between creature and creature is perfect in its kind, and consequently gives mutual satisfaction; I mean, it terminates the expectations, so that nothing remains to be enjoyed. The creature is shallow, and is soon fathomed; we soon come to the bottom of it: a finite can grasp a finite being, and enjoy it, as I may say, all at once. A man may come so near to his friend, that he can come no nearer, may enjoy him as fully as he is capable of enjoyment, or the other of being enjoyed: created sweetness may be exhausted to the very bottom. But the soul's communion with God does not give it any such satisfaction, though it gives a satisfaction of a much higher kind. This may be a certain mark, whereby to judge of the truth of communion with God; it is not glutting to the soul, but will certainly manifest itself in incessant hungerings: the soul is in the midst of plenty, and yet cries out, as if it were ready to starve for want. God is infinite; and therefore, though the soul may be ever grasping, it can never comprehend him: and yet the soul finds him to be infinitely good, and so cannot cease grasping at him. The godly soul sees that there is yet much more to be enjoyed of God, and in him; and therefore, though it be very near to him, yet cries out, and complains of its distance from him,—“Oh when shall I come and appear before him!” Though it be united to him, yet it longs to be in a closer conjunction. The godly soul forgets, with PAUL, what it has received, not through disingenuousness and unthankfulness, but through a holy ardour and covetousness: all that it hath of God seems little, because there is yet so much to be had. Though the soul drink of the fountain, yet that is not enough,—it would lie down by it; though it lie down by it, yet neither is it satisfied, except it may bathe itself, and even be swallowed up therein. Behold a paradox! The godly soul is most thirsty, though, according to CHRIST'S promise, it thirsts no more: it is most restless, though, according to his promise, it hath rest. It is peculiar to God alone, to rest in his love; for the creature cannot rest

in this imperfect state : by this we know that we are not yet in heaven ; for that is a state of perfect rest,—not of sloth, or cessation, but of satisfaction. Faith is the fever of the soul, rendering it more thirsty by so much the more as it drinks of the water of life, the living streams that flow forth from the throne of God and of the Lamb. The waters of the sanctuary are described by the Prophet, as growing deeper and deeper ; (*Ezek. xlvii.*;) so hope, which is the soul's appetite, grows larger and larger, and cannot be satisfied, till the soul's capacity be filled up.

The doctrinal part being thus briefly dispatched, it will be easy to infer some things by way of corollary. I shall content myself with three only, amongst many.

1. *All wicked men are strangers to God.* We know, indeed, that God, according to his infinite essence, is present with all his creatures. Not only men, but even Devils too, have their being in him ; He hath spread his omnipotence as the foundation whereupon the whole creation doth stand ; He reared up the world in himself, and in Him it subsists at this day. However angels and men have sadly fallen from God, yet they may be truly said to live in Him still ; and although all wicked souls straggle off from God, as to their dispositions and affections, engrafting themselves into another stock by sin and wickedness, yet they cannot possibly straggle from him as to their subsistence, as the Apostle teaches the Athenian philosophers : (*Acts xvii. 27* :) “ He is not far from every one of us,” though few feel after him or find him. Every thing that hath a being hath a relation to that infinite and supreme Being ; and every living thing may be rightly said to have communion with him who is Life itself. And all those several excellencies that are in the creatures are effluxes from God, who hath fixed various prints of his own beauty and perfection upon every thing that he hath made. God's making a thing is no other than the communicating of himself unto it. And therefore, when you look into the world, do not view any creature in the narrow point of its own being, but in the unbounded

essence of God, and therein love and admire it. But, upon the immortal soul of man, God hath copied out his divine perfections more clearly and gloriously than upon any other creature in this world. God could not make a rational soul without communicating of his own infinite wisdom, power, life, and freedom unto it: so that there is more of the divine nature to be seen in the understanding and will of any one man, than in the whole fabric of heaven and earth.

Notwithstanding this, wicked men are strangers to God. They live and move in God indeed, but they consider it not; they act as if they had no dependance upon him, no relation to him. Though they have some kind of communion with God, as creatures, yet this makes them not at all happy: for they have departed from God in their affections and dispositions, they have degenerated from that subserviency and subordination to the divine will, which is the proper perfection of the creature, and are "alienated from the life of God," as the Apostle speaks. (*Eph. iv. 18.*) It is not the soul's moving in God, that makes it truly and happily nigh unto Him, but its moving towards God, as the chief object, and according to the will of God, as the chief rule; and therefore wicked men, who pitch upon other objects, and walk by other laws, even the lusts of their own flesh, are strangers to God, and miserable. He is not properly said to know God, who has a notion of Him in his head, but he whose heart and will is moulded into a conformity to God, and a delight in Him; so that a wicked man, though he know, and believe, and tremble, as much as any of the Devils, yet not loving nor delighting in God, as his chief good, not being conformed to his image, as the highest and purest perfection, he may be truly said to be estranged from Him; which is a state of hell, and death, and darkness.

2. *The life of a true Christian is the most high and noble life in the world; it exceeds the life of all other men, even of the greatest men. The character that is here*

given of the godly man is the highest that can be given of any man, or indeed of any creature. It is the highest glory and excellency of the creature, to partake of the life of GOD, of the perfections of the CREATOR; and such is the description that the SPIRIT of GOD here makes of the godly man. What an unreasonable and senseless reproach is that which the world casts upon religion, calling it a low and despicable thing, and upon religious and godly men, calling them low-spirited people. Can a man be better spirited, than with the SPIRIT of GOD? Can any thing more truly ennoble a soul than a divine nature? Can a man be raised any higher than unto heaven itself? So noble is the godly soul. "The way of life is above to the wise;" (*Prov. xv. 24*;) and, consequently, all wicked men lead a low life, and are bound under chains of death and darkness: the righteous man is of a high and divine original, born of GOD, born from above; and therefore is more excellent than his neighbour, than any of his neighbours, even a king himself being judge. (*Prov. xii. 26*.) What a hellish baseness is that sinful gallantry of spirit, what a brutishness is that sensuality of living, which the degenerate sons of ADAM so much magnify! True goodness and excellency of spirit must be measured by the proportion which they bear to the supreme good, the infinite pattern of all perfection. What excellent persons were those renowned saints of old, of whom the Apostle says, "the world was not worthy," (*Heb. xi. 38*,) although they were thought not worthy to live in the world? What a noble and generous spirit of truly christian valour, patience, meekness, contempt of the world, and self-denial, was that, which was to be seen in the blessed Apostles, though they were esteemed as the filth and sweepings of the world, the "off-scouring of all things?" Of which of the noble, wise, or mighty men of the world, as such, did GOD ever say, "These are the men that have fellowship with me; these are the men that lead a noble and divine life"? No, no! "not many noble are called;" and when they

are called, they are made more noble than ever they were by birth or descent, by places of preferment or command. The life of every wicked man, of what rank or station soever he may be in the world, is but a low life, a life in most things common to the very beasts. If the main of his business and delight be to eat, and drink, and work, and sleep, and enjoy sensual pleasures, what doth he, what enjoyeth he, more than "the beasts that perish"? But the life of the meanest soul, that has spiritual communion with God, is a life common to him with the blessed Angels, those "sons of the morning," the flower of the whole creation. This is the true and only nobleness of spirit, when all the powers and faculties of this immortal soul are exalted and advanced into a true and vital sympathy and communion with the Chief Good, formed according to his will, and conformed to his image.

And O that wisdom might be more "justified of her children!" O that the life of God did but clearly manifest itself, and shine forth, in the lives of them that call themselves Christians! Alas that ever God himself should suffer reproach by reason of the low-spiritedness and laziness of his servants! For this cause is religion evil spoken of. The LORD awaken and enable us to express and show forth the divine life with all power and vigour, to live as high as the calling wherewith we are called, and so to roll away this reproach!

3. *The life of a Christian is not a heavy, sluggish thing, but active and vigorous; as the phrase, "communion with God," imports. Religion is a communication of life and vigour from Him, who is Life itself; which makes the truly god-like soul to be quick and powerful in its motions. Every thing is by so much the swifter and stronger in its motions, by how much the nearer it is to its centre. Certainly by how much the nearer any man is to God, who is the centre of souls, by so much the more does he covet after more intimate communion with him, and the more eagerly lay hold upon him. Communion necessarily implies re-action or*

reflection : the soul that receives of GOD, and his fulness, will certainly be emptying itself into him again. Communion, in the very force of the phrase, implies a *mutualness* ; we cannot suppose a soul partaking of GOD, but it must needs mutually render up itself to him again. There can be no commerce nor correspondence without returns. But what return can the godly soul make unto GOD ? Why, it renders up its whole self unto Him. Faith is a giving grace as well as a receiving one ; it gives the soul back to CHRIST, as well as takes CHRIST into the soul ; it imbibes strength and grace from GOD, and spends the same, and the whole powers of the soul, upon him. O shake off that lazy and drowsy spirit, which hath so benumbed many in this stupid age of the world ; and work out your salvation with care and diligence ! If your religion be nothing but a spiritual kind of sleep, your heaven will prove nothing but a pleasant dream.

Communion with GOD speaks something divine, active, vigorous. The life of a Christian does not consist only in cessation from evil, reformation from sin, or dying thereto ; mortification is but one part of regeneration. It is the conceit of many, that if they can but keep up a regular, even spirit and conversation, free from gross and scandalous sins, they are happy enough ; their utmost ambition is to be innocent and harmless. This indeed is necessary ; but surely the happiness of a soul lies higher. Thus happy are all the creatures that keep in the station, and keep up the order prescribed them of GOD : thus happy is the sun in the firmament, running its race continually, and never departing from the office which is assigned to it. But the soul of man is capable of a higher kind of happiness, viz. communion with GOD ; which is, when the faculties thereof, being awakened, refined, and acted upon by the SPIRIT of GOD, do reciprocally act and spend themselves upon him, longing to be perfectly swallowed up in him, and to be all that which GOD himself is, as far as the creature is capable of acquiring the perfections of the CREATOR.

I proceed to the next way of improving this doctrine, which shall be by way of conviction or reprehension.

1. "Our fellowship *is* with the FATHER," says ST. JOHN. This reproveth them that can take up with a *shall be*, a heaven to come. I am not now speaking to the worst of men, whose very souls are swallowed up in sensual enjoyments: for these men either think of no heaven at all, or else place their heaven and happiness in the enjoyment of themselves, or of the creature. Nor do I speak to those men who, being persuaded of a future state, do indeed wish for a heaven to come, but then it is a poor kind of low and earthly heaven, consisting in ease, rest, safety, and freedom from troubles or torments, which is the best happiness that most men understand. But I am speaking to a better and finer sort of souls than these, that are verily possessed with a sense of a pure and spiritual heaven in the world to come; yea, they are so overpowered with the foresight of it, that they earnestly expect and wish for it, and the hopes of it sustain their hearts under the manifold temptations and persecutions of this present world. But, in the mean time, they dwell too much upon heaven as a *future* state, and comfort themselves only in a happiness to come; not longing and labouring to find a heaven opened within themselves, a beginning of eternal bliss brought into themselves: they are too well content with a certain reversion; and do not eagerly enough endeavour to obtain a present possession, and to be actually *instated* in so much of the inheritance of souls as may fall to their share even in this lower world. This slothful temper and inactivity I condemn wherever it is found; yea, though it be in my own soul. Every thing in the world, by a natural principle, thirsts after its proper rest, and a happiness suitable to the nature of it; no creature can be content, though it may be constrained, to be at a distance from its centre. And why then should a godly man, who is GOD'S only new creature in the world, be content with a state of imperfection? Why should not he as eagerly covet, and as earnestly pursue,

the most intimate communion and conjunction with his God, as they do with their respective centres? Can any sensual man be content with an inheritance in reversion, so as to suspend his minding the world till hereafter? Can any ambitious spirit, who places his happiness in popular estimation and worldly greatness, be content to stand gazing at preferments? Will he be willing to sit still, and wait till they drop into his mouth? No, no! there is a raging thirst in the soul, which will not suffer it to be at rest, but is still awakening and provoking all the powers of the whole man, till they arise and fetch in water to quench it. And is there any reason to be given, why that divine principle, which God puts into regenerate souls, should not carry them as hastily and forcibly to a present fruition of their proper happiness, (so far as at present it may be enjoyed,) as that corrupt and degenerate nature doth hurry on them, in whom it ruleth, towards the satisfaction of their beastly lusts? The life and power of faith are most eminently exerted in a real bringing down of God and heaven into the soul. The truth is, heaven is a state of perfect communion with God, a state of love, joy, peace, purity, and freedom; and as far as any soul is in such a state upon earth, so far he may be said to be in heaven. Therefore a rightly active soul, that truly understands its proper and spiritual heaven and happiness, cannot be content to stay for all its happiness till the world to come,—cannot be content to be unhappy, no, not for an hour,—but is still growing up in God, and springing up into everlasting life. (*John* iv. 14.)

2. This doctrine reprehends them that make a stir about the kingdom of CHRIST in the world, and men's being brought into the communion of the church, but advance not his kingdom in their own souls, nor long to have their own souls advanced into this noble state of communion with the FATHER, and with the SON JESUS CHRIST. There is, doubtless, a generation of such popular Christians, who, being strangers to the life, and power, and spirit of true

religion, endeavour to set off themselves to the world, and commend themselves to their brethren, by a pretended zeal for the kingdom of CHRIST in the world, and for the glorious manifestation of it, as they speak. I know, indeed, that it is worthy of the cares, and prayers, and utmost diligence of every serious Christian, to spread the knowledge of the Gospel, and to pour out the ointment of CHRIST'S name far and near: a more pure and spiritual administration of all gospel-ordinances throughout the world is highly desirable: yea, and I think an indifferent and careless disposition towards the worship of GOD argues much of an earthly and atheistical mind. But I fear that kingdom of CHRIST, and those glorious manifestations, which are so much pretended to by many, if they should be thoroughly examined, would be, at length, resolved into nothing else but the advancement of some one party, or the exchanging of an old form and dress of religion for a new one; and that this zeal would be found little better than the blazings of self-love, a fire kindled not by a coal from the altar, but by a spark of their own. But be it so, that this disposition of theirs is sincere and spiritual, should not this charity begin at home? The most proper kingdom of CHRIST is that by which he rules in the hearts of men: the most excellent worship is when the soul itself becomes a temple for the living GOD to dwell in, and receives and reflects the manifestations of his glory; when a fire of divine love is kindled in it, and therein it offers up unto GOD, not bulls and goats, no, nor so much prayers and meditations, as indeed itself, which is a reasonable service, as the Apostle speaks, far more glorious than the Mosaical or evangelical dispensation either, if you consider it in the letter only. Whatever men may pretend, no man can be rightly studious of the advancement of the kingdom of GOD in the world, who hath not first felt the mighty power and blessed effects of it in his own soul. Communion with the church is only so far to be valued, as it lies in order to a real and spiritual communion with GOD; which com-

munion with God, if we indeed sincerely wish for others, we shall more abundantly labour to promote in ourselves. I cannot believe that he doth heartily seek the happiness of others, who himself sits still, and is content to be miserable, especially when their happiness and his is one and the same.

3. This doctrine condemns them as no Christians, whose fellowship is only with their fellow-creatures. We have seen that this is the character, the distinguishing character, of a godly man, to have fellowship with God; it must necessarily follow then, that those degenerate souls that rise no higher than the world, that converse only with creatures, are strangers to true Christianity, whatever their confidence or presumption may be. Christians, tell me not what you profess of CHRIST, what you believe of the Gospel, what orthodox opinions you hold, what an honest party you side with, how many specious duties you perform, no, nor what hopes or wishes you have of going to heaven; but, tell me, where is your principal communion? What do you mainly mind, follow, and converse with? What rule do you live by? What object do you ultimately aim at? The whole world of worldly men doth hasten after another God, as the Psalmist's phrase is, though not all after the same God; they spend their souls indeed upon various objects, and use different methods to obtain rest, but yet all their happiness and contentment may be ultimately resolved into creature-communion. The dreadful sentence, which the Apostle delivers concerning all men, is to be limited to all wicked men, and of them it is undoubtedly true; (*Phil.* ii. 21;) "All seek their own, and none the things of JESUS CHRIST:" and of all these it is that the Psalmist's "many" is to be understood; (*Psal.* iv. 6;) "There be many that say, Who will show us any good," *i. e.* any creature-good, as the words following explain it. All unregenerate souls are bound up in the creature, some creature or other; and therefore the noblest of them, whatever boast they may make, is low and ignoble; their main converse is but with their fellow-

creatures, and indeed creatures much inferior to themselves :—“corn and wine,” says the Psalmist ; “earthly things,” says the Apostle ; (*Phil.* iii. 19 ;) “Who mind earthly things.” In a word, though it be true, as the Apostle says in one place, that all men in the world live “in God,” (*Acts* xvii. 28,) yet it is also true, that most men, as the same Apostle speaks elsewhere, do live “without God in the world,” have their hearts staked down to one creature or other, and so fall short of this honourable character which the Apostle here gives of godly men, “Our fellowship is with the FATHER, and with his SON JESUS CHRIST.”

And now I shall comprehend the remainder of this discourse in an humble request and earnest expostulation.

