



---

A

**Christian Library:**

*&c. &c.*

---



A  
**CHRISTIAN LIBRARY:**

CONSISTING OF

EXTRACTS FROM AND ABRIDGMENTS OF

THE

**CHOICEST PIECES**

OF

**Practical Divinity**

WHICH HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN THE ENGLISH TONGUE.



IN THIRTY VOLUMES:

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1750, IN FIFTY VOLUMES, DUODECIMO.

---

BY THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, A. M.,

SOMETIME FELLOW OF LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

---

**VOL. XXIII.**

---

**LONDON:**

PUBLISHED AND SOLD BY J. KERSHAW,  
14, *City-Road*, and 66, *Paternoster-Row*.

---

1825.

---

Printed by T. Corder, 14, City-Road, London.

# CONTENTS.

---

## DEVOTIONAL TRACTS:

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

### LETTERS TO THE DUKE OF BURGUNDY, FROM M. DE FENELON, ARCHBISHOP OF CAMBRAY.

	Page
LETTER I.— <i>On the Love of God</i> . . . . .	3
LETTER II.— <i>On the same</i> . . . . .	8

### LETTERS CONCERNING AND FROM B. LAURENCE.

<i>The First Letter from B. LAURENCE to the Rev. —, on the presence of God</i> . . . . .	10
<i>The Second</i> . . . . .	13
<i>The Third</i> . . . . .	14
<i>The Fourth</i> . . . . .	15
<i>The Fifth</i> . . . . .	16

### CONVERSATIONS WITH B. LAURENCE.

<i>The First Conversation</i> . . . . .	18
<i>The Second</i> . . . . .	19
<i>The Third</i> . . . . .	22
<i>The Fourth</i> . . . . .	24

<i>A Letter from MARY HENRICKS, to one troubled in mind</i> . . . . .	28
---	----

### PIOUS REFLECTIONS.

<i>I.—How scarce true faith is</i> . . . . .	37
<i>II.—Of the only way to heaven</i> . . . . .	38
<i>III.—Of patience in suffering</i> . . . . .	39

	Page
<i>IV.—Of submission and conformity to the will of God . . . . .</i>	40
<i>V.—Of the right use of afflictions . . . . .</i>	41
<i>VI.—Of meekness and humility . . . . .</i>	41
<i>VII.—Of the one thing needful . . . . .</i>	42
<i>VIII.—Of inward peace . . . . .</i>	43
<i>IX.—Of deceitful joys . . . . .</i>	44
<i>X.—Of holy tears . . . . .</i>	45
<i>XI.—Of worldly wisdom . . . . .</i>	46
<i>XII.—Of the easiness of CHRIST'S yoke . . . . .</i>	47
<i>XIII.—Of spending our time well . . . . .</i>	48
<i>XIV.—Of the love we ought to have for God . . . . .</i>	49
<i>XV.—On the words, " LORD, teach us to pray." (Luke xi. 1.) . . . . .</i>	49
<i>XVI.—Of the good use of crosses . . . . .</i>	50

#### A MOTHER'S ADVICE TO HER DAUGHTER.

<i>SECT. I.—Some directions for devotion . . . . .</i>	55
<i>SECT. II.—Of the divine presence . . . . .</i>	57
<i>SECT. III.—How to pass the day religiously . . . . .</i>	60
<i>SECT. IV.—Concerning mortification . . . . .</i>	62
<i>SECT. V.—Some rules for conversation . . . . .</i>	65

---

#### EXTRACT FROM

#### MOLINOS'S SPIRITUAL GUIDE.

#### PART I.

#### OF THE TEMPTATIONS WHEREWITH GOD PURGES SOULS.

<i>CHAP. I.—To the end God may rest in the soul, the heart is always to be kept peaceable in whatsoever temptations . . . . .</i>	69
<i>CHAP. II.—The soul ought to persevere in prayer . . . . .</i>	70

CHAP. III.—*The soul is not to afflict itself, nor intermit prayer, because it sees itself encompassed with dryness and darkness* . . . . . 73

CHAP. IV.—*It is necessary that God purge the soul after his way, because the exercises that of itself it sets about are not sufficient* . . . . . 74

CHAP. V.—*The soul ought not to be disquieted, nor draw back in the spiritual way, because it finds itself assaulted by temptations* . . . . . 76

CHAP. VI.—*The nature of internal recollection* . . . . . 78

PART II.

OF SPIRITUAL MARTYRDOMS ; OF CONTEMPLATION, PERFECT RESIGNATION, HUMILITY, AND INTERNAL PEACE.