Reckon not upon any happiness below this communion. There are many things which a Christian may take as comforts ; but only one, this one, that he ought to take to be the happiness of his life. I design not to speak any thing to the prejudice of natural or civil ornaments or accomplishments, much less to the disparagement of any of those endowments or employments which are, in a sense, spiritual, and are commonly called gifts and duties : but, I must confess, it is one of the great wonders of the world to me, to see such a noble and intelligent being, as the soul of man is, attending to and pursuing after things either extrinsical or inferior to itself, and in the mean time carelessly forgetting, or wilfully rejecting, its main happiness, principal end, and proper perfection. As for sensual persons, those mere animals, whose souls are in their senses, and seem to perform no higher office in the world than the souls of beasts, that is, to carry about their bodies, and who value themselves by their bodies, or, which is baser, by the apparel that clothes them, or the estates that feed them, I shall not now trouble myself about them, but leave them to be chastised by *SENECA* or *PLUTARCH*, or indeed any ordinary Philosopher. I shall rather apply myself a little to a sort of higher-spirited people, whom, by a condescension of

charity, we call Christians, and who, valuing themselves by external professions, privileges, and performances, may indeed be said to be somewhat more scrupulous and curious, but no less mistaken than the former : for if the grosser sort of sensualists deny, and professedly abjure their own reason, and the finer sort of hypocrites do more cunningly bribe theirs, each method amounts to no more than a cheat ; and both parties will be alike miserable, save that the latter will be somewhat more tormented in missing a happiness for which they looked and hoped. It is not proper to my present discourse, to speak so highly and honourably of these externals of Christianity, nor to press unto them so zealously, as I do at all times when I have fit occasion ; for I value all ordinances of CHRIST, and duties of GOD's worship, at a high rate ; nay, I know not any serious and truly godly soul in the world, but is of this same persuasion with me : but I must confess, I think it is one of the greatest and most pernicious cheats in the world, for men to feed upon the dish instead of the meat, or to place their happiness in those things which GOD has only appointed to be means of conveying it. This was the great destruction of the Jewish church ; by this they perished : thus they are every where described in Scripture, as a people resting in their privileges and performances, and boasting of their sacrifices and temple-service ; they made account of a strange kind of flesh-pleasing heaven, something distinct from them, and reserved for them, to be given them by way of reward for the righteousness which themselves had wrought by the mere power of their own free-will ; which righteousness, if we look either into their own writings, or GOD's writings concerning them, we shall find was nothing else but a strict observance of the precepts of the Law, according to the letter and external dispensation of it. Such a low and legal spirit was generally found amongst the Jews ; I wish the greatest part of us, who are in profession and name evangelical, be not found as truly legal in spirit and temper as they were. If we cry, " The Gospel of CHRIST, the

Gospel of CHRIST," with the same spirit as they cried, "The Temple of the LORD, the Temple of the LORD," our confidence will as surely betray us into final misery as theirs did. Indeed, prayers, sacraments, sermons, are somewhat finer words than the old obsolete ones, the Law, sacrifices, ceremonies; but, alas! they are but words; at least they are not Gods, and no more fit to *terminate* our devotions and affections than these.

I beseech you therefore, Christians, be not mistaken in this matter. True Christianity is not a notion, but a nature: that is not religion which is wrapped up in books, or laid up in men's brains; but it is laid in the very constitution of the soul, a new principle implanted by God in the highest powers of the soul, refining and spiritualizing all its faculties, and rendering them as like to God himself, as such a creature can resemble its Creator. It is a truth, as clear as the sun, that nothing can make a soul really happy, but what is wrought into the nature of it; and that must be somewhat more excellent than itself, and can be nothing less than something divine, even the image of the blessed God. If you be Christians, in deed and in truth, value all the ordinances of God, and the duties of the christian religion, but value not yourselves by these, nor estimate your happiness by these. Attend upon them all for the maintenance and increase of real fellowship with God: for though these are not that fellowship, yet they are the way wherein it pleases God to give it. Drink the sincere milk of the word, but let it be only with a holy design of growing thereby, of growing up into God, and a divine life. Away with those low and base thoughts of happiness; the happiness of a soul is a high, excellent, and indeed a divine thing; it is in some sense common to God and the soul; God is happy in himself alone, and the soul can only be happy in him. What contentment, what real happiness, christian, can the rising of thy party in the world, or the rising of thy name, bring thee, if, in the mean time, thou harbourst any carnal will, any self-

interest, which rises up in opposition to the pure and perfect will and nature of GOD? How art thou happy in thy prayers, if thou cast sin out at thy mouth, and, in the mean time, a fountain of iniquity be springing up in thy heart? Of what avail, towards a state of perfection, are the most orthodox opinion, the most honest society, the fairest profession, and the most plausible performances, if the soul be, in the mean time, alienated from the life of GOD, and be feeding upon some earthly trash or other, which destroys the native powers and vigour of it, and keeps it under a perpetual languor? Even just so much as a silken stocking upon a gouty leg, or a princely diadem upon an aching head, avails towards a state of ease and soundness of body. Let nothing limit your ambition, but a state of god-like perfection; let nothing set bounds to your loving and longing souls, but a real fruition of GOD himself: nay, let not even that bound them, but the more you enjoy, see, and taste, the more let your love be strengthened, after the manner of fire, which the more it is fed, the more hungry and devouring it grows. In a word, let nothing satisfy you lower than the highest character that can be given of mortal man, to be men “after GOD’s own heart,” to have GOD dwelling in you, to be filled with his fulness, to have this real and excellent “communion with the FATHER, and with his SON JESUS CHRIST:” to whom be all honour, praise, and glory, for ever and ever!



A

SERMON

ON THE

FINAL JUDGMENT,

PREACHED BEFORE THE HOUSE OF PEERS

IN THE

ABBEY-CHURCH AT WESTMINSTER,

OCTOBER 10, 1666,

On the Day appointed for Humiliation after the Great Fire of London.



BY SETH WARD, D.D.,

THEN BISHOP OF EXETER.



A
SERMON
ON THE
FINAL JUDGMENT.

ECCLES. xi. 9.

But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment.

THE great and general design of the ministry and preaching of the gospel, is to bring men to Christianity; not merely in the outward profession, but in the true spirit and power thereof; to the end that they may be justified, and sanctified, and finally saved through CHRIST for ever.

The particular design of this day's observation is to "humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God," in consideration of his judgments, especially that late one, which consumed with fire the ancient and noble metropolis of this nation; and to endeavour to appease the wrath of God, gone out against us!

To compass both these designs, I know no better expedient, than to reason a while upon the important argument suggested in the text.

Who can think upon the conflagration of our late glorious city, and not call to mind the great and terrible day of judgment?

Who can think seriously of judgment, and not be compelled to come in, (driven to Christianity,) that he may be "saved from the wrath to come?"

The great instructor and example of Christian Preachers (he who saith of himself, that CHRIST sent him "to preach, and not to baptize,") found no means so powerful

to persuade men to christianity as to reason upon this argument ; as first to lay before them the terror of judgment, and then (whilst that was warm upon their hearts) to make them a tender of the Gospel. This is the great advantage and use which the Apostle makes of the doctrine of the text. "We must all appear," saith he, "before the judgment-seat of CHRIST:—Knowing therefore the terror of the LORD, we persuade men."

Upon these considerations I shall, in a practical and familiar way of reasoning, endeavour to imitate our Apostle in this particular.

If, in the mean time, it should be unpleasant to hear of the judgment to come, we shall do well to consider what it will be to undergo it. We shall do well to reflect upon our souls, and search out the ground of this unpleasantness. Is it because we do not believe a judgment to come, or because we ourselves shall be brought to judgment? Is it because we never consider who it is before whom we must appear, or what things will be charged to our account? Is it because we are so far gone in our arrears, that it is to no purpose to call these things into our remembrance?—Whatever it may be, we may perhaps hear of that, which may meet with and remove the prejudice and imposture that are upon us. It is neither our negligence nor infidelity that will "make void the truth of GOD." Whether we will hear, or whether we will forbear, the words which I have read remain firm and unalterable, and they clearly contain these propositions :

- I. There is a *Judgment to come*.
- II. *Thou* shalt be brought to Judgment.
- III. *GOD* will bring thee to Judgment.
- IV. *GOD* will bring thee to Judgment for *these things*,
—the ways of thy heart.
- V. *GOD* will bring thee to Judgment for *all* these things.

VI. All this is certain and evident ; for it is not said " *Think*," or " *Believe*," but " *Know*—that for all these things *GOD* will bring thee to Judgment."

1. First then, *There is a JUDGMENT TO COME.* This is no politic invention found out to fright you from your pleasures ; this is no engine of state devised to keep you in a subordination to your brethren ; this is no vain thunder, or foolish fire, to terrify you into a blind obedience ; but it is the tenor of the Scripture, the voice of GOD. “ King AGRIPPA, believest thou the Prophets ? I know that thou believest,” saith ST. PAUL. Brethren, do we believe the Scriptures ? I hope we do believe them ; this we do all profess to believe, so often as we repeat our creed ; and I hope the dissoluteness of our times has not yet shattered that foundation of our faith, the ground-work of our hopes respecting the salvation of our souls. Surely there are rewards for men ; “ doubtless there is a GOD which judgeth the earth.” What though the foundations of the world be out of course,—the pillar of faith remains unshaken ; “ the rod of the ungodly shall not for ever rest upon the righteous.” I desire to make a little use of your faith for that which soon will be obtained from your reason. There is a judgment to come ; it is as sure as death, nay, far surer ; they shall be judged who shall not die, they have been judged who could not die ; the one at the end, the other at the beginning of the world.

Before death, SOLOMON tells us, that “ the sun, and the moon, and the light, and the stars shall be darkened.” Before Judgment, a greater than SOLOMON tells us, that “ the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, and the stars shall fall from heaven.” Before the one, “ the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men bow themselves :” before the other, “ the mountains shall quake, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken.” Before the one, “ we shall rise at the voice of the bird :” before the other, “ at the sound of the trumpet.” Before the one, “ the silver cord shall be loosed, and the golden bowl broken, and the pitcher broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the cistern :” before the other, the silver zone of the ecliptic,

the golden globe of the sun, and all the heavenly orbs, (the wheel within a wheel,) shall be confounded ; the “ heavens shall be rolled as a scroll ” of parchment, and the earth and “ the elements shall melt with fervent heat.” In the one, the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit to God that gave it : at the other, the dust shall return from the earth to be as it was, and the spirit from God that gave it.

Come now, and let us reason together.

Are all these the forerunners and symptoms of approaching judgment ? Then why art thou so drowsy, O my careless soul, and why art thou so secure within me ? What strange lethargy has seized on thee ? “ Awake, thou that sleepest, and CHRIST shall give thee light.” The time of thy dissolution is coming, and after death the judgment. Retire therefore a while into thyself, and commune with thy heart : enter thou into thy closet, and shut thy door. Let us examine ourselves before we come to that strict examiner : let us make a judgment in our expectations before we come to judgment. Do we believe that a judgment will come ? Then how are we provided against that day ? Are our accounts ready ? Art thou able to stand in judgment ? Shalt thou be clear when thou art judged ?

When PAUL “ reasoned ” before FELIX concerning the “ judgment to come, FELIX trembled ; ” and because it was an unpleasant argument, he put it off to another time. There is no doubt but our treacherous hearts would gladly put off these considerations, and defer them to a more convenient season. But there is no time so convenient as the present, when we are wrought into some apprehension of judgment. If we stay till our present thoughts are over, we shall again be brought to lose the apprehension, and to forget the importance of the judgment ; we shall come again to hear the name thereof, and to neglect it as an idle noise, and an empty sound.

Let us therefore not neglect this opportunity ; let us

search ourselves to the bottom ; let us make a discovery of our final resolution, and secret reserves, in reference to Judgment. We profess openly to believe that CHRIST will come with glory, to judge both the quick and dead ; what are our inward thoughts in that particular, and how are we provided against the day of judgment ?

There is a Judgment to come ; that judgment will be terrible, the examination strict, the condemnation insupportable, and most of us are utterly unprovided. Is it possible, then, that it may be avoided ? All these things are true in judgments here below, and we see the proof of them at every assize ; yet all offenders are not brought to judgment, but many thieves and murderers escape it : may it be thus in the judgment to come ?—Is it possible that it may be avoidable ?

II. A miserable hope, if this be all : for “ *THOU* shalt be brought to Judgment.” That is the second proposition.

And it contains both the universality and the particularity of the judgment :—“ *Thou,*” and every man ; all sorts of men, and every man of every sort, from him that sitteth on the throne, to her that grindeth in the mill : for “ we must all appear before the judgment-seat of CHRIST. It is appointed for all men once to die, and after death the judgment.” Death shall deliver up our souls and bodies to judgment. The grave shall deliver up her spoils ; and the bodies of all men, devoured of beasts, consumed of fire, swallowed by the sea, or scattered to the four winds, shall, “ in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” be brought to judgment.

And shall I here bewail the infirmity, or inveigh against the negligence of us men, who suffer ourselves to be hurried headlong by the power of our imaginations, against the strivings of our consciences ; who suffer our senses to carry away the crown from our understanding, and give up ourselves to the impetuous stream of our passions ; who, when we have a full information, a complete judgment, a clear dictate of conscience, yet

will suffer all these to be overborne by our passions and imaginations; who having clear and evident principles, can yet doubt of their immediate consequences; or whilst we profess an universal truth, never descend to particulars.

We know there is a vast difference between the things present, and those to come; and yet we form our thoughts of the latter according to the analogy of the former, deluding ourselves with idle and childish imaginations. God keeps silence; and we think He is such an one as we. Vengeance is not presently executed; and we set our hearts to do wickedly. We profess that all men must die, and come to judgment; yet we do not really believe that we ourselves shall die, and come to judgment. This is the fountain of our misery, and the original of our spiritual miscarriages. The discovery of the causes and the remedy of this evil, lies in the philosophy concerning human nature; but the thing itself is of every day's observation. We may recount it in these authentic examples.

DAVID knew full well what belonged to murder and adultery, and what himself had done in the matter of URIAH; yet he cried not out that he had sinned, till NATHAN had charged him, "Thou art the man."

AHAB undoubtedly had read the law of MOSES, and knew the guilt of murder and oppression; yet he goes on triumphantly, he kills and takes possession: but when ELIJAH charges him home, "In the field of Jezreel shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine;" then he cries out, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" And having applied things particularly to himself, he "rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth;" he "fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly."

Once more: It is likely, that BELSHAZZAR knew that it was unlawful to spoil the house of God, to plunder those things which were dedicated to the LORD, and to employ in his debauch the bowls of the temple; and probably he had seen the hand-writing of the book of God to

that purpose;—yet all this did not restrain him. But when the fingers wrote upon the wall, then “his countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.”

This then is the office of the second proposition; it charges us home; it lays down the universal, and it brings it down unto the particular. “*THOU* shalt be brought to Judgment.” Thy judgment is unavoidable. And thus thy evasion is crossed, O stupid soul! Thou art spoiled of thy frivolous ground of hope: thou shalt surely be cited, and thou must appear; if thou refuse to come, thou shalt be *brought* to judgment. Return then again into thyself, and take a review of thy condition. What will the issue be of that judgment to which thou must be brought? What hopes are now remaining that thou shalt not be condemned; or that, when the officers have haled thee before the Judge, thou shalt not be delivered to the executioners? If thou art called to examination, canst thou elude thy Judge by thy wily answers, or canst thou baffle or suborn the witnesses? Canst thou persuade thy jury not to find the verdict, or bribe the Judge to favour thee in thy doom? Canst thou withdraw him from the rigour of justice by the mediation of thy friends; or melt him into compassion by the loudness of thy cries, and the sadness of thy lamentation? Canst thou procure a reversion or reprieve of thy sentence, or appeal from thy Judge unto another? Canst thou make an escape from thine executioner? Or, lastly, canst thou stoutly endure the sentence of condemnation? These are the hopes of men who are brought to judgment on earth; and why may not some of them be thine? No,—thou knowest all these to be fond impossibilities, dreams, and suggestions of a childish fancy. If once this day be over, and that time come, thy hopes are barely these,—that Omniscience, and Wisdom itself, may be deluded by stupidity; that Omnipotence, and Power itself, may be evaded by poor contemptible infirmity; that Severity, and Justice

itself, may be perverted by iniquity ! All this is evident by that which follows :

III. “ *GOD* will bring thee to Judgment.”—And here we are concerned to raise our thoughts, and employ our utmost attention, lest by the prejudice which our idleness has brought upon us, we “ treasure up to ourselves wrath against the day of ” judgment. It is true we daily hear of *GOD*, and receive the names of his attributes into our ears ; but we pass over them as if he were like to us, and seldom bestow so much labour as to attain to a just notion of those names. O that the *GOD* of heaven would afford us here some glimpse of himself ; that he would illustrate us with some beam of his majesty ; that he would be pleased to visit every unprovided soul, and insinuate into it a full and clear apprehension of this proposition, *GOD will bring thee to Judgment.*

But how shall we endure to see his face ? “ No man can see my face and live.” (*Exod.* xxxiii.) If the Israelites durst not hear him proclaim the law, how shall we endure to hear him pronounce the judgment ? If the angels veil their faces, not able to behold his excellency, how shall we be affected with his terrors ? If the cherubim are oppressed with the sight of his glory, what shall we be with the sense of his fury ? If we find ourselves confounded and swallowed up in inextricable labyrinths, when we set ourselves to consider his attributes, his eternal duration, his unbounded essence, his unconfined presence ; with what disposition can we entertain the terror of his judgment, the search of his omniscience, the stroke of his omnipotence ? If the best and choicest of the saints of *GOD* have been afraid, and trembled, at the thoughts of judgment, if they have been surprised with horror and confusion at the mere imagination of that dreadful voice, “ Arise, and come to judgment,” what shall the worst and most obdurate sinners feel, when they shall be stripped of this cloud of flesh and error, and cited before the great tribunal, to render an account of their creation, preservation, and redemption ?

What fear, what horror, what agony, will possess thee, O sinful soul, when thou shalt be brought into a perfect apprehension of thy Judge, and of thyself, and he shall begin to order out, before thee, the things which he has done ; when the whole TRINITY shall begin to unfold its common work, and that sacred Person, blessed for ever, upon whose shoulder the judgment is laid, shall unfold his peculiar favours to thee, and thou must render a severe account of thy returns !—

When the mystery of thy creation shall be unveiled to thee ; when thou shalt apprehend thoroughly, what it is to have been fetched out of the dark and barren shade of an eternal privation, and to be put in a capacity of glory : when he shall recount to thee the proceedings of his handy-work, the method of thy making, the several articles and gradations of his providence in the formation of thee ; how, at first, he “ poured thee out like milk, and curdled thee like cheese ;” how he spun out thine arteries and veins, and “ whilst thou wert yet in thy blood, said unto thee, Live ;” how he guarded thee with muscles, strengthened thee with sinews, propped thee with bones, covered thee with skin, furnished thee with organs, endued thee with senses, invested thee with reason, crowned thee with freedom, enlightened thee with principles of science and conscience, bounded thee by his precepts, encouraged thee by his promises, restrained thee by his threatenings ; when he shall run over the benefits of thy daily preservation, and rigorously examine what thou hast done for him !—

When GOD THE SON shall display to thee what He has done and suffered for thee, and shall set before thine eyes the great mystery of thy redemption ; when he shall bring thee to apprehend the price which he has paid, and that ransom which thou hast not regarded ; when it will not be in thy power to pass over these considerations as now thou dost, but they shall be forced into the centre of thy soul ; when thou shalt have a clear sight of the abasement of a God incarnate ; when thou shalt know

how to be moved at the sight of a despised and an abused GODHEAD!—

When he shall charge thee with the blueness of those stripes, and the ghastliness of those wounds, which thou hast made; when he shall rehearse to thee the miseries of his death; when he shall recount to thee the woundings of the taunts and reproaches, the smart of the whips, the terror of the agony which made him sweat great drops of blood, the pricks of the thorns, the piercing of the nails, the lancing of the spear, and the ineffable horror of the dereliction under which he cried out, in the bitterness of his soul, “My GOD, my GOD, why hast thou forsaken me!”—And when he shall call upon thee to answer for the wounds that thou hast made, to render him his blood that thou hast spilt, to account to him for that life of which thou hast bereft him, to show him the fruit of all his pains and sufferings, and to present him thy returns for all these benefits and favours,—then tell me what thou wilt answer, O stupid soul? How art thou prepared to reply?

Wilt thou deny that he has done these things for thee? Or, canst thou show as much for him? Hast thou returned him that being which he hath given thee, though that would come infinitely short of thy obligation? Hast thou sacrificed thyself for his benefit, or abased thyself for his commodity? What wilt thou plead when thou art called? The time is coming, thy judgment is hastening, thine account is unavoidable, thy Judge inexorable!

But it may be replied, “Alas! what could I have done for him? What profit could I have brought him, if I should have pined away in the exercise of devotion, and been eaten up with zeal? If I should have ‘spent my substance in burnt-offerings, or calves of a year old?’ If I should have presented him ‘with thousands of rams, or ten thousand rivers of oil?’ To what purpose then should I endeavour that which I could not have performed? Why should I trouble myself with vain attempts, and spend my strength about that which I never could accomplish?”

Neither, if I be righteous, is He the better ; nor, if I be wicked, is He the worse. ‘ Our goodness extends not to Him. If thou sinnest, what dost thou against Him ? If thou be righteous, what receiveth he at thine hand ? ’ ”— Is this then the excuse ? I need not stand to unfold the disingenuousness and the madness of this evasion. However, though these things shall be urged upon us, they are not all ; these offer themselves in the consideration of the person of the Judge, but are not all the matter of thy judgment. For,

IV. Thou shalt be brought to Judgment *for these things* :—there is the matter of thy judgment.

V. For *All* these things :—there is the extent of it.

Because I desire not to be tedious, we will put these two together.

And now we are descended from these less familiar considerations, to which we were forced to strain our understandings in the contemplation of our Judge, into the compass of our own sphere, and to the survey of our own operations ; we are come from the incomprehensible ways of God, to the ways of our own hearts. “ Walk *in the ways of thy heart*. But know, that for *all these things* God will bring thee to judgment.” In the judgment of this life, men are tried for the works of their hands ; or the words of their mouths ; for theft or murder, for slander or treason, men may be brought to judgment ; but thought is free. He is dealt with, as if he had lived well, who has kept his crimes close ; the crafty politician and the concealed hypocrite escape. Hereafter the case will be quite contrary ; the judgment takes in primarily the *ways of the heart*, and the words and actions only as they proceed from them. Wherefore let us withdraw for a time into ourselves, and endeavour to mete out the extent of this proposition : *For all the ways of the hearts of men, God will bring them to Judgment.*”

How would it trouble us to recount and bring to memory every thought of but one day, and how many disorders and irregularities should we find in such a

reflection? How do our thoughts float upon our brains, and we know neither whence they come, nor what becomes of them! When they break in upon our minds, we cannot hold them; and when they are gone from us, (as it was with NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S dream,) it is not in our power to recover them. How many roving fancies present themselves unto us in a moment; and how many sudden and imperfect complacencies and distastes are raised by them! Leave but thyself unbound, unfixed (by hearing, or reading, or business) for an hour; and then tell me what suppositions, and consequences, and resolutions thou hast made, and how thou hast felt thyself to stray upon the borders of lust or envy, of pride or anger, of discontent or melancholy! O that you would but reflect a little upon your souls, and consider how many wandering thoughts have broken in upon your minds, since I began to speak of this important subject. You might thus save me the labour of further speaking, and raise yourselves to that which I endeavour. I fear you might find, among your sacred thoughts, a mixture of others very unsuitable; of envious, of ambitious, of covetous, of idle thoughts. All these are the matter of our future judgment: however they slightly pass us here, they are noted in the book of GOD; and when that book shall be opened, they will be charged to our account. "Thou tellest my wanderings," (saith the Psalmist;) "Are not these things noted in thy book?" I have already said enough to take up the consideration of the remainder of our time: but our hearts being too heavy, and our ears too dull of hearing, to be moved with generals, I must crave leave to run over the heads of some particulars.

Thou must give an account of all things committed to thee, inward or outward, natural or spiritual, thy senses and thy understanding, thine outward and thine inward faculties:—Whether thou hast kept a constant covenant with thine eyes, and hast never suffered them to rove in disorder: whether thou hast bowed thine ears to discipline, and

never let them be open to vain entertainments : whether thy taste has been moderated by the necessities of nature, and the laws of temperance, and never let loose according to the lust of riot : whether thy hands have been wholly employed in the works of GOD, and never been instruments to the machinations of the Devil : whether thy speech has never uttered any idle words, but ever “ administered grace to the hearers :” whether thy feet have only traced the ways of GOD, and never “ stood in the way of sinners :” —

What hath been the exercise of thine inward faculties, thine apprehensions, and thy desires : whether thy fancy hath always been employed in administering help to thine understanding, and never afforded incentives to thy vile affections : whether thy memory hath been taken up with the things which GOD hath done, and CHRIST hath suffered for thee, and hath afforded no place to vanity : what have been the object, measure, end, and circumstances, of thy love, hatred, desire, aversion, delight, sadness, hope, despair, fear, boldness, anger, jealousy, and compassion :—

How thou hast managed thine understanding, and improved thy contemplative and active principles : whether thou hast advanced in the discovery of eternal truths, or herded with the beasts that perish : whether thou hast cherished the principles, the dictates, and reflections of thy conscience, and never rebelled against them : how thou hast determined the freedom of thy will, in thine election and consent, thy fruition and use, when good and evil, life and death, have been set before thee :—

How thou hast behaved thyself in spirituals, in gifts and graces : whether thou hast accepted that which hath been offered, and improved what thou hast accepted, or hid it in a napkin :—In outward things, how thou hast acquired, and how thou hast managed thine estate : how thou hast behaved thyself in thy relations, public and private, in thy charge, and in thy duty.—But the time would fail me to reckon up a considerable part of the

exercises and objects of the "ways of the hearts" of men: and yet all these, and many more, are but the simple elements, and common heads, of our account.

Consider then, O negligent soul! if thou couldest reckon up the ways of thy heart, in any one of these kinds; if thou couldest call to mind but every idle word whereof thou must give an account, or thy motions upon every thing thou hast heard, and remember, in any one of these elements, what thou hast done, or else omitted; then tell me how wouldest thou find thyself possessed, and how wouldest thou be disposed to judgment? Wouldest thou deem it needless or idle to call it sometimes to thy remembrance? Wouldest thou drive off thy thoughts of it to the time of sickness, or to the hour of death, and rudely throw thyself upon it?—But then, try and examine all these together; contemplate a little the mixtures and combinations of them; these will afford us many millions of millions of "ways," (far exceeding the varieties of the corporeal nature, which proceed from the mixture of fewer elements,) so many as it will utterly confound our thoughts to number. Who can reckon up the "ways of the hearts" of the children of men? "Who can understand his errors?"

And now, that He who hath the world to uphold, the planets and stars to guide, and the course of nature to maintain, should keep a register of our impertinencies, and bring to judgment all the ways of men; (the traces of a ship in the sea, or of a serpent upon a rock;)—who hath believed our report? We are apt to believe it cannot be, and to say, "Surely he sees not these things: tush, he cares not for them." This is indeed the last resort of the treacherous hearts of men, the grand imposture, which may be resolved into a species of atheism and infidelity. O! if I should use the language of the Scriptures, I must call thee fool and beast, to doubt of that which is plain and evident, and to disbelieve that which may be *known*.—This article concerning the judgment to come, is not a problem of philosophy, to be disputed this way and that

way, with equal probability. ST. PAUL speaks of the terror of judgment under terms which imply certainty, and a kind of demonstrative evidence; “*KNOWING the terror of the LORD.*” And here in the text it is not said, *Think, or Believe*; but “*KNOW that for all these things GOD will bring thee to Judgment.*”

VI. He is a fool that hath said in his heart there is no GOD; and he that thinks he hath no understanding may well be compared to the beasts that perish. And so surely as there is a GOD, and as man hath an understanding soul, so surely it may be known, “*That for all these things GOD will bring thee to Judgment.*” For if there be a GOD, he must be infinitely just; and if so, he must render to every one according to his actions, if not here, then hereafter; and if so, he must bring them to judgment. But he doth it not here: the ways of Providence seem to be promiscuous. “*There is a wicked man to whom it happens according to the way of the righteous, and a righteous man to whom it happens according to the way of the wicked.*” DIVES receives pleasure, LAZARUS pain; therefore so surely as there is a GOD, there will be a judgment.

Again, If man have an understanding soul, he must have freedom in his actions; and if so, he deserves either good or evil; and if there be desert, there must be retribution; and if there be retribution, there must be a judgment. So then, so surely as thou art an understanding creature, so surely there is a judgment to come.

Once more, retribution is answerable to desert; and desert is only in what is free; and what is free in man is “*the ways of his heart.*” Wherefore, they are to be brought to judgment: and if any, then all; for no reason can be fancied, why some should be brought to judgment, and others not. Wherefore, if it be sure that GOD is in heaven, and that man hath an understanding soul, then it is also sure that for all these things GOD will bring thee to judgment, and that GOD shall bring to judgment every secret thing.

And now how sure and evident are these things!—more sure and more plain, if we will attend to them, than any other truths in the world; for there is not any known truth which does not evince the truth of these things. We know a truth, because we plainly and evidently understand the notions in a proposition, or the deduction of a proposition from some others; therefore, if we know any truth, we pre-suppose that we have souls which understand the notions of things; and if we have souls which understand these notions, then surely they are not bodies; (no combination of fire, and air, and earth, and water, no disposition of insensible atoms, can cause the subject to apprehend and judge, to reason and discourse;) and if they be no bodies, then they are not subject to corruption. It is evident therefore that our souls are intelligent, and immortal, deserving and capable of future judgment.

And as evident it is, also, that there is a a sovereign power, a God that governs and will judge the earth.—This is not a rhetorical undertaking, but a just and measured truth: there is not any thing in the world from whence these two may not be plainly evinced, viz. a godhead from the creature, and thine own immortality from a godhead. The world, which thou see'st, had it a beginning, or had it not? If it had a beginning, He is thy God that made it; if it had no beginning, then there are as many myriads of years as minutes of time, which is infinitely more absurd to grant, than to say, thou hast as many hands as fingers, as many wholes as parts.

If then at any time we find ourselves to doubt of these things, it is not because we are the *beaux esprits*, or *forts esprits*; our doubting proceeds from dulness, and the want of that reason to which we pretend. The things are certain in themselves, and evident. “He is not far from any one of us, in whom we live, and move, and have our being;” and our immortality was discovered not only to Philosophers, but even to the heathen poets,—to him that sung, “We are also his offspring.”—So that now thy pretences are all taken off, and every imposture of the

heart discovered!—Return then once again into thy bosom, and take account of thy apprehensions. The day of the LORD is coming and stealing upon thee as a thief in the night;—the day of judgment, the great and terrible day: a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of whirlwind and tempest, a day of anguish and tribulation. Where wilt thou hide thyself? O that is impossible! “Whither shall we go from his presence?” Shall we “call to the mountains to fall upon us?” How wilt thou appear? O that is intolerable, for our God is a consuming fire. What wilt thou do when the day of judgment comes?—and this may be the hour! This minute thou mayest be smitten, and hurried hence to judgment! Thousands have fallen beside us, and ten thousands at our right hand; and why may not we be the next? The time of our death cannot be far away; and why may we not reasonably apprehend the approach of the general judgment, either of this world, or at least of this sinful nation? Our LORD indeed tells us, that “of the day and hour” of the final judgment, “knoweth no man.” Yet he hath given us the signs of his coming. The Apostles have left us characters of the last days; and the Prophets have declared the manner and *apparatus* of the coming of the LORD to judgment.

We read that when the Disciples admired the stones and the buildings of HEROD’S temple at Jerusalem, CHRIST told them, that the day was coming when there should not be left one stone upon another: upon this the Disciples ask him (privately) three questions: 1. “When shall these things be?” 2. “What shall be the sign of thy” second “coming? And,” 3. “Of the end of the world?”

As for the precise moment of these things, he refuses to tell it them; nay, he professes, that as the Son of Man he did not know it. But on the other two points, he condescends to their curiosity; he tells them the signs of his coming, and of the end of the world, and that they shall be such as these:—“You shall hear,” saith he, (*Matt. xxiv.*) “of wars and rumours of wars; for nation shall rise

against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." There shall be traitors and "false prophets," saying, "Lo! here is CHRIST; behold he (a new MESSIAS) is in the wilderness: Lo! there is CHRIST; behold, he is in the secret chambers."—He tells us, that "iniquity shall abound, and the love of many shall wax cold;" that "he shall hardly find faith on the earth; and that as it was in the days of NOAH, when they were eating and drinking, till the flood came and swept them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.—He tells us, (*Luke xxi.*) that "there shall be earthquakes, famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights, great signs from heaven; on the earth distress of nations, with perplexities; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, looking after those things that are coming upon the earth."

Concerning the last days, ST. PAUL also tells us, that there shall be "perilous times;" that on one hand there shall be a sort of men, that shall be "lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, and blasphemers;" and that on the other hand there shall be a race of men "heady, high-minded, traitors, having a form of godliness, creeping into houses, leading captive silly women." They shall "despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. These," saith ST. JUDE, "are they that separate themselves, sensual, not having the SPIRIT."—ST. PETER tells us, likewise, that in the last times there should be a loose, profane, bold, atheistical, gigantic race of "scoffers, walking after their own lusts," saying, "Where is this GOD of judgment? let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it." "Where is the promise of his coming? Since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were before."

And as to the manner and *apparatus* of his coming; "Our GOD shall come," saith the Psalmist, "and shall not keep silence; there shall go before him a devouring fire, and a mighty tempest shall be stirred up round about him."—"Behold! the LORD will come with fire," saith the Prophet, "and with his chariots like a whirlwind,

to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. The streams of Zion shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone; the land thereof shall be burning pitch; the smoke thereof shall ascend day and night, and shall not be quenched."—The kings of the earth shall tremble, the captains and the mighty shall be horribly afraid, the great men and the rich men shall hide themselves, all the bond-men and all the free-men shall flee to the rocks of the mountains. And soon after all this, "the heavens shall be shrivelled as a scroll;" the earth and the elements shall melt away; for God shall arise to judge terribly the earth.

Have not all these things come upon us, the men of this generation? Is it weakness, is it a vain and superstitious scrupulosity, to call these things to our remembrance? Have we no reason at all to apprehend the approach of a general judgment, either upon the world, or upon our sinful nation?

Do we not now envy those once despised persons who have made their accounts ready? We thought it madness to see them pine away with penitential exercises, and macerate themselves with mourning. We thought that folly, which they called conscience, and for which they denied themselves the pleasures of the world. "We fools counted their lives madness, and their latter end to be without honour." But the time is coming when they shall be "comforted," and we shall be "tormented." "Because He hath called and we have refused, He hath stretched out his hand, and we have not regarded, He will laugh at our calamity, and mock when our fear cometh; when our destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon us."

May we not therefore give up ourselves to our hearts, and surrender our souls unto despair? So Israel said; "There is no hope, we will follow every one the devices of his heart:"—"After twenty, thirty, or forty years' continuance in our courses, it is in vain to think of turning from them. Our arrears are gone so far, that there is no

hope of discharging them; and why should we trouble ourselves with the thoughts of our account? Nay, that which must come, let it come;—what is a few days' respite to eternity? 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die.' Let us go forth as at other times, and shake ourselves, and scatter these troublesome apprehensions of future judgment. What if we should drink a little, to drive away melancholy?"—Yes! and fall, perhaps, in our intoxication, and rise no more!

Nay, but, I beseech you, stay a little, and consider; consider, "at least in this your day, the things which belong to your peace. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God! Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?"

Such careless and desperate resolutions are the advantages at which the Devil aims, that he may sear our consciences, and seal us up in a final obduration. But there is another kind of advantage, at which God, and our LORD CHRIST, and the HOLY SPIRIT, and the Gospel, aim,—that advantage of which I told you in the beginning of my discourse,—that "knowing the terror of the LORD, they may persuade men."

And now what is it, to which they would persuade us? That we will be contented to part with the tormenting fears of judgment; that we will condescend not to be miserable to all eternity; that we will accept of deliverance from the wrath to come; that we will not neglect so great salvation, nor trample on the blood of the everlasting covenant.

Behold! God calls upon us: "Turn you, turn you at my reproof, why will you die, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the LORD, I desire not the death of sinners." Our LORD CHRIST calls upon us: "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." In the last day of the feast of tabernacles, he "stood and cried, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." "The SPIRIT says, Come, and

whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely." The Gospel assures us, that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Behold! I "set before you life and death, blessing, and cursing:" and, as an unworthy ambassador in CHRIST'S stead, I "pray you be reconciled to God." Take his "yoke upon you; his yoke is easy, and his burden light:" embrace now the tender of the Gospel; only repent, and believe in the LORD JESUS,—accept him for your SAVIOUR and your LORD, your Prophet to instruct you, your King to govern you, your Priest to save you,—and you shall be saved; saved from the fears and horrors of a guilty conscience, condemned by its own witness; saved from the wrath of God and of the Lamb. You shall meet the LORD with confidence. We shall be able to stand with boldness in the judgment, to "lift up our heads with joy, because our redemption draweth near."