CHAP. I.—*Who are truly spiritual men* . . . . . 84

CHAP. II.—*Of the spiritual martyrdom, wherewith God cleanseth the soul that he unites with himself* . . . . . 88

CHAP. III.—*Inward mortification, perfect resignation, and humility, are necessary for obtaining internal peace* . . . . . 91

CHAP. IV.—*Of inward solitude* . . . . . 97

---

EXTRACTS FROM

THE SERMONS OF DR. HENRY MORE.

*Address to the Reader* . . . . . 105

DISCOURSE I.—On doing the will of God.

John iv. 31—34.—*In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work* . . . . . 107

DISCOURSE II.—On doing the word of GOD.	
James i. 22.— <i>Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves</i> . . . . .	121
DISCOURSE III.—On recovering the divine likeness.	
Psa. xvii. 15.— <i>As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness</i> . . . . .	136
DISCOURSE IV.—On suffering with CHRIST.	
Rom. viii. 17.— <i>And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with CHRIST: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him</i> . . . . .	150
DISCOURSE V.—On pure religion.	
James i. 27.— <i>Pure religion and undefiled before God and the FATHER is this, To visit the widows and fatherless in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world</i> . . . . .	165

---

EXTRACTS FROM

THE WORKS OF STEPHEN CHARNOCK, B.D.,  
SOMETIME FELLOW OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD.

DISCOURSE I.—Of the knowledge of GOD.	
John xvii. 3.— <i>And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and JESUS CHRIST, whom thou hast sent</i> . . . . .	183
DISCOURSE II.—Of the knowledge of GOD in CHRIST.	
John xvii. 3.— <i>And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and JESUS CHRIST, whom thou hast sent</i> . . . . .	223

EXTRACTS FROM  
THE SERMONS OF DR. CALAMY.

SERMON I.—On Christian benevolence.  
Acts x. 38.—*Who went about doing good* . . . . . 271

SERMON II.—On the wickedness of the heart.  
Matt. xv. 19.—*For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts—* . . . . . 286

SERMON III.—On the resurrection.  
1 Cor. xv. 35.—*But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?* . . . . . 302

---

 DISCOURSES ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS:

BY HENRY SCOUGAL, A.M.

*Address to the Reader* . . . . . 327  
*A Sermon preached at MR. SCOUGAL'S funeral* . . . 329

SERMON I.—The superior excellency of the righteous.  
Prov. xii. 26.—*The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour* . . . . . 359

SERMON II.—The indispensable duty of loving our enemies.  
Luke vi. 27.—*But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies* . . . . . 377

SERMON III.—That there are but a small number saved.  
Luke xiii. 23.—*Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved?* . . . . . 398

	Page
SERMON IV.—The duty and pleasure of praise and thanksgiving.	
Psa. cvii. 15.— <i>O that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men</i> . . . . .	415
SERMON V.—On the nativity of our SAVIOUR.	
Psa. ii. 11.— <i>Rejoice with trembling</i> . . . . .	428
SERMON VI.—On the passion of our SAVIOUR.	
Lam. i. 12.— <i>Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow</i> . . . . .	443

---

---

DEVOTIONAL TRACTS,

TRANSLATED

FROM THE FRENCH.

---

---

VOL. XXIII.

B



LETTERS  
TO  
THE DUKE OF BURGUNDY,  
FROM  
M. DE FENELON,  
ARCHBISHOP OF CAMBRAY.

---

LETTER I.

*Of the Love of God.*

I BELIEVE, my Lord, the true way of loving mankind is, to love them in GOD, and for his sake. Men know not what it is to love GOD, and therefore they dread him, and keep at a distance from him. This slavish fear hinders them from understanding the sweet familiarity of children in the bosom of the tenderest of fathers. They look upon him only as an all-powerful and rigorous task-master; they are always under constraint with him; every thing they do is forced; it is with reluctance they do any good, that they may escape punishment; they would do evil if they durst, and could hope for impunity. The love of GOD appears to them a burdensome debt; they endeavour to elude it by formalities and external worship, still inclining to substitute these in the place of sincere and effectual love; they use artifices with GOD himself, to give him as little as possibly they can. O my GOD! if men knew what it is to love thee, they would seek no other life, no other joy, but thy love.