This is the way to save our own souls from perishing; which is the general design of all our preaching. And this is the way to appease the wrath which is gone out against us, and to preserve our nation from destruction; which is the particular and more immediate end of our present humiliation, whereof I am yet to speak.

The hand of the LORD hath indeed been heavy upon us; his wrath hath been kindled; it hath "waxed hot against the sheep of his pasture," and he hath plagued our nation very sore: his judgments have been multiplied; his strokes have been redoubled; and for all this "his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still."

Wars and pestilences, and other forerunners of CHRIST'S coming to judgment, have been seen and felt amongst us: And now when these have not been able to prevail with us, to awaken a drowsy people, to rouse up a lethargic nation, and to ferment a people settled upon their lees, God has made a new thing in the midst of us; he hath

wrought a work in our days, which makes the ears of all that hear it to tingle,—a work not to be paralleled, perhaps, in all the circumstances, since the creation of the world.

“How hath the LORD covered the daughter of our Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven to earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his footstool in the day of anger? He hath swallowed up the habitation of his people; he hath taken away his tabernacles, and destroyed his places of assemblies; the ramparts and the walls lament and languish; her gates are sunk to the ground, her bars are destroyed.”

Who can express the terror of this judgment,—the unexpected eruption, the sudden increase, the irresistible force, the remorseless rage, the insatiable voracity of this fiery judgment? The present sufferings and the lasting miseries of private persons are inexpressible; the public damage, and the dangerous consequences, it may be, are inconceivable.

What thing shall I liken to thee, O daughter of my people? Whereunto shall I compare the day of thy visitation? To the destruction of Jerusalem, or to the great and terrible day of judgment?

O the terrors and affrights, the shrieks and lamentations, the agonies and confusions, of that day! They that were on the house-top durst not stay to take any thing out of their houses, nor he that was in the field return back to take his clothes; they that were in the city betook themselves to the fields and mountains, where they beheld their flaming habitations, and trembled to behold the abomination of desolation raging in the holy places.

How were the wise men amazed, and the strong men terrified? Despair seized them; counsel and strength fled away from them; there was no help in them; they presently gave up all for lost; they stood affrighted at a distance, gazing at the dreadful spectacle. Vain they

thought it to contend ; it looked so like the coming of the SON OF MAN.

The breath of the LORD kindled the fire. "He rode upon the cherub, he came flying upon the wings of the wind." He made "the winds his messengers," and the "flames of fire his ministers." He "brought the winds out of his treasure," and (to point the flame directly upon the bulk and body of the city) "through his power he brought in the south-east wind." "As a thief in the night," as "pains upon a woman in travail," as "the lightning that cometh from the east and passeth to the west," so came this flaming judgment ; and so shall the coming of the SON OF MAN be.—I cannot endure to dilate this argument ; sorrow and anguish are in the consideration of it. *Animus meminisse horret, luctuque refugit.* Great is the judgment ; and there is reason for us to fear that it may be portending and symptomatical.

Yet who can tell but GOD may have mercy upon us, and yet save us from destruction ? Though our breach be great as the sea, yet it is not irreparable ; though our wounds be deep and gaping, they are not desperate or incurable. Hitherto we may say with the Apostle, we are "chastened, but not killed ; afflicted, but not in despair."

The signs and symptoms of an approaching final judgment are not so peremptory, as that we should despair. GOD'S final judgments have hitherto been accompanied with signs of mercy ; and this is a plain case, that he is not fond of our destruction, and that he had rather that we should live. "He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." He stands pausing and hesitating, as he did once before, saying, "O Ephraim, how shall I give thee up ?" "How shall I give thee up, O England ?" What mean else those alternations, and those mixtures and combinations, of wonderful judgments and of wonderful deliverances and mercies, which our ears have heard, and our eyes have seen ? We have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us what

wonderful deliverances he wrought in their time of old. We have seen vicissitudes great and prodigious, mixtures and combinations, marvellous in our eyes; horrible destructions, and wonderful restitutions, succeeding one another; raging plagues at home, and signal victories abroad. God hath filled us with bitterness, and covered us with ashes: but "it is of his mercy that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." If the arm of his justice and severity hath been made bare, that it might be seen of all the people, he hath not left his mercy without witness. If his judgment hath been great and terrible, in that which is consumed, his mercy is wonderful and miraculous in that which is preserved. "Except the LORD had left us a remnant," (and visibly interposed to do it,) we should not have had this place wherein we are to humble ourselves before him: "we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." It was He who in "the midst of judgment remembered mercy." When the flaming vengeance was at its height; when, in the opinion of all men, it had arrived at the state of irresistibility; when every man's heart failed him, and the hopes of all men were sunk into despair; He checked the domineering vengeance, He put up the flaming sword, He controlled the streaming waves of fire, and said, "Thus far shall ye come, and no farther." In a wonderful manner he preserved the goods and persons of the poor inhabitants of the city. He restrained the rage of our enemies, that cried concerning our Jerusalem, "Down with it, down with it. Aha! so would we have it." He suffered not a foreign enemy to land, nor our domestic foes to make head in our confusions. He was a wall of fire about the persons of our gracious Sovereign, and his Royal Highness, and of those noble persons who adventured boldly and strenuously, and indefatigably laboured, for the public preservation. He hath given signal preservations and victories to our fleets abroad. He hath restored our generals, and our fleet, in health and safety. He hath given us plenty of

all things necessary for the life of man. In one great word,—to sum up great and various mercies,—he hath upheld our religion and government in peace; and for an earnest of his further preservation, he hath given us this seasonable opportunity, with health and safety, in this place to attend the public service, in order to advise and assist in this arduous juncture of affairs.—Arduous and difficult indeed it is, to restore our city, and defend our country; to restore the houses of God, and public buildings; to re-edify ten thousand private habitations; to sustain the poor and needy; to preserve the rights and properties of men; to find such a temper of justice and equity, “that there be no decay, no just complaining in our streets;” to uphold the traffic of the nation, and to keep it in order and security, free from private robberies and public insurrections; and, in order to all these ends, to uphold our religion in zealous and effectual exercise, as well as to make provision against our dangerous and cruel enemies, “*Gebal*, and *Ammon*, and *Amalek*,” the *French*, the *Dutch*, and the *Danes*, who have conspired for our destruction.

These things are arduous, but not insuperable; difficult, but not to be despaired of. Concerning Jerusalem, burned and laid waste by the Assyrians, DANIEL foretold that the “streets and the walls thereof should be rebuilt even in troublous times;” and when the time came that they were re-edified, we read in *Nehemiah*, that the labourers in one hand held the trowel, and in the other held a weapon; one half of the people laboured in the work, and the other half held the spears and the shields, because of their cruel enemies on every side.

If God shall be pleased to give us a spirit of understanding, and “teach our senators wisdom;” if he shall pour out a public spirit upon our councils, a spirit of tenderness and compassion, of justice and equity, temperance and frugality, fortitude and magnanimity; if all orders and degrees amongst us, civil, military, and ecclesiastical, shall take to themselves the spirits of Christians

and of men; if our councils and endeavours shall be answerable to the benignity, to the fervour, and strenuous industry of our gracious Sovereign, and to the alacrity and magnanimity of our courageous and generous countrymen;—then, (speaking humanly, and abstracting from our deservings,) we need not greatly fear, but we may yet subdue the pride and insolence of our barbarous enemies, and may yet behold our city rising out of its ashes, in greater splendour than we have seen it heretofore. Wherefore arise, and gird yourselves, O ye princes, ye nobles, ye rulers of our Israel! Consult, consider, and give sentence. “Men, brethren, and fathers,” let us arise and labour; let us up and be doing. “Be strong and of good courage,” and the good hand of our God shall be upon you; he shall give you the honour to be defenders of your country; he shall make you “repairers of the breaches, restorers of our city to dwell in.”

Yet I cannot, I may not, forbear to put you in remembrance of this one thing; “Except the LORD build the city, their labour is but lost that build it.” It is not our wisdom or industry, much less our confidence, that will do it, unless God be for us; neither will God be for us, unless we turn from the evil of our ways. Except we repent, we have reason to fear, that what we have seen hitherto, will be no more than the beginning of our sorrows. The Prophet ISAIAH tells us, that “the LORD sent a word into JACOB, and it lighted upon *Israel*: and all the people shall know, that say, in the pride of their hearts, The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars. Therefore the LORD shall set up their adversaries, and join their enemies together, the *Syrians* before, and the *Philistines* behind, and they shall devour *Israel* with open mouth; because this people turneth not to him that smiteth them.”—“Wherefore turn you, turn you every one from the evil of his ways. Let us search our hearts, and try our ways, and turn to Him that hath smitten us;—turn unto Him with all our hearts,

with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. He hath smitten us, and He will heal us, because his compassions fail not.”—“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow.”

There is yet a way open to take away the terror of our particular judgment, and to prevent a final judgment from falling upon the nation. We are yet in the land of hope, and space is given for repentance; the door of mercy is not yet shut upon us, nor the ears of our judge sealed against us.

“O that men would therefore praise the LORD for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he hath done for the children of men! He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities;” he hath not cut us off in the midst of our sins, nor in the height of our impenitencies snatched us away to judgment; he hath not dealt with us as with the apostate angels, and with thousands of our brethren, who were better and more righteous than we.

Let us once more then return into ourselves. Let us consider our condition; let us look over and balance the grounds of our hopes, and the reasons of our fears. Let us take an exact account of our whole estate and interest, in reference to all our concerns, national and personal, temporal and eternal. Let us deliberate and advise what is to be done, and what is to be avoided. Did I say *deliberate*?—Whether we shall save our souls from utter darkness and everlasting burning? Whether we shall save the nation from final ruin and desolation?—Nay, rather, let us “break off our sins by repentance, and our iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.” Let us make ourselves “friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when” we “fail,” we “may be received into everlasting habitations.” Let us “lend unto the LORD,” that we may have “treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.” Let us fast “the fast that the LORD hath chosen;

and loose the bands of wickedness ; feed the hungry ;
 “ clothe the naked.” “ He that hath two coats, let him
 give to him that hath none ; and he that hath meat
 let him do likewise.” ; “

Such an occasion scarcely happens in many hundreds of
 years ; and as to motives to charity, they are all com-
 prized in the great argument of the judgment to come.—
 When the Son of Man shall come to judgment, “ and shall
 sit upon the throne of his glory ;” when “ all nations shall
 be gathered before him,” and he “ shall set the sheep on
 his right hand, and the goats on his left ;” this shall be
 the mark of their discrimination. He shall “ say to those
 on his right hand, I was hungry, and ye fed me ; thirsty,
 and ye gave me drink ; naked, and ye clothed me ; sick
 and in prison, and ye visited me ; come, ye blessed of my
 Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you.” And he
 “ shall say unto them on the left hand, I was hungry,
 and ye fed me not ; thirsty, and ye gave me no drink ;”
 wherefore “ go ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared
 for the Devil and his angels.”

The way is short and compendious to save all our
 interests. “ What doth the LORD require of us but to do
 justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God ?”
 Let us be merciful therefore as our heavenly Father is
 merciful, and let us humble ourselves under the Almighty
 hand of God,” as we pretend to do this day. Let us
 betake ourselves afore-hand to our Judge, and pour out
 our complaints before him. Let us confess our wicked-
 ness, and be sorry for our sins. Let us lay hold on the
 feet of our blessed Redeemer, and give him no rest till he
 hath sealed our pardon. Let us bathe with our tears the
 wounds we have made. Let us cry mightily to the throne
 of grace. Let us wrestle and strive with our Redeemer,
 and not let Him go until He bless us ; until he open our
 eyes to see the dangers we are in, and through his mercy
 show us a way to escape them ; until he quicken us to
 resolutions of amendment, and carry us strongly through
 these resolutions ; until he heal our backslidings, and

make up our breaches; until he save our souls from death, and our nation from destruction!

To fix us in these resolutions, and to make them abide upon us all our days, let us remember what hath been spoken; and let us frequently meditate upon that sarcastical concession of the text; "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

THE
SPIRITUAL BEE;
OR,
A MISCELLANY
OF
DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

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I.

THERE is a very little viper at *Amyclæ*, says **SOLINUS**, which is disregarded for its smallness, but hurts the more easily because slighted. The Devil often comes to plead for some sins, *sub formâ pauperis*; saying, “Is it not a little one?” And being listened to, he can improve the smallest grant to his great advantage in our hurt and discomfort. Therefore when he shooteth this shaft, let us take it up and retort it on himself again. If he makes the smallness of the thing a consideration to tempt us to compliance, let us make use of it to facilitate our resistance. If it be small to yield to, it is little to resist; and it is easiest to deny **SATAN** in the smallest things, whom we must not gratify in any. So long as we show no kindness to him, he can never hurt us: but if we give him the least corner of our souls, only to sojourn in, he will soon get an absolute rule. If he have admittance at the smallest pass, “behold a troop comes;” as the whole power of an army may break in upon a city at a narrow breach. A little spark may set on fire a whole town. It is therefore an excellent saying of the Son of **BRACH**, “He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little.” Let me crush the cockatrice in the egg, that I feel not the mortal sting of the serpent when engendered; and strangle sin in its infancy, that the first

breath it takes may be likewise the last, and that it may expire in the first motions; and that though it be conceived, yet it may prove abortive. Happy shall he be, "O daughter of Babylon," that thus "taketh thy children," while young, "and dasheth them against the stones."

II.

I HAVE sometimes seen a blazing light, much outshining other stars, and attracting the eyes of men to behold it with wonder, which yet, by vanishing a while after, has appeared to have had no true place among the stars; and which, notwithstanding its glorious lustre, secretly sent forth vapours of a malignant nature. How many have been seen and gazed on with admiration, who have shone with glorious beams, which yet have at length discovered themselves to be exhalations only, gilded with rays, and counterfeiting the stars. Many have had a shining zeal in those exercises of religion that lie open to the view, and so have gotten and kept up a high esteem and credit; but not trading on a solid stock, no wonder that they prove bankrupts at last. These falling stars shall never shine in the firmament of heaven. Let all therefore try, and assure to themselves, the fixedness of their station; and, making just abatement for that false light, with which worldly credit and advantage, or slavish fear of God, may have vested them, examine what remains which is true and firmly grounded. Let me never deceive myself or others with a false light. I had rather be a true star, though the smallest, and shining undiscerned, like the stars in the milky-way, than be the most glorious comet.

III.

FINDING my friend in a passion, I endeavoured by some motives to reduce him to moderation; but I perceived that he was the more incensed, and that after the attempts I made to allay his heat, it was become greater

than before. Passion is deaf to all advice but what may seem to encourage it. This wild-fire makes that its fuel, which was intended to quench it; and turns that into food, which was designed for remedy. Water cast on the smith's forge makes it burn the fiercer. A torrent is so far from being restrained by what is set to stop it, that it swells the higher, and spreads the farther;—*Pontem indignatur*. To encounter a man in the boisterousness of his passion, is to enter the combat with such creatures as ST. PAUL fought with at *Ephesus*;—to cast reins on the waves of the sea when it rages;—and to use rational endeavours to call a soldier to council in the heat and fury of a battle. The method therefore most kind and effectual is, to give place to wrath while the tempest rages;—and not to apply ourselves to the cure of it in its paroxysm, nor, at too great a disadvantage, to meet it with reason and counsel, when it comes forth armed with fury, and hooded with blindness. When the fire has got a full conquest, and the flame is outrageous, we seek not to quench it with water, and to save the house; but rather, by pulling down the next, to make the want of fuel diminish the flame. The violence of anger is best broken by giving way, and yielding to it, as a flint is most easily broken on a cushion; and time is the best lenitive to mollify.

IV

It has been observed, that those who have the longest freedom from diseases, most hardly escape, when a disease once takes hold of them; and hence it is, that fevers are generally more pernicious in *England*, than in places about us, because that disease is less familiar to our natures, than to those in our neighbouring countries.

Temptations are usually most dangerous where least frequent; and their assaults are most effectual on those who have most seldom experienced them. They are then most to be feared, when their power is increased by a strength gathered from a long discontinuance, and the

edge of our resistance blunted by long ease. When our shield is laid by, and may have contracted rust, then those fiery darts are with most difficulty repelled; when our bow is unbent, and our hand in our bosom, no wonder if our disadvantage be great, upon the enemy's onset. Hence SATAN hath this stratagem amongst others, not to be frequent in his assaults in places where former alarms have excited care and vigilance; but rather to attempt an entrance, where a long quiet hath produced security, and lessened the power of defence. Where he bestows his visits most rarely, he is least feared, and consequently least provided against. Let me not think myself secure from those temptations with which I have been little exercised, lest I find myself over-powered where I least suspected assault, and add to the other advantages, of which SATAN has too many over me, that of mine own security.

V.

THE deepest waters move silently, and undiscernibly. The stars, though vast and glorious bodies, yet from their distance seem very small; and many stars, as in the galaxy, shine unseen. The moon, when that side towards the earth is darkened, towards heaven shines bright. If in some men's conversation I seem to discern little or no splendour, let me not be forward in my censures of their state. It may be, that I do not approach near enough to them. Perchance, "our heavenly Father" may see that in secret, which doth not discover itself openly;—they may have a bright side heaven-ward, though toward earth they seem wholly eclipsed. Perchance they have so much more of the Publican in them, than of the Pharisee, that they will not let their "left hand know what their right hand doth." As most men seem better than they are in truth, so some are better than they seem to be. I had rather be good and not seem so, than seem good and not be so: for the Publican went home justified rather than the Pharisee.

VI.