This love requires nothing of us, but to do for the sake of GOD, what reason itself should incline us to do. We are not desired to add to the number of the good works which we have already learned to practise. All that is incumbent upon us is, to do the same things from a prin-

principle of love to GOD, that honest men of a regular life do from principles of honour, and regard to themselves. Nothing is to be laid aside but what is wrong, which we ought to lay aside, though we had no other principle but right reason. As for the rest, let us leave all matters in that order which GOD hath established in the world. Let us do the same honourable and virtuous things as formerly; but let us do them for his sake who made us, and to whom we owe all.

This love of GOD does not require of all Christians the austerities of the ancient hermits, nor their profound solitude; neither does it in ordinary cases demand shining, heroic deeds, nor renouncing lawful possessions, nor abandoning the advantages of any condition of life. It would only have us just, sober, and moderate in the proper use of all these things; it would only have us not make them our god and our happiness; but to use them according to his designs, and so as they may help to raise our affections towards him.

This love does not multiply our crosses. It finds all conditions of life already sown with all kinds of them. They arise from the infirmity of our bodies, and the passions of our souls; from our own imperfections, and those of other men with whom we live. The love of GOD causes none of these pains; on the contrary, it sweetens all our sufferings; it likewise lessens them by moderating our ardent passions, and too great sensibility, the source of all our real ills. Were the love of GOD so perfect in us, as to draw off our affections from whatever we fear to lose, or hope to gain, it would finish our griefs at once, and fill us with a blessed tranquillity.

Why then so afraid of this love, which is the cause of none of our afflictions, is able to mitigate all of them, and to bring along with it into our hearts all kinds of happiness? Men are much their own enemies to resist this love, and to be afraid of it.

The precept of love is so far from being an additional burden to the rest, that it renders them light and easy.

What one does through fear, without love, is always tedious, hard, painful, and burdensome: what one does through love, becomes by this means agreeable, how cross soever it be to sense. The desire of pleasing that God whom we love, makes us, that if we suffer, we choose to suffer; and the suffering which one chooses, is no longer a suffering.

This love unsettles and changes no part of that order which God has established. It leaves the great in their grandeur, and makes them little under the hand of him who made them great. It leaves the low in the dust, and makes them satisfied to be nothing but in him. This contentment in the lowest place has no meanness in it; it makes true greatness.

This love regulates and animates all the affections we owe to creatures. We never love our neighbour so well as when we love him for the sake of God, and with the love of God. When we love men without regarding God, we love them for our own sakes; it is still our own interest we seek in them; either a more gross, or a more refined and disguised interest. If it is not money, or convenience, or favour, it is the pleasure of following our taste, of confiding in them, of being mutually beloved by them. These things flatter our self-love more than any sum of money can do; so that we really love ourselves when we imagine we love our friends. But, to love another for the sake of ourselves, is a very imperfect way of loving them. It is not friendship; it is self-love.

It may be asked, What is the right way, then, of loving our friends? It is to love them in their due order after God; it is to love God in them; to love what he has given them, and to bear, for his sake, with the want of what he has thought fit to deny them. When we love our friends for our own sakes, self-love is impatient, delicate, jealous, full of wants, and void of merit, always suspicious both of itself and its friends; it grows weary and disgusted; it soon sees an end of what it entertained the highest thoughts of; it meets with disappointments every

where : it would always have perfection, but can never find it ; it grows angry, it changes, it can rest in nothing. But the love of GOD loves its friends without views of self-interest, and so loves them pàtiently with all their faults ; it seeks no more but what GOD has given them ; it looks to nothing in them but GOD and his gifts ; it is pleased with every thing, because it loves what GOD has made, and bears with what he has not made, but permitted, and would have us to permit likewise, in compliance with his designs.

The love of GOD never looks for absolute perfection in the creatures. It knows this is to be found in GOD alone ; it takes great pleasure in saying to GOD, "Who is like unto thee?" It says to every thing that has imperfection in it, Thou art not my GOD. As it expects perfection in no creature, it is never disappointed. It loves GOD, and his gifts, in every creature, according to the degree of goodness in every one ; it has a less love to that which is less good, and a greater to that which is better ; it has some love to every thing, because every thing has some little good in it, which is the gift of GOD ; and the very worst men are capable, while they continue in life, of becoming good, and of receiving the gifts they are destitute of at present.

For the sake of GOD, it loves all his works ; all that he has commanded us to love. It raises and heightens its affection towards such objects as GOD would have it to prefer to others. In a mortal father, it looks to its Father in heaven ; in a kinsman or friend, it considers the strict ties formed by Providence. The stricter these ties are in the order of Providence, the love of GOD makes them so much more strong and intimate. Can one love GOD, without loving the objects he has commanded one to love ? They are his workmanship ; he has ordered us to love them : shall we not do so ?

Indeed, we should far rather die than love any thing better than him. He hath told us in the Gospel, "If any man love father or mother more than me, he is not worthy

of me." **God** forbid I should love better than him, what I love only for his sake ; but upon his account I love with my heart whatever represents him to me, whatever contains his gifts, whatever he designs I should love. This solid principle of love makes me resolve never to be wanting in any duty, either to my neighbours or my friends. Their imperfections cannot surprise me, for I expect nothing but imperfection in every thing which is not my **God**. I see nothing but him, in whatever has the least degree of goodness. It is he whom I love in his creatures, and nothing can alter this love. This love is not indeed always tender and affecting ; but it is real, cordial, faithful, constant, and active ; and I prefer it in my last and sincerest choice to every other love. It has also its tendernesses and its transports. If a soul was wholly addicted to **God**, it would no longer be subject to that dryness which is owing only to the delicacies and inequalities of self-love. As it would love only for the sake of **God**, it would love as **God** does, with an admirable love ; for "**God** is love," as the Apostle **John** says. Its bowels would be an inexhaustible source of living waters, according to the promise. Love would, for the sake of others, "hear all things, endure all things, hope all things ;" it would overcome all difficulties, it would diffuse itself from the bottom of the heart, even upon the external senses ; it would compassionate the pains of others, and make no account of its own ; it would wait for them, it would accommodate itself to them, it would humble itself to the low, it would raise itself up to the great ; it would "weep with them that weep, and rejoice with them that rejoice ;" it would "become all things to all men," not by a forced appearance and dry affectation, but from the abundance of the heart, in which the love of **God** would be a living source of all the tenderest, strongest, and most condescending affections. Nothing is so cold, dry, hard, and reserved, as a heart that loves itself in all things. Nothing is so tender, open, lively, sweet, and loving, as a heart possessed and animated with divine love.

## LETTER II.

**NEVER** did any thing give me such comfort, as the letter I have received. Thanks be to him who can alone work in the heart what he pleases, for his own glory. He must needs love you much, since he maintains his love in your soul, while you are surrounded with whatever tends to extinguish it. Love him then above all things, and fear nothing but not to love him. He himself shall be your light, your strength, your life, your all. O how rich and powerful is a heart amidst adversities, when it carries this treasure within it! You must learn to seek him in your heart with the simplicity of a child, a tender familiarity and a confidence that charms so good a father.

Be not discouraged at your weaknesses: there is a way of supporting them without indulging them, and of correcting them without impatience. God will show you this peaceable and effectual way, if you seek it with an entire diffidence in yourself, and walk in the presence of God like ABRAHAM.

For God's sake, let prayer nourish your heart, as food does your body. Let prayer at certain stated times, be a source of the presence of God through the day; and let a frequent recollection of the presence of God be a renewal of prayer. This short and affectionate view of God revives the whole man, calms the passions, carries light and counsel along with it on important occasions, and gradually subdues the temper; so that one possesses his soul in patience, or rather suffers it to be possessed by God. "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." I entreat you pray a little at least every morning, in some bit of stolen time. This will nourish you through the whole day: Pray more with the heart than the understanding; more in the way of simple affection than reasoning. Few regular connected thoughts, but a great deal of faith and love.

You must read too; but it must be such things as tend to give you recollection, and encouragement, and fami-

liarity with **GOD**. Fear not to attend the sacraments when you have occasion and inclination. Let not things of small importance deprive you of that bread from heaven. Beware of ostentation : at the same time, never be ashamed of Him who alone is your true glory.

What gives me wonderful hopes, is, that I see by your letter, you are sensible of your weaknesses, and humbly acknowledge them. O how strong is he in **GOD**, who feels he is weak in himself! “When I am weak, then am I strong.” Dread sin more than a thousand deaths : but if you unhappily fall into it, make haste to return to the Father of Mercies, and the **GOD** of all consolation, who stretches out his arms to receive you; and open your wounded heart to him who can heal you. Above all things, be humble and lowly : “I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight.” Mind your duty : govern your temper and inclinations : I speak to you only of **GOD** and yourself; no matter for me. I thank **GOD** my heart is at peace : my severest suffering is my not seeing you : but I carry you continually with me into the presence of **GOD**, where I am nearer unto you than the external senses can make me. I would give a thousand lives as a drop of water, to see you such as **GOD** would have you. Amen, Amen.