THE Book which ST. JOHN ate, while in his mouth, was sweet and pleasant, but in his belly became bitter. We read of waters in *Miletum* and elsewhere, which are fresh at the top, and bitter at the bottom; and of a lake in *Phrygia*, whose water makes those that drink it strangely jocund and full of laughter, but ends in their death. While we are pleasing ourselves in worldly pleasure, we should do well to consider whether it will not be bitterness in the end. There is no earthly pleasure which hath not the inseparable attendance of grief,—and that following it as closely as JACOB came after ESAU, “holding it by the heel.” Yea, worldly delight is but a shadow; and when we catch after it, all that we grasp is substantial sorrow in its room. The honey should not be very delightful, when the sting is so near; it is better to want it, than to feel the smart and venom that attends it. Let me rest on nothing that has not a real and unmixed pleasure in it; and then I shall find I must leave this world, and take a higher flight; there is no such thing here, on which I can rest the sole of my foot; all earthly things have within them both the saltness and the turbulency of the sea. I will not bid adieu to innocent delight; but neither shall it have any thing of my heart. If I unwarily press too much on roses in the pulling, the prickles may run into my fingers. I will honestly enjoy my delights, but not purchase them at so dear a rate as my own danger. That mortal laughter and dancing which the bite of the *tarantula* causes, are only cured by music. The best remedy against the madness of laughter, is the voice of that “wise charmer:”—GOD can cure and retrench the exorbitances and profuseness of our spirits in worldly delights.

VII.

LET us contemplate prayer in its journey between earth and heaven, as JACOB did the angels ascending and

descending. It ascends lightly mounted on the wings of faith; but it always comes laden down again upon our heads. It goes up, it may be, in a shower of tears; but descends in a shower of blessings. It is wafted into heaven with groans; (for these have a force to open heaven's gates, and that prayer flies swiftly that is carried on the wings of a groan;) but those sighs return again laden with comforts, like the south winds in *Egypt*, whose wings are loaded with the sweet odours of spices. They go out weeping, but never come weeping back; for where the spring and seed-time are wet, the harvest is clear and joyful. "They that sow in tears reap in joy."

VIII.

I HAVE sometimes wondered, and almost judged it another miracle, that BALAAM was no more amazed at that most strange and uncouth miracle, when he heard a voice come from that mouth which was wont only to bray, and saw himself out-reasoned by that which was remarkable for nothing so much as its stupidity and dulness. I marvel that his knees did not tremble, and his heart become like a stone; and that he did not so much as alight, on account of it; but, as though no strange thing had fallen out, he gave the beast a wrathful answer, without any symptoms of wonder. Although, perchance, being a sorcerer, he might be not wholly a stranger to converse not much different from this, which might make it seem less uncouth; yet I rather think, that the transport of madness which so possessed this Prophet, and the covetousness which blinded his eyes, left no room for reflection. See, then, how senseless and stupid lust and passion make us. Many are so eager in the pursuit of their foolish desires, and so wholly possessed with contrivances to compass, and hopes to attain, their satisfaction, that they regard not any providences, though ever so strange and remarkable, which cross them in their course. Though GOD meet them in the way with a drawn sword, though

he speak from heaven in a voice of thunder against them, they are not astonished. They may storm and rage at the impediments which traverse their unlawful pursuit, and at the blocks which are laid in their way; but they take no notice of the hand of Providence which casteth them there, though it be, perhaps, as visible and miraculous as that which wrote BELSHAZZAR'S doom on the wall.

IX.

WE read in GELLIUS of a soldier, who, riding forth to a muster, with a horse as lean as if he had been newly raised out of a charnel, and being himself so well habited and full, that he might have been a very sufficient burthen for a more able beast, was asked by the Censors whence came such a great disproportion between the meagreness of the one, and the grossness of the other; to which he answered, "That it was because he took care of himself, but his servant took charge of his horse." Most men have languid and infirm souls, while their bodies are in a vigorous habit. And whence is this? Because their souls have no share in their care; they do not mind them as their own proper charge. Their time and diligence are all laid out on their bodies; these are the darlings they pamper, and which engross all their thoughts; or if they expend any in the other way, they soon rescue themselves as from an usurpation and encroachment. But, surely, souls so weakened and emaciated will not be able to stand the least brunt in the day of battle,—labouring under the pressure and weight of flesh so much indulged. Let me have a lean, unhealthy, deformed body;—no matter, so I may find my soul sound, strong, and beautiful, in the eyes of God.

X.

SOME are so curious as to conjecture, that CHRIST'S prayer, which he made after his withdrawment from his Disciples, was not merely mental, but vocal; inferring it

from the manner in which the Evangelists relate it,—“ He prayed, *saying*,”—which they will have to imply an audible speech and voice.

There is some advantage to be observed in prayer which is vocal, above what is mental only; although it be all one to God, who hath an ear to hear what the heart prayeth, as well as what the mouth uttereth. This advantage consists in the following particulars.

1. By joining a voice to our mental prayer, our affections are more awakened and quickened; as we find by experience, that the sense of a misery, when cooped up in our own thoughts, does not always burst into tears, which are the language of grief, but yet, when we vent it to others, in our recounting it, we cannot refrain from weeping.

2. It confines the mind more closely, and keeps it more fixed and intent upon what is spoken.

3. We find sometimes, that vehemency of affection forces us to it; for when our devotion is ardent, and the fire is kindled within us, it breaks forth into outward expressions, complaints, or tears.

4. I may add, lastly, that we can sometimes better form, or at least draw out in better order, our conceptions of what we pray for in an audible voice.

XI.

I SAW a painter, who had made the picture of a face smiling, on a sudden, with no more than one dash of his pencil, make it seem to weep. How near are the confines of joy and sorrow, both of which, by the change of a line, may be made to sit on the same countenance! Their nature is much more distant than their abode. In the twinkling of an eye, in the turning of a hand, sadness may jostle out mirth; and deep sighs may be fetched from that breast, whence loud laughter has just made its eruption. Pleasure may die in the same moment that gave it its birth; and a sudden succession of grief may turn its cradle into its grave. The tears, in which an

enlarged and vehement passion of joy had run over, may be arrested in the middle of their course, and be made to minister unto grief. In the flight of a minute, or in the beating of a pulse, the dilation of the heart by pleasure may be turned into a contraction of it by sorrow.

XII.

LIVY tells us, that the *Gauls*, when they had once tasted of the wines of *Italy*, were so much taken with the pleasantness of them, that they would not afterwards rest contented with a bare trade thither for their wine, but firmly resolved to get possession by conquest of the land which produced it. Thus the antepasts of glory do but provoke the desires, and excite the appetite, of the believing soul. He is so far from being satisfied by foretastes, that they do but augment his thirst after a full fruition. He is not content with those small drops which are derived unto him at so great a distance from the fountain: nor are those degrees of grace and comfort, which he gains by holding commerce with heaven while upon earth, by means of prayer and faith, in the worship and ordinances of GOD, sufficient to allay his hunger. He cannot drink his fill, nor slake his thirst, at those cisterns. A holy insatiableness doth so enlarge the capacity of his soul, that the more he hath, the more he longeth for; and the wideness of his increasing desires is proportioned to the largeness of his receivings. He therefore resolves and aims, by a holy violence, to get possession of that spiritual *Canaan* from whence these grapes are brought; that so he may there drink of that wine of the kingdom, and of those rivers of pleasure.

XIII.

IT is strange how ST. PETER, who not long before had been so daring as to draw his sword on a whole regiment, was yet, notwithstanding all his resolves and protestations about not forsaking CHRIST, suddenly infected with the air of the priest's hall. As soon as he had got in thither,

his temper was changed, as though a contagion had seized him; and while he did but warm himself at their fire, his zeal and respect for his Master were abated and chilled. As many times, our foot is in the Devil's snare, and we are grievously entangled, where we thought we might have been safe enough. We may venture upon occasions of sin, and put ourselves within SATAN's circle, thinking we are sufficiently armed by peremptory resolves and engagements; not duly considering, either the plausible and insinuating nature of sin, the treachery and deceit of our hearts, or the craft and importunity of the Tempter. Hard it is to avoid infection in the company of those that have the pestilence; especially as evil men have so much of that quality which is ascribed to those who have the plague,—*a desire to taint others*. It is hard not to be seized by evil, though by gentle and insensible degrees, in the society of the wicked. Evil converse cannot but leave a tincture upon us, if rare; if more frequent, a deep and double dye. The spirits and manners of men are, by a secret enchantment, transformed into the conditions of those with whom they communicate.

We may say generally of rivers, that they never run within the same banks without mixing their current. Waters, passing through the earth, have a quality and savour derived to them from the nature of the soils and minerals through which they pursue their course.

XIV.

I HAVE seen a deception used, to keep some from their meat, so that they dare not eat it, by laying shreds of lute-strings on it, which appeared like worms; and to keep them from their drink, by putting into it the counterfeit of a toad. SATAN often plays this part; and uses such a deception to affright the children of GOD from their Father's table, and to make them out of conceit with duties. He presents to their sight the corruptions of their performances, and so represents them, that they appear formal though ever so zealous, and proud or hypocritical,

though attended with ever so much humility and sincerity. When thou hast done thy work, then he comes with his sophistry, to make thee afraid that what thou hast done will turn to thy hurt; and, opening the parts of thy duty, tells thee,—“Here thy corruptions wrought, and there thy pride discovered its stirrings; here thou wert as cold as if thou caredst not whether thou wert heeded or not, and there thou hadst lost thine heart. And is there not death in the pot, thinkest thou? Or expectest thou wages for what deserveth stripes?” These artifices he uses, to dishearten believers from their services; and he has this great advantage, that they are usually apt to suspect themselves; their humours are stirred to his hand, and therefore he may the more easily work on them; they are ready to give credit to any that comply with their pensive apprehensions, and therefore are easily induced to use SATAN’S perspective, which at one end magnifies the evil of their performances, and makes it seem greater than it is, while at the other end, it extenuates the good, and makes it appear less. It is easy for SATAN to press down him that is already sinking, and to dye that soul *sable black*, which is of a dark and sad hue before. Thou who art not ignorant of SATAN’S devices, show him that thou seest the sophistry, and understandest the cheat.

XV.

THERE is what we are wont to call *good nature*, which, however desirable, yet does very much prepare and expose those in whom it is found to temptations. For it is nothing but a pliable, yielding, waxen frame, which is so much the more subject to evil impressions rather than good, as wickedness is more insinuating than virtue. Such flexible twigs are easily bowed into crookedness; such a soft temper of mind is easily wrought and moulded to a compliance with the most dangerous suggestions; as the soft head of the infant is framed into any fashion by the midwife and nurse. Their facility and bashfulness often betray persons of this temper into a grant of that

which yet they secretly condemn; and they know not how *not to comply* with the desires of the boldest and most unreasonable insinuator. That bashfulness is dangerously bold, which dares to offend God, lest it displease men. Nothing is more laudable than a firm, inflexible temper, when found in the way of righteousness. Let me never be ashamed to deny, what another is so shameless as sinfully to ask. Let my heart be as wax to the impressions of goodness, but as marble to those of evil;—as pliant as an osier to the hand of virtue, as stiff as an oak to SATAN and his instruments. Let a just request be as a command to me; let me obey it as a law, though it be but a desire; but let an unjust and wicked demand be cast back by me with abhorrence. If my friend be in any thing a factor for SATAN, let me bid him, “Get behind me,” as our SAVIOUR did ST. PETER. It is better to lose my friend than my innocence; and safest to keep at a distance from him, when he breathes contagion.

XVI.

SOMETIMES I have intermitted or deferred the performance of duty, upon apprehension of some present indisposition and unaptness. I have thought, “It is better not to set my hand to GOD’S work, than to spoil it; better to omit my offering, than to give the lame and blind in sacrifice;—the next time I will make amends, when I am fitter to do it:” and the next time, perhaps, the task has been more irksome to me, and my plea of unfitness has seemingly had more strength than before; so that what before I did only defer, now I could be content wholly to neglect.—“Have I found thee, O mine enemy?” Here the serpent’s head discovers itself. Hereafter, when this plea is put in, it shall be rejected without hearing. I will check the least thought of reluctance toward the performance of the work I have assigned to myself. A lame prayer may get to heaven. I may, by rubbing and chafing my heart, get warmth into it. If I put forth my strength, I may break asunder the cords with which I am bound.

THE SPIRIT may come, and fill my sails ; and I may have the wind with me, though the tide be against me. That rule of physicians is well applied to practice, in such cases, which advises persons of weak stomachs to eat, though they have no present appetite, because they shall feel the effects thereof in their future increase of strength.

XVII.

THE *Turks* have a saying concerning the *Tartars*, whom they repute a very wise nation,—that other nations have their wisdom written in their books, but the *Tartars* have devoured their books, and so have wisdom lodged in their breasts. Many Christians have the word of GOD written in their Bibles, but they never, as ST. JOHN, swallowed the book. The laws of GOD are best inscribed in the tables of the heart ; the soul is the best repository for them, and practice the fairest transcript of them. He is a good text-man, whose life is a comment on Scripture.

What benefit can accrue to us from gold in the mine, or pearls in the bottom of the sea ; except we dig for the former, and coin it into money,—and dive for the latter, that we may have them to apply to our use. He to whom the word of GOD is not as his necessary food, or who doth not, “ *tanquam sacer belluo,*” “ as a holy glutton,” devour, digest, and convert it into *succum et sanguinem*, is like him, who as long as he had PLATO’S book on the immortality of the soul in his hands, was a Platonist, but as soon as he had laid it by, became an Epicure again. As we often say of physicians, that they are better acquainted with GALEN than with the disease ; so of such we may say, that they carry their wisdom rather in their book than in their heart.

XVIII.

OUR SAVIOUR (*Luke iv.*) would not give the Devil audience, even when he spake truth, saying, “ I know thee who thou art, the holy one of GOD ;”—refusing to have the Father of Lies to bear witness of him, because

he knew that he used the truth, only to countenance error. And on the same account the Apostles (*Acts* xvi. 17,) silenced the spirit of divination, when he would have defiled the Gospel by preaching it. In *Matt.* iv. 6, we find the Devil quoting Scripture; but he strangely maimed and perverted it, to make it serve his own turn; for one part is left out, the other misapplied. We may be sure this impostor has never any errand but deceit, whatever message he seems to bring. This liar always mixes some truth with his tale, that may make way for it to enter into belief. For vice and falsehood must still borrow the assistance of virtue and truth. There is always true corn strewed under a pit-fall; and they are full and weighty ears, which we daub with lime, to deceive the poor birds in a snow. Even in the dunghill of MAHOMET'S Alcoran there are some jewels; and SERGIUS has bespangled and decked it with some parcels of branches of Scripture and of Christianity.

Et partem veri fabula quæque tenet.

This great deceiver, SATAN, deals as cheats are ordinarily wont to do; who, to make their impostures more passable, use some means to gain credit, before they can cozen.

Let me beware of SATAN'S hook, though covered with ever so specious and pleasing a bait. Though his pills be gilded, yet they are poisonous. Though he take upon him the covering of an angel of light, yet, by a circumspect eye, the black fiend may be discerned under it. There suspect him most, where his pretences are most plausible.

XIX.

MAN that was once in honour, and placed little lower than the angels, having lost his birth-right, is now become lower than the beasts that perish; and the Scripture sends him to school to them;—to the ant to learn industry, to the ox and the ass to learn duty to God, to the dove to learn innocency, to the serpent to learn wisdom. But how many descend so far even below their degraded

estate, that they transcribe these patterns not in the good but the evil; and whereas they should make use of them as tutors and monitors, they degenerate into the very nature of beasts, and make NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S punishment their choice. We know that centaurs, made up of half man and half beast, came not from *Thessaly*, but had their original in PINDAR'S poetic fancy, which was the *Prometheus* that fashioned them: and GALEN, considering the utter irreconcilableness of the fiction with the principles of anatomy, is very angry at his vanity in it. But we find many such monsters in morality, if we consider the strange discomposure that is in the souls of men; in which the difference is only this, that here the prodigy is more wonderful, in that the beast is placed before the man, and passion and lust above reason. How much rather should men endeavour to advance their natures above their present sphere, to recover and raise them, rather than thus depress them; and, if they will needs forsake their humanity, to assume the nature of angels, and succeed to that vacated rank, which the Prince of the Morning was willing to leave.

XX.

POPE ALEXANDER V., who had been so bountiful to the poor, that he had left little or nothing to himself, (records do not abound with such popes,) would often say of himself, "That he was a rich bishop, a poor cardinal, and a beggarly pope." Many are thus retrograde in Christianity. Like NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S image, the further they are from the beginning, the more their goodness decays; as in that, the further from the head, the coarser was the metal. Their first commencement in Christianity had a golden beginning; they went on to a silver progress; and in the conclusion they are all earthy.

We should go up the hill to *Zion*; every day should bear us a step nearer heaven; but these go down the hill, and are further from salvation in the evening of their life than when they first believed. Whereas they should be

like the sun going on from strength to strength, till they come to their meridian lustre,—they rather resemble him, as he was in HEZEKIAH's time, when he went backward ; for in this subject the case is one, where *non progredi est regredi* : he that does not go forward in Christianity, goes backward ; he is already come to a decrease of goodness, that does not strive after an increase of it. Many, the higher they rise in the world, the more they fall in goodness ; and their true riches decrease by the increase of outward accessions ; like trees, which, as they advance higher in growth, strike their roots proportionably deeper into the earth ; and like stars, which, the higher they are, the more their beams are contracted. The Devil effects on them what he did but tempt our SAVIOUR to ;—no sooner are they raised to a pinnacle, but straightway they cast themselves down ; and being placed on a mountain, where they have a more large and alluring view of the world, they fall down before SATAN.

XXI.

I MEET with an excellent advice of a heathen ;—so excellent, that I cannot but think it came from a higher dictate than that of his own spirit, as well as many other sayings, both of the same and other stoical authors : “ To procure that which all men seek, contentment, μηδὲν ἄλλο θελεῖν ἢ ἃ ὁ Θεὸς θελει, *will nothing but what GOD wills.*” Methinks this is like a north-west passage, or a shorter cut, to a treasure greater than that of the *Indies*, and to a haven of rest, at which men generally seek to arrive by a wide compass of vain contrivances. This is such an elixir, that the very touch of it turns all into gold. This is that universal remedy, that prevents and removes all frettings, tumults, disquiets, murmurings, and discouragements of the soul ; and puts it into a temper so equal, calm, and serene, that it does in a measure anticipate its future happiness. For when our will is thus, as it were, resolved and melted into the will of GOD, we have all that we desire, and nothing can happen

to us but what we will ;—and what more needeth there to make us happy ? This is a higher degree of grace than that of merely submitting ourselves to God's will ; (which yet is a high attainment ;) for it makes the divine will and ours to be the same. This is the ready way to procure riches, and honours, and pleasures ; not by using endeavours to add to our wealth, reputation, and carnal enjoyments ; (for we find by experience, that he who has most, has greatest want in his store ;) but by a more compendious and less tiresome way,—by detracting from our desires, and by reducing them to a due proportion. And thus we shall find it true, that he has most, who has as much as he desires ; as he is not rich who has much, but he who has enough ; nor he indigent who has little, but he who craves more ;—for we are not rich or poor, happy or unhappy, so much according to the proportion of what we possess, as of what we desire. Therefore I commend the answer of one, who, when his friend wished that the gods would give him whatever he desired, replied, “ Nay, rather wish, that they would give me to desire only what they give.”

XXII.

WHEN NEBUCHADNEZZAR closely besieged *Jerusalem*, and they were reduced to extremities, the *Jews* made a solemn covenant with GOD to dismiss their servants, and set them free ; but no sooner had the King removed his siege, but they reversed their vow, and brought back their servants to bondage.

How often do those whom GOD has chastened with affliction, and seemed to have marked out for death, make covenants and promises of reformation, and of putting away their sin ; and yet, when he withdraws his terrors, or causes the sickness to retreat, those ties do no more bind them, than the withs did Samson ; but they arise, and go out, and do as at other times. While they sit on the margin of the grave, their spirits stoop, their passions are broken, their thoughts are humbled ; then to be liberal of promises

is an easy bounty; but when the storm is over, then they are straitened in performances, and rescind former engagements. The sighs of their sick-bed, which they turned into penitent groans, are now vanished into air; the sad reflections and serious recollections of their ways, to which they were reduced when they dwelt in sorrow; are now as little thought of, as the dolorous accents of their grief. When they come newly out of the furnace, while the smell of fire is yet on them, they are scrupulous and tender; but it is only like those who come out of a hot stove, and shrink from a cold air at first, but by degrees are brought to their former hardness. If the soul be not changed, though for a while some religious colour may appear in the man's face, he will at last return to his former habit.

It was therefore wise advice which THEODORICUS, Bishop of *Cologne*, gave to the Emperor SIGISMUND, when he asked how he might be directed in the way to heaven: "Live so as thou promisedst to do, in a painful fit of the gout or stone." The *Israelites*, when they had been humbled with the voice out of the fire, the uproar in all the elements, the thunder, darkness, and terror of Mount *Horeb*, were very prodigal of their promises: "All these things will we do." But GOD foresaw, though they spake as they intended in that distress, that they would afterwards be niggardly in their performances: "O that there were such a heart in them!" And what people ever were more rebellious than they? Never was a heart harder than PHARAOH'S; and yet upon the repetition of every plague, how couchant is the lion! How he fawns and crouches to the power which his stubbornness incensed! At every stroke how he cries out, "Spare me this once, and I will offend no more!" And at length, when death had made all *Egypt* to ring at once with passing-bells, and even his palaces were invaded by that King of Terrors, he suddenly gives the *Israelites* a dismissal, and, as it were, thrusts them forth, as if he could not be soon enough rid of them: "Rise up, get you forth

from among us." And yet, no sooner were they gone, but the stream of his passion has a reflux, being only diverted by that judgment; and he goes after them with the whole force of his country, to fetch them back again.

LORD, never let my holy resolutions pass away with my afflictions; nor my health dispense with the vows of my sickness. Let me not, when I have in my distress found sanctuary in thy mercy as a votary, in my enlarged condition indulge myself as a libertine. Let me maintain my credit, and faithfully pay my vows, and discharge the bonds I have entered into with thee, in my necessitous and low state. Let immunity from evil never render me such a stranger to what I was in distress, as to make me recoil from my promises, and disown them.

XXIII.

IT is not a new remark, that the SPIRIT OF GOD himself doth, in Scripture, make use of heathenish speeches and observations, and apply them to a spiritual use. Thus ST. PAUL took notice of a pagan inscription on an altar, and began his sermon to the *Athenians* on that text; and in the same place he quotes one of their poets, ARATUS; as also MENANDER, in 1 *Cor.* xv. 33; and CALLIMACHUS, or EPIMENIDES, in *Tit.* i. 12. Surely the warrant of such an example will give good ground for our making use of the borrowed helps of human writers in sacred things; if we deal with them as GOD commanded the *Israelites* to deal with the *Canaanitish* captives, if they would wed them,—to “shave their heads, and pare off their nails,” &c.;—if we divest them of their pagan superfluities. For surely it would reflect upon the wisdom of GOD, to think that he has given the gold and treasures of arts and learning, the spoils of the *Egyptians*, to be used only for making a golden calf, (and such are all other subjects, compared with divine,) rather than to be applied to the use of the sanctuary, the service of GOD, and, as in *Exod.* xxxv., to the adorning of the tabernacle. Only let them be made to pass through the fire, as the

Midianitish gold and silver, (*Numb.* xxxi. 22,) and be thoroughly refined and purged from their heathenish dross. He that furnished CYRUS with treasure and riches of secret places, for the building of his temple, (*Ezra* i. 2,) doubtless had an eye to the framing and edifying of his church in that light of knowledge with which he hath embellished such writers. ELIJAH did not nauseate or reject the food that was brought to him even by a raven, which was an unclean creature under the law.

XXIV.

A VINE, which is one of the most fruitful of trees, (and is used by GOD to illustrate the case of a Christian) if it be left to its natural excrescences, unregarded and unpruned, shoots forth into many superfluous branches and stems, spends its most generous strength in that way, and so becomes weak and fruitless. If GOD should leave the Christian to the vicious exorbitancies of his own heart and affections, and not curb and prune them, and retrench the extravagancy of his desires, his strength would be spent on that which profiteth not, and he would soon grow barren and useless. There is need that both by his restraining grace he should reduce and limit our desires, and by the sharpness of affliction check their excrescences. JONAH grew fond of his gourd, and GOD smote it, and therein nipped and restrained the unruliness of his spirit, which would have spent his love and delight on a silly plant. HEZEKIAH's pride was grown to such a height, that he must needs vent it by boasting of his treasure ; but GOD blasted it, by sending the *Chaldeans* to plunder him. When my heart irregularly runs out after vanity, let the smart of thy hand correct my wanderings, and tame the wildness of my affections ! Better I should bleed by thy pruning hook, than be cut down by thy axe as withered and fruitless, and cast into the burning !

XXV.

WE may observe, that lightning works with most force,

where it meets with the greatest resistance; and acts more on that which has hard and firmly compacted parts, than on what is soft and yielding, and gives easy passage to it. Hence it is, that it has been sometimes said to pass through the scabbard, without any effect, and to melt the sword in it. Hence also, the hard oak and firm cedar feel its effects, when the bay, which is of a more yielding nature, is passed over untouched by it. The judgments of GOD in their working are much accommodated to the temper of the subjects on which they light. Where they meet with a stubborn, unpliant enemy, they fall with greater force, and are most pressing and heavy; they will break what they cannot bow. “The foolish heart fretteth against the LORD; he is careless and rageth.” (*Prov. xix.*) But what is the effect? “The man that hardeneth his neck when he is rebuked, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.” Those that are as wild bulls in the net of GOD, their own rage does but the more entangle, perplex, and weaken; but where GOD meets with souls of a soft and complying temper, his dealings are accordingly gentle, he afflicts them lightly, and does not stir up all his wrath. In this respect, because GOD thus wisely and carefully distinguishes between the different states and tempers of the patients with whom he has to deal, he is said “to correct us *in judgment.*”

XXVI.

IF salt-petre, which is in itself observed to be of a fiery nature, be mixed with lukewarm water, at first it contesteth with it; but when it is overcome and dissolved by it, the water becomes abundantly more cold than otherwise it could have been. And water which has been warmed, and afterwards returns to its native temperature, becomes more cold, and more subject to be frozen, than that which has not felt the fire. Where the convictions of the SPIRIT OF GOD do not work a thorough change, the heart becomes afterwards benumbed into a

greater coldness and deadness. A spiritual relapse is very pernicious. Where **God** has been knocking, and sent away with a repulse, he will suffer another bar to be put on that door. He that has conquered the good motions and desires which **Heaven** kindled in him, is given over to a more reprobate sense, as the temper of iron is more hardened by being quenched after it has been heated in the forge. No sinner does more eagerly wallow in the mire, than he that returns to it after he was once washed. Where the unclean spirit, after his departure for a season, on his return finds the soul without **CHRIST**, swept and emptied of all gracious dispositions, and garnished with whatsoever vice may suit the entertainment of so unclean a guest, his re-entrance is with new attendance, and his hold is rendered seven-fold more impregnable than before: "he taketh to himself seven other spirits worse than himself, and that man's last state is worse than his first." **LORD**, let me never quench those sparks which I should be always quickening and kindling into a flame; lest, by so doing, I make myself fuel for a flame that shall never be quenched!

XXVII.

PLINY, as his nephew tells us, out of curiosity prying into the mountain **Vesuvius**, that he might discover the manner and causes of its fiery eruptions, was devoured by them, and made fuel to that by which he thought to have increased his knowledge; and so found his death in his too bold advance in quest of that mystery of nature. Surely to be too curious in our inquiries and researches into the mysteries of **God** cannot but be dangerous. **God** hath drawn a veil over some things; and if we are so bold as to attempt to lift it up, he may justly strike us with blindness, even in those things which were before exposed to our view. If we long after such forbidden fruit, **God** may, by a flaming sword, so set as to turn to all points of the compass, keep us not only from the tree of life and knowledge, but from all other trees in his Para-

dise. MOSES might come to the hill, but not to the burning bush: "Come not hither." If he had, it might have proved a consuming fire to him. If the waves of the sea have limits set to them, "Hitherto shall ye go,"—much more man's curiosity. And what security can he give himself, who will boldly invade the privacies which infinite wisdom hath locked up in concealment, and break down the inclosures which the ALMIGHTY hath set up? Cannot we be content to be admitted into his house, except we ransack his closet and cabinet;—to be of his court, except we be his secretaries? If we have an ear to hear where GOD hath no tongue to speak, He may justly cause us to have no eye to read where He hath a hand to write. It is a dangerous presumption to break open GOD's seal, and to go in quest of the knowledge of that, which he has hidden on purpose that we might not know it. He who is not content to look on the sun, where his rays are refracted through a cloud, will but lose his sight by staring on him in his naked brightness.

XXVIII.

THE Rabbins tell us, according to their wonted vanity, that AARON (*Exod.* xxii.) intended not to make a calf, but cast the golden ear-rings into the fire to consume them; but, by the operation of SATAN, the form of a calf came forth.

But surely it is very usual for that old Serpent thus to over-act us, and make us unwittingly advance his interest; to use zeal without knowledge, as an instrument to promote his own cause under the pretext of GOD's; and, where men think they are building a church for GOD, to make it a chapel for himself. ST. PETER thought he had uttered that which would have pleased CHRIST, when he said, "Master, pity thyself;" yet the Devil, it seems, had made him his spokesman; for our LORD replied, "Get thee behind me, SATAN." That design, which to gain proselytes and assistants had "Holiness to the LORD" written on it, when the other side is seen, sometimes

proves to be only for the advancement of a carnal interest under that mask. Hence it has proceeded, that what DAVID said, “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up,” may be by a prodigious inversion truly applied to some; —*their zeal hath eaten up the house of God.*

XXIX.

GALEACIUS, the noble Marquis of *Vico*, was so effectually wrought on by an elegant similitude in a sermon of PETER MARTYR’S, that he soon afterwards laid down all his honours, interests, and relations, at the feet of CHRIST. Perhaps the same thing, nakedly proposed, would not have made so easy and great an impression upon him, as it did when set forth and adorned in that rhetorical dress. The same passage, in a different habit, may be vigorous and piercing, or languid and dispirited.

Hearers are generally like bees, they all go to the flowers; therefore our discourse may be profitably as well as pleasingly strewed with them, provided they yield as much honey as they make a fair show: the food will be received more readily, when thus prepared. The assistance of oratory, if it be duly applied, and brought in only as an auxiliary, is in no wise to be slighted and rejected; for by this chiefly, among secondary means, the preacher reigns in the affection of his auditors;—by this he thunders and lightens in them, as PERICLES was said to do. The feathers that imp the arrow, make it fly the faster, and pierce the deeper. Surely it could not be without the help of this art that CHRIST was so graphically described, and, as it were, painted forth, in his crucifixion, before the eyes of the Galatians. (*Gal. iii. 1.*) Yet the imposture of that rhetoric deserves more reproof than commendation, which works on the affections alone, and not at all on reason or conscience; and so kindles a strange fire in the heart, through the glass of the fancy rather than the judgment, which God will not own in the sacrifice; as likewise does the wantonness of that oratory, which is as gay and gaudy in the dress of every sentence,

as a young scribe is in flowering a capital letter. Truth, especially divine truth, will not be decked like a strumpet, although it refuse not a decent and matron-like ornament. The pearls of the kingdom of heaven should be set in gold, not in lead ;—though not so curiously wrought and embellished, as that the artifice should hide the lustre of the jewel. Comely and neat apparel is an ornament to the body ; but if either gaudy or coarse, a disgrace.

XXX.

A SPARTAN having long busied himself about the carcase of a dead man, to try if he could settle it firmly in an upright posture, perceiving how ineffectual his endeavours proved, (sometimes the head falling into the bosom, sometimes the arms flagging downward, and the whole at last falling to the ground,) told the standers-by, “There is wanting something within,” meaning a soul. Thus it is in dealing with those who are “dead in trespasses and sins.” If we endeavour to hold up their countenances heaven-ward, and would have them fix their eye on eternity, we cannot hold them to it one moment ; they presently incline towards the earth again. If we would set them on their feet, and make them upright ; if we would set their hands at work in deeds of righteousness, justice, and truth, and have them stretch out their arms to the relief of those that are in distress ; all is in vain, while there is no spirit, nor principle of motion ; something is wanting within. If GOD’s dreadful threatenings be sounded in their ears with a voice of thunder, they hear it not ; if hell be set before their eyes, they see it not ; if a scourge be laid on their backs, their dead flesh feels it not.

XXXI.

OLD ELI was very mild towards the notorious sacrileges, adulteries, and incests of his sons ; but how uncharitably doth he misconstrue poor HANNAH’s devotion, and upon what weak ground (only seeing her lips move with-

out noise) doth he build the heavy charge of drunkenness against her! Yet afterwards, perceiving his error, he recants, and turns his condemnation of HANNAH into prayer for her.

Thus it often happens, that those who are most mildly indulgent to their own, are most sharply censorious towards others. He whose judgment is suborned or bribed by affection to a too partial and soft gentleness, will, where the subject is different, be as much warped and biassed towards a contrary extreme. For the case is much altered with the persons that are concerned in it. If nature or affection be allowed to pass the sentence, and in judging offences to accept the persons of the offenders, the judgment must needs be partial. The same eye which could not discern a beam in one case, will be so quick-sighted as to spy a mote in the other.

How apt is hasty and inconsiderate zeal to pass a grievous censure, where there is no other ground for it but mere misapprehension? Those that are too rash in their reproofs, before they have taken sufficient estimate of the ground on which they are to level them, are often guilty of a zealous breach of charity. Let me imitate ELI, not in committing, but amending, his fault; and if in my haste I have prejudiced or injured another by an unjust censure, let me not persist in my error, but be as unquiet till I have made satisfaction for my offence, as I was till I had committed it. Let me in cool blood make the best reparation I can for the wound I have given in my heat and distempered zeal.

XXXII.

WE read of AGRIPPINA, that the course she took to destroy her husband CLAUDIUS, was, by mixing poison at a banquet with the food which he most delighted in,—a mushroom: *Boletum medicatum avidissimo talium ciborum obtulit*. And we know, that what is venomous, being mingled with wine, works more furiously and incurably than with water. The Devil's great business is, to search

into our tempers, thoughts, inclinations, and affections ; that, finding which way the pulse of our soul beats, he may apply himself accordingly ; that he may suit his temptations so as most effectually to work on the humour that abounds most in us ; that he may lay his poison in our daintiest dish, and bait his hook with what he is sure we will swallow with most eagerness. If he finds the heart bent upon riches, he will present to such a man a golden idol for him to fall down to, as NEBUCHADNEZZAR set up an image of gold for his subjects to worship. When he entered JUDAS, to hurry him to that horrid treachery, it was a silver key that let him into his heart ; and he knew that the bag which he carried was so closely hugged by him, that poison would be best conveyed to him in a cordial of gold. Are unclean desires accustomed guests to a man's soul ? The Devil will be the pander to his lust ; and, by effectual contrivances, will so order things, that they shall fall in with the current of his affections. Thus he endeavoured to compass DAVID's death by the poison of a look ; and when he found AMNON's soul hot with this fever, he, by JONADAB's mouth, inspired the crafty contrivance into his head of feigning himself sick, whereby he inveigled his sister. Hath pride and ambition the throne in his heart ? How doth the Devil sublime his thoughts, and raise them up to high and soaring hopes ; engaging him in such designs as cannot be compassed, but by wading through deep and enormous sins ? Thus HAMAN, that he might engross the favour of his King, and shine with a lustre of glory, free from that shadow with which the contempt of an unbended knee seemed to eclipse it, is drawn to contrive a cruel epidemic plot against the whole nation of the Jews, and which proved in the upshot most fatal to himself, in an advancement which his ambitious thoughts had never proposed to him.

XXXIII.