# LETTERS

CONCERNING AND FROM

B. LAURENCE.

---

## LETTER I.

FROM B. LAURENCE, TO THE REV. ———.

NOT finding my manner of life in books, although I have no difficulty about it, yet for greater security, I shall be glad to know your thoughts concerning it.

In a conversation some days since with a person of piety, he told me, the spiritual life was a life of grace, which begins with servile fear, which is increased by hope of eternal life, and which is consummated by pure love. That each of these states had its different stages, by which one arrives at last at that blessed consummation.

I have not followed all these methods: on the contrary, I found they discouraged me. This was the reason why, at my entrance into religion, I took a resolution to give myself up to God, and for the love of him to renounce all besides.

For the first years I commonly employed myself, during the time set apart for devotion, with the thoughts of death, of judgment, hell, heaven, and my sins. Thus I continued some years, applying my mind carefully the rest of the day, and even in the midst of my business, to the presence of God, whom I considered always as with me, often as in me.

Such was my beginning: and yet I must tell you, that for the first ten years I suffered much: the apprehension that I was not devoted to God, as I wished to be, my past sins always present to my mind, and the great unmerited favours which God did me, were the matter and source of

my sufferings. During this time I fell often, and rose again presently : It seemed to me, that the creatures, reason, and God himself, were against me, and faith alone for me. I was troubled sometimes with thoughts, that to believe I had received such favours was presumption, which pretended to be at once where others arrive with difficulty ; at other times, that it was a wilful delusion, and that there was no salvation for me.

When I thought of nothing but to end my days in these troubles, (which did not at all diminish the trust I had in God,) I found myself changed all at once ; and my soul, which, until that time, was in trouble, felt a profound inward peace, as if she were in her centre and place of rest.

Ever since that time, I work before God simply in faith, with humility and love : and I apply myself diligently to do nothing, say nothing, and think nothing, which may displease him.

As for what passes within me at present, I cannot express it. I have no pain or difficulty about my state, because I have no will but that of God, which I endeavour to accomplish in all things, and to which I am so resigned, that I would not take up a straw from the ground against his order, or from any other motive but purely that of love to him.

I have quitted all forms of devotion and set prayers, but those to which my state obliges me. And I make it my business only to persevere in his holy presence, wherein I keep myself by a simple attention, and a general loving regard to God, which I may call an actual presence of God ; or to speak better, an habitual, silent, and secret conversation with God, which often causes joys and raptures inwardly, and sometimes also outwardly, so great that I am forced to use means to prevent their appearance to others.

In short, I am assured beyond all doubt, that my soul hath been with God above these thirty years. I pass over many things, that I may not be tedious to you : yet I

think it proper to inform you, after what manner I consider myself before **GOD**, whom I behold as my King.

I consider myself as the most wretched of men, full of sores and corruption, and who has committed all sorts of crimes against his King : touched with a sensible regret, I confess to him all my wickedness, I ask his forgiveness, I abandon myself in his hands, that he may do what he pleases with me. This King, full of mercy and goodness, very far from chastising me, embraces me with love, makes me eat at his table, serves me with his own hands, gives me the key of his treasures ; he converses and delights himself with me incessantly in a thousand and a thousand ways, and treats me, in all respects, as his favourite. It is thus I consider myself from time to time in his holy presence.

My most usual method is this simple attention, and such a general passionate regard to **GOD** ; to whom I find myself often attached with greater sweetness and delight, than that of an infant at the mother's breast : So that, if I dare use the expression, I should choose to call this state the breasts of **GOD**, for the inexpressible sweetness which I taste and experience there.

If sometimes my thoughts wander from it by necessity or infirmity, I am presently recalled by inward motions, so charming and delicious, that I am ashamed to mention them. I desire your reverence to reflect rather upon my great wretchedness, of which you are fully informed, than upon the great favours which **GOD** does me, all unworthy and ungrateful as I am.

As for my set hours of prayer, they are only a continuation of the same exercise ; sometimes I consider myself there as a stone before a carver, whereof he is to make a statue : Presenting myself thus before **GOD**, I desire him to make his perfect image in my soul, and render me entirely like himself.

At other times, when I apply myself to prayer, I feel all my spirit, all my soul, lift itself up without any care or

effort of mine : and it continues as it were suspended, and firmly fixed in **God**, as in its centre and place of rest.