I FIND it to be more hard to combat pleasure than grief,

and that I am more easily foiled by the insinuating nature of that, than overthrown by the open and harsh violence of this. For grief, when it makes its onset, cannot hold any intelligence within me, to facilitate a surprisal; but pleasure hath a treacherous party in my bosom, which has secret compliances with her; a thousand passions favour her admittance, and by all endeavours seek to frustrate my resistance. The soul barricadoes itself against grief, and by all wards seems to keep off the fury of its assaults; but to pleasure it lies open and naked, and soon hearkens to the summons. It admits of parleys, truces, correspondencies, and compliances here; whereas in the other war, it fights it out to the last, without quarter. That is like the strife between the torrent and the dam, always struggling to force one another; but this is like that between wind and tide, which sometimes strive, sometimes come about, and are both of a side. The will keeps its forces firmly united, when she enters the lists with that; but when pleasure is to be resisted, they are divided and dissipated, and not easily rallied. The soul's resolution will not be borne down by force, but it gently surrenders to delight. It soon comes to a treaty here; but the stormings of grief it firmly opposes. Therefore I will venture to pronounce, though it be a bold aphorism, That it is more easy to live on the dunghill of JOB with patience, than in the midst of SOLOMON'S affluence with moderation. Those "paths washed with butter" (as the Scripture phrases them) must needs be more slippery than the way that hath blocks and crosses in it, or that is strewed with the salt of affliction.

Surely, if we review the examples of those who have marked the ways that lead to destruction with their blood, we may return with that saying in our own mouths: Adversity "hath slain her thousands," but Prosperity "her ten thousands." King JAMES, once asking a gentleman of note, what the people talked of the Spanish navy, was answered, "Sir, the people are more afraid of the Spanish Match, than the Spanish Powder." I more

fear SATAN'S kind offers and courting addresses, than his hostile attempts.

XXXIV.

THEY who indulge themselves in the diversion of reading romantic stories, experience, that though they know all to be false and fictitious, yet many times they cannot help having as violent passions, as if they were true, and as if they saw that really before their eyes, which they are sure is but painted. Sometimes they are under a transport of joy, sometimes of sorrow, as it pleases the romancer to tell his story; they are in fears when extremity of danger is represented, and in hopes when a good issue of the matter seems to open itself; and that with as lively a sense, as if they were in good earnest interested in the affair. And though still they can reflect on all, as but the dreams and fancies of another man, yet when they find themselves so truly affected, they are ready to think them their own proper concerns. This plainly evidences what vain, irrational things our passions for the most part are, and how eager and vehement they may be in the pursuit of that, which is as empty as shadows and dreams. And it would be a good lesson from this, to learn how little we are to trust the representations of our fancies in cases where the matter is of a more weighty nature; it being an approved rule of prudence, "Never to trust those entirely, who have deceived us, though but once." How great folly is it in us, to commit ourselves to the hurry of these blind and hoodwinked, yet impetuous guides! In this instance, likewise, methinks we have an insight into the unhappiness of our natures, and may learn what a strange and secret violence sense exercises over reason; what a tyrannical power passion usurps in the soul; how extremely contagious the neighbourhood of the inferior faculty, the imagination, is to the understanding. Certainly, there is in man more of the earth, out of which he was taken and framed, than of that living spirit which was breathed

into his nostrils. There is more body than soul in this proud creature, who thinks himself created to have dominion over all others.

. XXXV.

IT is observable in what manner the contention between ABRAHAM'S herdsmen and LOT'S is related, in *Gen. xiii. 7* : "And there was a strife between ABRAHAM'S herdsmen, and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle ;" and then those words immediately follow, in a seemingly strange dependence, "And the *Canaanite* and *Perizzite* dwelled in the land ;" which surely the SPIRIT of GOD inserted as no small aggravation of the unseasonableness of the strife, that they should fall out while the heathens lived so near them, and were looking on, and so expose their religion to contempt and reproach. How great an aggravation have our dissensions received from the neighbourhood of those that are adversaries to the truth, who have delighted to look on, and see our scuffles, and have clapped their hands, saying, "Aha, so would we have it ;"—from hence, also, taking occasion to reproach and vilify our religion. As ST. PAUL says of speaking with several tongues, "Would not he that comes in say, you are mad ?"—so, when those that are without hear of so many dissensions and brawls, and such jangling opinions among us, will they not think us mad ? They will not easily be induced to believe that there is a church or temple of GOD building, where there is such a noise and clatter from the knocking of hammers and iron instruments. Surely Sion can as ill be built with discord of hearts, as Babel could with discord of tongues. GOD is not wont to be in the whirlwind of dissensions and uproars, but in the "still voice ;" and that Heavenly Dove the HOLY GHOST, like the halcyon, builds his nest only in a calm. Though the garment of the King's daughter, the Church, be of divers colours, though there be variety of gifts, yet it should be like CHRIST'S garment, without seam : *In veste varietas sit, scissura non sit.* Lines, the

nearer they approach to the centre, the nearer they come to one another; and those are at greatest distance from God, who are furthest off from one another in uncharitable differences.

But have the *Canaanite* and the *Perizzite* been merely lookers on? Or have they not had another interest in the strife, by strong and secret influences causing and fomenting differences and contentions, and kindling sparks into a flame? Surely "the hand of JOAB hath been in all this matter." To this "sower of tares" we are in great part to impute the stirs and disturbances which new disciplines, new doctrines, sects, and schisms, have raised among us. He has been diligent in improving that rule in the Machiavelian politics, *Divide et impera*; making divisions, and disuniting us, that he may bring the broken parties more easily under his own mastery.

AN
EXTRACT
FROM
THE ASSEMBLY'S
SHORTER CATECHISM;
WITH THE
PROOFS THEREOF OUT OF THE SCRIPTURES.

THE
SHORTER CATECHISM;

WITH

THE PROOFS THEREOF OUT OF THE SCRIPTURES, IN WORDS
AT LENGTH.

QUESTION 1. What is the chief end of man?

Answer. Man's chief end is to glorify God,^a and to enjoy him^b for ever.

^a 1 *Cor.* x. 31. Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

Rom. xi. 36. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

^b *Psal.* lxxiii. 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. *Ver.* 26. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Q. 2. What rule has God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

A. The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament,^c is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify God, and enjoy him.

^c 2 *Tim.* iii. 16. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

Q. 3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Q. 4. What is God?

A. GOD is a Spirit,^d infinite,^e eternal,^f and unchangeable,^g in his being, wisdom,^h power, holiness,ⁱ justice, goodness, and truth.^k

^d *John* iv. 24. GOD is a Spirit.

^e *Job* xi. 7. Canst thou by searching find out GOD? canst thou find out the ALMIGHTY unto perfection?

^f *Psal.* xc. 2. From everlasting, to everlasting, thou art GOD.

^g *Jam.* i. 17. The FATHER OF LIGHTS, with whom is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning.

^h *Psal.* cxlvii. 5. Great is our LORD, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.

ⁱ *Rev.* iv. 8. Holy, holy, holy LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, which was, and is, and is to come.

Rev. xv. 4. Who shall not fear thee, O LORD, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy.

^k *Exod.* xxiv. 6. The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. *Ver.* 7. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.

Q. 5. Are there more Gods than one?

A. There is but one only,^l the living and true GOD.^m

^l *Deut.* vi. 4. Hear, O Israel, the LORD our GOD is one LORD.

^m *Jer.* x. 10. But the LORD, he is the true GOD, he is the living GOD, and everlasting King.

Q. 6. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There are three Persons in the Godhead, the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST;ⁿ and these three are one GOD, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.^o

ⁿ *Matt.* xxviii. 19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.

^o *1 John* v. 7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the FATHER, the WORD, and the HOLY GHOST, and these three are one.

Q. 7. What is the work of creation?

A. The work of creation is GOD's making all things^p out of nothing, by the word of his power,^q in the space of six days, and all very good.^r

^p *Gen.* i. throughout. 1. In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.

^q *Heb. xi. 3.* Through faith, we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God.

^r *Gen. i. 31.* And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good; and the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Q. 8. How did God create man?

A. God created man male and female, after his own image,^s in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness,^t with dominion over the creatures.^u

^s *Gen. i. 27.* So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

^t *Col. iii. 10.* And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.

Eph. iv. 24. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

^u *Gen. i. 28.* And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Q. 9. What are God's works of providence?

A. God's works of providence are his most holy,^v wise,^x and powerful^y preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.^z

^v *Psal. cxlv. 17.* The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

Psal. civ. 24. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches.

^x *Isa. xxviii. 29.* This also cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts, which is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.

^y *Heb. i. 3.* Upholding all things by the word of his power.

^z *Psal. ciii. 19.* His kingdom ruleth over all.

Matt. x. 29. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. *Ver. 30.* But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Q. 10. What special act of providence did God exercise towards man in the state wherein he was created?

A. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience,^a forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.^b

^a *Gal. iii. 12.* The man that doeth them shall live in them.

^b *Gen. ii. 17.* But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Q. 11. Did our first parents continue in the state wherein they were created?

A. Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the state wherein they were created, by sinning against God.^c

^c *Gen. iii. 6.* And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Eccl. vii. 27. God hath made man upright.

Q. 12. What is sin?

A. Sin is a transgression of the law of God.^d

^d *1 John iii. 4.* Sin is the transgression of the law.

Q. 13. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the state wherein they were created?

A. Their eating the forbidden fruit.^e

^e *Gen. iii. 6.* And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Q. 14. Did all mankind fall in ADAM'S first transgression?

A. The covenant being made with ADAM, not only for himself, but for his posterity,^f all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression.^g

^f *Gen. ii. 16.* And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

Gen. i. 28. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. *Ver. 17.* But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.

^g *Rom. v. 12.* Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. *Ver. 18.* By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation.

1 Cor. xv. 21. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. **Ver. 22.** For as in ADAM all die, even so in CHRIST shall all be made alive.

Q. 15. Into what state did the fall bring mankind?

A. The fall brought mankind into a state of sin and misery.^h

^h **Rom. v. 12.** By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

Q. 16. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that state into which man fell?

A. The sinfulness of that state into which man fell, consists in the guilt of ADAM'S first sin,ⁱ the want of original righteousness,^k and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called Original Sin,^l together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

ⁱ **Rom. v. 19.** By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.

^k **Rom. iii. 10.** There is none righteous, no, not one.

^l **Eph. ii. 1.** You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. **Ver. 2.** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

Psal. li. 5. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Q. 17. What is the misery of that state into which man fell?

A. All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with GOD,^m are under his wrath and curse,ⁿ and so made liable to all the miseries of this life,^o to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.

^m **Gen. iii. 8.** ADAM and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD GOD, among the trees of the garden. **Ver. 24.** So he drove out the man.

ⁿ **Eph. ii. 3.** And were by nature children of wrath, even as others.

Gal. iii. 10. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

^o **Rom. vi. 23.** The wages of sin is death.

Q. 18. Who is the Redeemer of mankind?

A. The LORD JESUS CHRIST,^p who being the eternal

SON OF GOD,^a became man,^r and so was, and continued to be, GOD and man, in two distinct natures and one Person, for ever.^s

^p *1 Tim.* ii. 5. For there is one GOD, and one Mediator between GOD and man, the Man CHRIST JESUS.

^a *John* i. 14. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

Gal. iv. 4. But when the fulness of the time was come, GOD sent forth his SON, made of a woman, made under the law.

^r *Rom.* ix. 5. Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh CHRIST came, who is over all, GOD blessed for ever.

Luke i. 35. And the angel answered and said unto her, The HOLY GHOST shall come upon thee, and the power of the HIGHEST shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the SON OF GOD.

Col. ii. 9. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

^s *Heb.* vii. 24. But this Man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. *Ver.* 25. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto GOD by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Q. 19. How did CHRIST, being the SON OF GOD, become man?

A. CHRIST the SON OF GOD became man, by taking to himself a true body,^t and a reasonable soul,^u being conceived by the power of the HOLY GHOST, in the womb of the Virgin MARY, and born of her,^w yet without sin.^x

^t *Heb.* ii. 14. For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. *Ver.* 16. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of ABRAHAM.

Heb. x. 5. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me.

^u *Matt.* xxvi. 38. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.

^w *Luke* i. 31. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

^x *Heb.* iv. 15. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Q. 20. What office does CHRIST execute as our Redeemer?

A. CHRIST, as our Redeemer, executes the offices of a Prophet,^y of a Priest,^z and of a King,^a both in his state of humiliation and exaltation.

^y *Acts* iii. 22. MOSES truly said unto the Fathers, A Prophet shall the LORD your GOD raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me : Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

Heb. xii. 25. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh : for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven. Compare with 2 *Cor.* xiii. 3.

^z *Heb.* v. 5. So also CHRIST glorified not himself to be made an High Priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. *Verse* 6. Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.

^a *Psal.* ii. 6. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. *Verse* 8. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Isa. ix. 6. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given : and the government shall be upon his shoulder : and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. *Verse* 7. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.

Q. 21. How does CHRIST execute the office of a Prophet?

A. CHRIST executes the office of a Prophet, in revealing to us,^b by his word^c and Spirit,^d the will of GOD for our salvation.

^b *John* i. 18. No man hath seen GOD at any time ; the only-begotten SON, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared him.

John xv. 15. Henceforth I call you not servants ; for the servant knoweth not what his LORD doeth : but I have called you friends ; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.

^c *John* xx. 31. These things are written, that ye might believe that JESUS is the CHRIST, the SON of GOD, and that believing, ye might have life through his name.

^d *John* xiv. 26. The Comforter, which is the HOLY GHOST, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things.

Q. 22. How does CHRIST execute the office of a Priest?

A. CHRIST executes the office of a Priest, in his once offering up himself a sacrifice to satisfy Divine Justice,^e and reconcile us to God,^f and in making continual intercession for us.^g

^e *Heb. ix. 14.* How much more shall the blood of CHRIST, who through the eternal SPIRIT, offered himself without spot to GOD, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

^f *Heb. ii. 17.* In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to GOD, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

^g *Heb. vii. 24.* But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. *Ver. 25.* He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto GOD by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Q. 23. How does CHRIST execute the office of a King ?

A. CHRIST executes the office of a King, in subduing us to himself,^h in ruling and defending us,ⁱ and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.^k

^h *Psal. cx. throughout. Ver. 3.* Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, &c.

ⁱ *Isa. xxxiii. 22.* The LORD is our judge, the LORD is our law-giver, the LORD is our King ; He will save us.

^k *1 Cor. xv. 25.* For he must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet.

Q. 24. Wherein did CHRIST's Humiliation consist ?

A. CHRIST's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition,^l made under the law,^m undergoing the miseries of this life,ⁿ the wrath of GOD,^o and the cursed death of the cross,^p in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.^q

^l *Luke ii. 7.* And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger.

^m *Gal. iv. 4.* God sent forth his SON, made of a woman, made under the law.

ⁿ *Isa. liii. 2.* For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground : he hath no form nor comeliness : and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. *Ver. 3.* He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

Luke xxii. 44. And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly : and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

° *Mat. xxvii. 46.* And about the ninth hour, JESUS cried with a loud voice, My GOD, my GOD, why hast thou forsaken me ?

° *Phil. ii. 8.* He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

° *Mat. xii. 40.* As JONAS was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the SON OF MAN be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Q. 25. Wherein consists CHRIST's Exaltation ?

A. CHRIST's exaltation consists in his rising again from the dead on the third day,^r in ascending up to heaven, and sitting at the right hand of GOD the Father,^s and in coming to judge the world at the last day.^t

^r *1 Cor. xv. 4.* And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.

^s *Mark xvi. 19.* So then, after the LORD had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of GOD.

^t *Acts xvii. 31.* He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Q. 26. How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by CHRIST ?

A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by CHRIST, by the effectual application of it to us,^u by his HOLY SPIRIT.^w

^u *John i. 11.* He came unto his own, and his own received him not. *Verse 12.* But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of GOD.

^w *Tit. iii. 5.* Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the HOLY GHOST. *Verse 6.* Which he shed on us abundantly, through JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOUR.

Q. 27. How does the SPIRIT apply to us the redemption purchased by CHRIST ?

A. The SPIRIT applies to us the redemption purchased by CHRIST, by working faith in us,^x and thereby uniting us to CHRIST.^y

^x *Eph. i. 13.* In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that HOLY SPIRIT of promise. *Verse 14.* Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Eph. ii. 8. By grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

^y *Eph. iii. 17.* That CHRIST may dwell in your hearts by faith.

Q. 28. What benefits do they that truly believe, partake of in this life?

A. Justification, Sanctification,^z and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany, or flow from them.

^z *1 Cor. i. 30.* Of him ye are in CHRIST JESUS, who of GOD is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

Q. 29. What is Justification?

A. Justification is an act of GOD's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins,^a and accepteth us as righteous in his sight,^b only for the righteousness of CHRIST imputed to us,^c and received by faith alone.^d

^a *Rom. iii. 24.* Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in JESUS CHRIST. *Verse 25.* Whom GOD hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of GOD.

Rom. iv. 6. Even as DAVID also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom GOD imputeth righteousness without works. *Verse 7.* Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. *Verse 8.* Blessed is the man to whom the LORD will not impute sin.

Eph. i. 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

^b *2 Cor. v. 19.* GOD was in CHRIST, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. *Verse 21.* For he hath made him to be sin for us, that knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in him.

^c *Rom. v. 17.* For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, JESUS CHRIST. *Verse 18.*

Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. *Verse 19.* As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

^d *Gal. ii. 16.* Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of JESUS CHRIST, even we have believed in JESUS CHRIST, that we might be justified by the faith of CHRIST.

Q. 30. What is Sanctification?

A. Sanctification is the work of GOD's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man, after the image of GOD,^e and are enabled to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.^f

^e *Eph. iv. 23.* And be renewed in the spirit of your mind. *Verse 24.* And that ye put on the new man, which after GOD is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Rom. vi. 4. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death; that like as CHRIST was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. *Verse 6.* Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

^f *Rom. viii. 1.* There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS, who walk not after the flesh, but after the SPIRIT.