I cannot bear that this should be called delusion ; because the soul which thus enjoys **God**, desires herein nothing but him. If this be delusion in me, it belongs to him to remedy it. Let him do what he pleases with me : I desire only him, and to be wholly devoted to him. You will however, oblige me in sending me your opinion, to which I always pay a great deference, for I have a singular esteem for your reverence, and am in our **LORD**,

Yours, &c.



## LETTER II.

I do not pray that you may be delivered from your pains ; but I pray **God** earnestly, that he would give you strength and patience to bear them as long as he pleases. Comfort yourself with him who holds you fastened to the cross : he will loose you when he thinks fit. Happy those who suffer with him : accustom yourself to suffer in that manner, and seek from him the strength to endure as much, and as long as he shall judge to be necessary for you. The men of the world do not comprehend these truths, nor is it to be wondered at, since they suffer like what they are, and not like Christians : They consider sickness as a pain to nature, and not as a favour from **God** ; and seeing it only in that light, they find nothing in it but grief and distress. But those who consider sickness as coming from the hand of **God**, as the effect of his mercy, and the means which he employs for our salvation, commonly find in it great sweetness and consolation.

I wish you could convince yourself, that **God** is often (in some sense) nearer to us, and more effectually present with us, in sickness than in health. Rely upon no other physician, for, according to my apprehension, he

reserves your cure to himself. Put, then, all your trust in him, and you will soon find the effects of it in your recovery, which we often retard, by putting greater confidence in physic than in God.

Whatever remedies you make use of, they will succeed only so far as he permits. When pains come from God, he only can cure them: he often sends diseases of the body, to cure those of the soul. Comfort yourself with the sovereign Physician both of soul and body.

Be satisfied with the condition in which God places you: however happy you may think me, I envy you. Pains and sufferings would be a paradise to me, while I should suffer with my God: and the greatest pleasures would be hell to me, if I could relish them without him; all my consolation would be to suffer something for his sake.

I must in a little time, go to God. What comforts me in this life is, that I now see him by faith, and I see him in such a manner as might make me say sometimes, I believe no more, but I see. I feel what faith teaches us; and in that assurance, and in that practice of faith, I will live and die with him. •

Continue then always with God; it is the only support and comfort for your affliction. I shall beseech him to be with you.



### LETTER III.

IF we were all accustomed to the exercise of the presence of God, all bodily diseases would be much alleviated thereby: God often permits that we should suffer a little to purify our souls, and oblige us to continue with him.

Take courage, offer him your pains incessantly, pray to him for strength to endure them. Above all, pray for grace to entertain yourself often with God, and forget him

the least you can. Adore him in your infirmities, offer yourself to him from time to time; and in the height of your sufferings, beseech him humbly and affectionately, (as a child his father,) to make you conformable to his holy will. I shall endeavour to assist you with my poor prayers.

I know not how **God** will dispose of me, I am always happy : all the world suffer, and I, who deserve the severest discipline, feel joys so continual, and so great, that I can scarce contain them.

I would willingly ask of **God** a part of your sufferings, but that I know my weakness, which is so great, that if he left me one moment to myself, I should be the most wretched man alive : and yet I know not how he can leave me alone, because faith gives me as strong a conviction as sense can do, and he never forsakes us, until we have first forsaken him. Let us fear to leave him : let us be always with him : let us live and die in his presence. Do you pray for me, as I for you.



#### LETTER IV

I **RENDER** thanks to our **LORD**, for having relieved you a little, according to your desire. I have been often near expiring, though I was never so much satisfied as then. Accordingly I did not pray for any relief, but I prayed for strength to suffer with courage, humility, and love. Ah, how sweet is it to suffer with **God** ! However great the sufferings may be, receive them with love. It is paradise to suffer and be with him : so that if in this life we would enjoy the peace of paradise, we must accustom ourselves to a familiar, humble, affectionate conversation with him : we must hinder our spirits wandering from him upon any occasion : we must make our heart a spiritual

temple, wherein to adore him incessantly : we must watch continually over ourselves, that we may not do, nor say, nor think, any thing that may displease him. When our minds are thus employed about God, suffering will become full of consolation.

I know that to arrive at this state, the beginning is very difficult ; for we must act purely in faith. But though it is difficult, we know also that we can do all things with the grace of God, which he never refuses to them who ask it earnestly. Knock, persevere in knocking, and I answer for it, that he will open to you in his due time, and grant you all at once, what he has deferred during many years. Adieu : Pray to him for me, as I pray to him for you. I hope to see him quickly.