Q. 31. What are the benefits which, in this life, do either accompany or flow from justification and sanctification?

A. Assurance of GOD's love, peace of conscience, joy in the HOLY GHOST,^g increase of grace,^h and perseverance therein unto the end.ⁱ

^g *Rom. v. 1.* Being justified by faith, we have peace with GOD through our LORD JESUS CHRIST. *Verse 2.* By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of GOD. *Verse 5.* And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of GOD is shed abroad in our hearts, by the HOLY GHOST which is given unto us.

Rom. xiv. 17. For the kingdom of GOD is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST.

^h *Prov. iv. 18.* The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

¹ *1 John v. 13.* These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the SON OF GOD; that ye may know that ye have eternal life.

1 Pet. i. 5. Who are kept by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation.

Q. 32. What benefits do believers receive from CHRIST at their death?

A. The souls of believers at their death pass into glory,^g and their bodies rest in their graves,^h till the resurrection.ⁱ

^g *Phil. i. 23.* Having a desire to depart, and to be with CHRIST.

Luke xxiii. 43. And JESUS said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

^h *Isa. lvii. 2.* He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.

ⁱ *Job xix. 26.* And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see GOD.

Q. 33. What benefits do believers receive from CHRIST at the resurrection?

A. At the resurrection, believers, being raised up in glory,^k shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment,^l and made perfectly blessed, in the full enjoyment of GOD,^m to all eternity.ⁿ

^k *1 Cor. xv. 43.* It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory.

^l *Matt. x. 32.* Whosoever shall confess me before men, him also will I confess before my FATHER which is in heaven.

^m *1 John iii. 2.* When He shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

ⁿ *1 Thess. iv. 17.* And so shall we ever be with the LORD.

Q. 34. What is the duty which GOD requires of man?

A. The duty which GOD requires of man, is obedience to his revealed will.^o

^o *Micah vi. 8.* He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy GOD?

Q. 35. What did GOD at first reveal unto man for the rule of his obedience?

A. The rule which GOD at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the Moral Law.^p

^p *Rom. ii. 14.* When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law; these having not the law, are a law unto themselves. *Verse 15.* Which show the work of the law written in their hearts.

Q. 36. Where is the Moral Law summarily comprehended?

A. In the Ten Commandments.^q

^q *Deut. x. 4.* And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the Ten Commandments.

Matt. xix. 17. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments.

Q. 37. What is the sum of the Ten Commandments?

A. The sum of the Ten Commandments, is to love the LORD our GOD with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind, and our neighbour as ourselves.^r

^r *Matt. xxii. 37.* Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

Q. 38. What is the Preface to the Ten Commandments?

A. I am the LORD thy GOD, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.^s

^s *Exod. xx. 2.*

Q. 39. What doth the Preface to the Ten Commandments teach us?

A. That because GOD is the LORD, and our GOD and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his Commandments.^t

^t *Deut. xi. 1.* Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his Commandments alway.

Q. 40. What is the First Commandment?

A. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. (*Exod. xx. 3.*)

Q. 41. What is required in the First Commandment?

A. To know^u and acknowledge GOD to be the only true GOD and our GOD,^w and to worship and glorify him accordingly.^x

^u 1 *Chron.* xxviii. 9. And thou SOLOMON, my son, know thou the GOD of thy Father.

^w *Deut.* xxvi. 17. Thou hast avouched the LORD this day to be thy GOD, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken to his voice.

^x *Matt.* iv. 10. Thou shalt worship the LORD thy GOD, and Him only shalt thou serve.

Q. 42. What is forbidden in the First Commandment?

A. The First Commandment forbiddeth the denying or not worshipping and glorifying the true GOD as GOD, and our GOD, and the giving that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone.

Q. 43. What are we specially taught by these words (*before Me*) in the First Commandment?

A. These words (*before Me*) in the First Commandment, teach, that GOD who sees all things, taketh notice, and is much displeased with the sin of having any other GOD.

Q. 44. Which is the Second Commandment?

A. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy GOD am a jealous GOD, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. (*Exod* xx. 4—6.)

Q. 45. What is required in the Second Commandment?

A. The receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as GOD hath appointed in his word.

Q. 46. What is forbidden in the Second Commandment?

A. The worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed by his word.

Q. 47. What are the reasons annexed to the Second Commandment ?

A. The reasons annexed to the Second Commandment, are God's sovereignty over us, his property in us, and the zeal which he has to his own worship.

Q. 48. Which is the Third Commandment ?

A. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain ; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. (*Exod. xx. 7.*)

Q. 49. What is required in the Third Commandment ?

A. The holy and reverent use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works.

Q. 50. What is forbidden in the Third Commandment ?

A. All profaning, or abusing, any thing whereby God makes himself known.

Q. 51. What is the reason annexed to the Third Commandment ?

A. The reason annexed to the Third Commandment is, that however the breakers of this Commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the LORD our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment.

Q. 52. Which is the Fourth Commandment ?

A. Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it holy ; six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work ; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God ; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger, that is within thy gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day ; wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it. (*Exod. xx. 8—11.*)

Q. 53. What is required in the Fourth Commandment ?

A. The keeping holy to God, such set time, as he hath appointed in his word, expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath to himself.

Q. 54. Which day of the seven has GOD appointed to be the weekly Sabbath ?

A. Till the resurrection of CHRIST, GOD appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath ;^b and the first day of the week, ever since, to continue to the end of the world.

^b *Acts xx. 7.* And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, PAUL preached unto them.

Q. 55. How is the Sabbath to be sanctified ?

A. The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting, all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days, and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of GOD's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in works of necessity and mercy.

Q. 56. What are the sins forbidden in the Fourth Commandment ?

A. The omission, or careless performance, of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about worldly employments, or recreations.

Q. 57. What are the reasons annexed to the Fourth Commandment ?

A. The reasons annexed to the Fourth Commandment are, GOD's allowing us six days of the week for our own employment, his challenging a special property in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the Sabbath-Day.

Q. 58. Which is the Fifth Commandment.

A. Honour thy father and mother, that thy days may be long in the land, which the LORD thy GOD giveth thee. (*Exod. xx. 12.*)

Q. 59. What is required in the Fifth Commandment ?

A. The preserving the honour, and performing the duties, belonging to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals.

Q. 60. What is forbidden in the Fifth Commandment ?

A. The neglecting of, or doing any thing against, the honour and duty which belong to every one in their several places and relations.

Q. 61. What is the reason annexed to the Fifth Commandment ?

A. A promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good) to all such as keep this Commandment.

Q. 62. Which is the Sixth Commandment ?

A. Thou shalt not kill. (*Exod. xx. 13.*)

Q. 63. What is required in the Sixth Commandment ?

A. All lawful endeavours to preserve our own life, and the lives of others.

Q. 64. What is forbidden in the Sixth Commandment ?

A. The taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbour, unjustly, or whatsoever tends thereto.

Q. 65. What is the Seventh Commandment ?

A. Thou shalt not commit adultery. (*Exod. xx. 14.*)

Q. 66. What is required in the Seventh Commandment ?

A. The preservation of our own, and our neighbour's chastity, in thought, speech, and behaviour.

Q. 67. What is forbidden in the Seventh Commandment ?

A. All unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.

Q. 68. What is the Eight Commandment ?

A. Thou shalt not steal. (*Exod. xx. 15.*)

Q. 69. What is required in the Eighth Commandment ?

A. The lawful procuring and furthering of the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.

Q. 70. What is forbidden in the Eighth Commandment ?

A. Whatsoever doth, or may unjustly hinder our own, or our neighbour's, wealth and outward estate.

Q. 71. Which is the Ninth Commandment ?

A. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. (*Exod. xx. 16.*)

Q. 72. What is required in the Ninth Commandment ?

A. The maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own, and our neighbour's, good name, especially in witness-bearing.

Q. 73. What is forbidden in the Ninth Commandment?

A. Whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own, or our neighbour's, good name.

Q. 74. Which is the Tenth Commandment?

A. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's. (*Exod. xx. 17.*)

Q. 75. What is required in the Tenth Commandment?

A. Full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit towards our neighbour, and all that is his.

Q. 76. What is forbidden in the Tenth Commandment?

A. All discontentment with our estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbour, and all inordinate motions and affections to any thing that is his.

Q. 77. Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?

A. Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.^c

^c *Ezek. viii. 6.* He said furthermore unto me, Son of Man, seest thou what they do? Even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? But turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations. *See verses 13, 15.*

Psal. lxxviii. 17. And they sinned yet more against him, by provoking the Most High in the wilderness. *See verses 32, 56.*

John xix. 11. He that delivereth me unto thee, hath the greater sin.

Q. 78. What does every sin deserve?

A. Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come.^d

^d *Eph. v. 6.* Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

Gal. iii. 10. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them.

Matt. xxv. 41. Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels.

Q. 79. What does GOD require of us, that we may escape the wrath and curse due to us for sin ?

A. To escape the wrath and curse of GOD due to us for sin, GOD requires of us faith in JESUS CHRIST, repentance unto life,^e with the diligent use of all outward means, whereby CHRIST communicates to us the benefits of redemption.

^e *Acts xx. 21.* Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance towards GOD, and faith towards our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Prov. viii. 33. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. *See verses 34, 35.*

Isaiah lv. 3. Incline your ear, and come unto me ; hear, and your souls shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of DAVID.

Q. 80. What is faith in JESUS CHRIST ?

A. Faith in JESUS CHRIST is a saving grace,^f whereby we receive,^g and rest upon him alone for salvation,^h as he is offered to us in the Gospel.

^f *Heb. x. 39.* We are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

^g *John i. 12.* As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of GOD, even to them that believe on his name.

Isa. xxvi. 3. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee ; because he trusteth in thee. *See ver. 4.*

^h *Phil. iii. 9.* And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of CHRIST, the righteousness which is of GOD by faith.

Q. 81. What is repentance unto life ?

A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin,ⁱ and apprehension of the mercy of GOD in CHRIST,^k does, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto GOD,^l with full purpose of, and endcavours after, new obedience.^m

^l *Acts xi. 18.* Then hath GOD also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

Acts ii. 37. When they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto PETER, and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do ? *See ver. 38.*

^k *Joel* ii. 12. Therefore also now, saith the LORD, Turn ye unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. *Also ver.* 13.

Jer. iii. 22. Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings: behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the LORD our GOD.

^l *Jer.* xxxi. 18. Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my GOD. *See ver.* 19.

Ezek. xxxvi. 31. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loath yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations.

^m *Psal.* cxix. 59. I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.

2 Cor. vii. 11. For behold this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

Isa. i. 16. Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil. *See ver.* 17.

Q. 82. What are the outward means whereby CHRIST communicates to us the benefits of redemption.

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby CHRIST communicates to us the benefits of redemption, are his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer.

Q. 83. How is the word made effectual to salvation?

A. The SPIRIT OF GOD makes the reading,ⁿ but especially the preaching, of the word an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners,^o and of building them up in holiness and comfort,^p through faith, unto salvation.^q

ⁿ *Neh.* viii. 8. So they read in the Book, in the law of GOD distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

Acts xxvi. 18. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of SATAN unto GOD, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Acts xx. 32. And now, brethren, I commend you to GOD, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Rom. xv. 4. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

2 *Tim.* iii. 15. And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in CHRIST JESUS. *See verses 16, 17.*

° *Psal.* xix. 7. The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. *See ver. 8.*

° 1 *Thes.* i. 6. And ye became followers of us, and of the LORD, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the HOLY GHOST.

° *Rom.* i. 6. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of CHRIST, for it is the power of GOD unto salvation, to every one that believeth.

Q. 84. How is the word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?

A. That the word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereto with diligence,^r preparation,^s and prayer,^t receive it with faith,^u and love,^w lay it up in our hearts,^x and practise it in our lives.^y

^r *Prov.* viii. 34. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting daily at the posts of my doors.

° 1 *Pet.* ii. 1. Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and evil speakings. *See ver. 2.*

^t *Psal.* cxix. 18. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wonderful things out of thy law.

° *Heb.* iv. 2. The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

^w 2 *Thes.* ii. 10. They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

^x *Psal.* cxix. 11. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Luke viii. 15. But that on the good ground, are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

^y *James* i. 25. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

Q. 85. How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?

A. The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that administers them,^z but only by the blessing of CHRIST, and the working of his SPIRIT in them that by faith receive them.^a

^a *1 Cor.* iii. 6. I have planted, APOLLOS watered: but GOD gave the increase. *See ver.* 7.

^a *1 Pet.* iii. 21. The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us, (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards GOD,) by the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST.

1 Cor. xii. 13. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Q. 86. What is a sacrament?

A. A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by CHRIST, wherein, by sensible signs, CHRIST and the benefits of the new covenant are represented,^b sealed, and applied to believers.^c

^b *Gen.* xvii. 7. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a GOD unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. *See verse* 10.

^c *Rom.* iv. 11. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had yet being uncircumcised.

1 Cor. xi. 23. For I have received of the LORD that which also I delivered unto you, that the LORD JESUS, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread. *See verse* 26.

Q. 87. What are the sacraments of the New Testament?

A. Baptism, and the LORD's Supper.

Q. 88. What is Baptism?

A. Baptism is a sacrament wherein the washing with water in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST,^d doth signify and seal our ingrafting into CHRIST, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace,^e and our engagements to be the LORD's.^f

^d *Matt.* xxviii. 19. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.

^e *Rom.* vi. 3. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into JESUS CHRIST, were baptized into his death?

^f *Rom.* vi. 4. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as CHRIST was raised up from the dead by the glory of the FATHER, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Gal. iii. 27. For as many of you as have been baptized into CHRIST, have put on CHRIST.

Q. 89. To whom is baptism to be administered ?

A. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in **CHRIST**, and obedience to him ;^s but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.^h

^s *Acts viii. 36.* And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water : and the eunuch said, See, here is water ; what doth hinder me to be baptized ? *See verse 37.*

Acts ii. 41. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized.

^h *Gen. xvii. 7.* And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generation, for an everlasting covenant, to be a **GOD** unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. *See verse 10.*

Acts ii. 38. And **PETER** said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of **JESUS CHRIST**, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the **HOLY GHOST**. *See verse 39.*

Col. ii. 11. In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of **CHRIST**. *See verse 12.*

Cor. vii. 14. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband, else were your children unclean ; but now are they holy.

Q. 90. What is the **LORD'S** Supper ?

A. The **LORD'S** Supper is a sacrament, wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to **GOD'S** appointment, his death is showed forth,ⁱ and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.^k

ⁱ *Luke xxii. 19.* And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you, this do in remembrance of me. *See verse 20.*

^k *1 Cor. x. 16.* The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of **CHRIST**? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of **CHRIST**?

Q. 91. What is required in the worthy receiving of the **LORD'S** Supper ?

A. It is required of them that would worthily partake of the **LORD'S** Supper, that they examine themselves of

their knowledge to discern the LORD's body,^y of their faith to feed upon him,^z of their repentance,^a love, and new obedience,^b lest coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.

^y 1 *Cor.* xi. 28. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. *See verse 29.*

^z 2 *Cor.* xiii. 5. Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith.

^a 1 *Cor.* xi. 31. If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

^b 1 *Cor.* v. 7. Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened: for even CHRIST our passover is sacrificed for us. *See verse 8.*

Q. 92. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires to GOD,^c for things agreeable to his will,^d in the name of CHRIST,^e with confession of our sins,^f and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.^g

^c *Psal.* lxii. 8. Trust in Him at all times, ye people, pour out your hearts before him: GOD is a refuge for us.

^d *Rom.* viii. 27. And He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth the mind of the SPIRIT, because He maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of GOD.

1 *John* v. 14. And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.

^e *John* xvi. 23. Whatsoever ye shall ask the FATHER in my name, he will give it you.

^f *Dan.* ix. 4. And I prayed unto the LORD my GOD, and made my confession.

^g *Phil.* iv. 6. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to GOD.

Q. 93. What rule has GOD given for our direction in prayer?

A. The whole word of GOD is of use to direct us in prayer; but the special rule of direction is, that form of prayer which CHRIST taught his disciples,^h commonly called the LORD's Prayer.

^h *Matt.* vi. 9. After this manner therefore pray ye, Our FATHER which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, &c. (*See Luke* xi. 2—4.)

Q. 94. What does the preface of the LORD'S Prayer teach us ?

A. The preface of the LORD'S Prayer, (which is, *Our Father, which art in heaven,*) teaches us to draw near to GOD with all holy reverence,ⁱ and confidence,^k as children to a father, able and ready to help us,^l and that we should pray with and for others.^m

ⁱ *Isa. lxi. 9.* Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people.

^k *Rom. viii. 15.* For, ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the SPIRIT of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

^l *Luke xi. 13.* If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly FATHER give the HOLY SPIRIT to them that ask him ?

^m *Eph. vi. 18.* Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the SPIRIT, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints.

Acts xii. 5. PETER therefore was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto GOD for him.

1 Tim. ii. 1. I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men. *See verse 2.*

Q. 95. What do we pray for in the first petition ?

A. In the first petition, (which is, *Hallowed be thy name,*) we pray, that GOD would enable us, and others, to glorify Him in all that whereby he maketh himself known; and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.

Q. 96. What do we pray for in the second petition ?

A. In the second petition, (which is, *Thy kingdom come,*) we pray, that SATAN'S kingdom may be destroyed, that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

Q. 97. What do we pray for in the third petition ?

A. In the third petition, (which is, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,*) we pray, that GOD by his grace would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

Q. 98. What do we pray for in the fourth petition ?

A. In the fourth petition, (which is, *Give us this day our daily bread,*) we pray, that of God's free gift, we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.

Q. 99. What do we pray for in the fifth petition ?

A. In the fifth petition, (which is, *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,*) we pray, that God, for CHRIST's sake, would freely pardon all our sins, which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by his grace we are enabled, from our heart, to forgive others.

Q. 100. What do we pray for in the sixth petition ?

A. In the sixth petition, (which is, *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,*) we pray, that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

Q. 101. What doth the conclusion of the LORD's Prayer teach us ?

A. The conclusion of the LORD's Prayer, (which is, *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen,*) teaches us, to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise Him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to Him; and in testimony of our desire and assurance to be heard, we say, *Amen.*

END OF VOL. XIV.