## LETTER V.

God knoweth best what is needful for us, and all that he does is for our good. If we knew how much he loves us, we should be always ready to receive equally, and with indifference, from his hands, the sweet and the bitter ; all would please that came from him. The sorest afflictions never appear intolerable, but when we see them in a wrong light : when we see them in the hand of God, who dispenses them ; when we know it is our loving father who abases and distresses us, our sufferings will lose their bitterness, and become even matter of consolation.

Let all our employment be to know God : the more one knows him, the more one desires to know him : and as knowledge is commonly the measure of love, the deeper and more extensive our knowledge shall be, the greater will be our love : and if our love of God were great, we should love him equally in pains and pleasures.

Let us not amuse ourselves, to seek or to love God

merely for any sensible favours, (how elevated soever,) which he has or may do us. Such favours, though never so great, cannot bring us so near to **GOD**, as faith does in one simple act. Let us seek him often by faith. Do we not deserve blame, if we leave him to busy ourselves about trifles, which do not please him, and perhaps offend him? It is to be feared these trifles will one day cost us dear.

Let us begin to be devoted to him in good earnest. Let us cast every thing besides out of our hearts: he would possess them alone: beg this favour of him. If we do what we can on our parts, we shall soon see that change wrought in us which we aspire after. I cannot thank him sufficiently for the relaxation he has vouchsafed you. I hope from his mercy the favour to see him within a few days.\* Let us pray for one another: I am, in our **LORD**,  
Yours, &c.

\* He took his bed two days after, and died within the week.

# CONVERSATIONS

WITH

B. LAURENCE:

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

---

## CONVERSATION I.

THE first time I saw B. LAURENCE, was upon the 3d of August, 1666. He told me, that GOD had done him a singular favour in his conversion at the age of eighteen.

That in the winter, seeing a tree stripped of its leaves, and considering that within a little time the leaves would be renewed, and after that the flowers and fruit appear, he received a high view of the providence and power of GOD, which has never since been effaced from his soul. That this view had perfectly set him loose from the world, and kindled in him such a love for GOD, that he could not tell whether it had ever cooled at all, in above forty years that he had lived since.

That he had been footman to MR. FIEUBERT, the Treasurer, and that he was a great awkward fellow, who broke every thing.

That he had desired to be received into a monastery, thinking that his bones would there be broken for his awkwardness, and the faults he should commit, and so he should sacrifice to GOD his life, with its pleasures; but that GOD had disappointed him, he having met with nothing but satisfaction in that state.

That we should establish ourselves in a sense of GOD's presence, by continually conversing with him. That it were a shame to quit his conversation, to think of trifles and fooleries.

That we ought to quicken our faith; that it was lamentable we had so little; and that instead of taking faith for the rule of their conduct, men amused themselves with trivial devotions, which changed daily. That the way of faith was the spirit of the Church, and that this alone was sufficient to bring us to a high degree of perfection.

That we ought to give ourselves up to God, with regard both to things temporal and spiritual, and seek our satisfaction only in the fulfilling his will, whether he lead us by suffering or consolation; for all would be equal to a soul truly resigned. That there needed fidelity in those drynesses, or insensibilities and irksomenesses in prayer, by which God tries our love to him; that then was the time for us to make good and effectual acts of resignation, whereof one alone would oftentimes very much promote our spiritual advancement.

That as for the miseries and sins he heard of daily in the world, he was so far from wondering at them, that on the contrary, he was surprised there were not more, considering the malice sinners were capable of.

That to arrive at such resignation as God required, we should watch attentively over all the passions, which mingle as well in spiritual things, as those of a grosser nature; that God would give light concerning those passions, to those who truly desire to serve him. That if this was my design, *viz.*, sincerely to serve God, I might come to him (B. LAWRENCE) as often as I pleased, without any fear of being troublesome; but if not, that I ought no more to visit him.



## CONVERSATION II.

*Sept. 28, 1666.*

THAT he had always been governed by love, without selfish views; and that having resolved to make the love

of **GOD** the end of all his actions, he had found reasons to be well satisfied with his method; that he was pleased when he could take up a straw from the ground for the love of **GOD**, seeking him alone, and nothing else.

That he had been long troubled in mind from a certain belief that he should be damned; that all the men in the world could not have persuaded him to the contrary, but that he had thus reasoned with himself about it: "I did not engage in a religious life but for the love of **GOD**, and I have endeavoured to act only for him; whatever becomes of me, whether I be lost or saved, I will always continue to act purely for the love of **GOD**. I shall have this good at least, that until death I shall have done all that is in me to love him." That this trouble of mind had lasted four years, during which time he had suffered much.

That since that time he had passed his life in perfect liberty, and continual joy; that he placed his sins betwixt him and his **GOD**, as it were to tell him, that he did not deserve his favours, but that **GOD** still continued to bestow them in abundance.

That he expected, after the pleasant days **GOD** had given him, he should have his turn of pain and suffering; but that he was not uneasy about it, knowing very well, that as he could do nothing of himself, **GOD** would not fail to give him the strength to bear them.

That when an occasion of practising some virtue offered, he addressed himself to **GOD**, saying, 'LORD, I cannot do this unless thou enablest me;' and that then he received strength sufficient.

That when he had failed in his duty, he only confessed his fault, saying to **GOD**, 'I shall never do otherwise, if thou leave me to myself; it is thou must hinder my falling, and mend what is amiss.' That after this, he soon found himself in peace.

That we ought to act with **GOD** in the greatest simplicity, speaking to him frankly and plainly, and imploring his assistance in our affairs, just as they happen. That **GOD** never failed to grant it, as he had often experienced.

That he had been lately sent into Burgundy, to buy the provision of wine for the Society ; which was a very unwelcome task to him, because he had no turn for business, and because he was lame, and could not go about the boat, but by rolling over the casks. That however he gave himself no uneasiness about it, nor about the purchase of the wine. That he said to GOD, It was His business he was about ; and that he afterward found it very well performed. That he had been sent into Auvergne the year before upon the same account ; that he could not tell how the matter passed, but that it proved very well.

So likewise in his business in the kitchen, (to which he had naturally a great aversion,) having accustomed himself to do every thing there for the love of GOD, and with prayer upon all occasions, for his grace to do his work well, he had found every thing easy, during fifteen years that he had been employed there.

That he was very well pleased with the post he was in now ; but that he was as ready to quit that as the former, since he was always pleasing himself in every condition, by doing little things for the love of GOD.

That he retired to pray, according to the directions of his Superior ; but that he did not want such retirement, because his greatest business did not divert him from GOD.

That he was very sensible of his faults, but he was not discouraged by them ; that he confessed them to GOD, and when he had so done, he peaceably resumed his usual practice of love and adoration.

That in his trouble of mind he had consulted nobody ; but knowing only by the light of faith, that GOD was present, he contented himself with directing all his actions to him ; *i. e.*, doing them with a desire to please him, let what would come of it.

That useless thoughts spoil all ; that the mischief began there : but that we ought to reject them as soon as we perceived their impertinence to the matter in hand, or our salvation, and return to our communion with GOD.

That all bodily mortifications, and other exercises, are

useless, but as they serve to arrive at union with God by love; that he had well considered this, and found it the shortest way to go straight to him by a continual exercise of love, and doing all things for his sake.

That we ought to make a great difference between the acts of the understanding and those of the will; that the first were comparatively of little value, and the others all. That our only business was, to love and delight ourselves in God.

That all possible kinds of mortification, if they were void of the love of God, could not profit us. That we ought without anxiety to expect the pardon of our sins from the blood of JESUS CHRIST, only endeavouring to love him with all our hearts. That God seemed to have granted the greatest favours to the greatest sinners, as more signal monuments of his mercy.

That the greatest pains or pleasures of this world, were not to be compared with what he had experienced of both kinds in his spiritual state; so that he was careful for nothing, and feared nothing, desiring one only thing of God, *vis.*, that he might not offend him.

That he had no scruples; 'for,' said he, 'when I fail in my duty, I readily acknowledge it, saying, I am used to do so; I shall never do otherwise, if I am left to myself. If I fail not, then I give God thanks, acknowledging that it comes from him.'



### CONVERSATION III.

*Nov. 22, 1666.*

HE told me, that he had no other care, but faithfully to reject every other thought, that he might perform all his actions for the love of God. That when sometimes he had not thought of God for a good while, he did not disquiet himself for it; but after having acknowledged his

wretchedness to **God**, he returned to him, with so much the greater trust in him, by how much he found himself more wretched to have forgotten him.

That the trust we put in **God** honours him much, and draws down great graces.

That it was impossible, not only that **God** should deceive, but also that he should long let a soul suffer, which is perfectly resigned to him, and resolved to endure every thing for his sake.

That from the same experience, when he had business to do, he did not think of it beforehand ; but when it was time to do it, he found in **God**, as in a clear mirror, all that was fit for him to do. That of late he had acted thus, without anticipating care ; but before the experience above-mentioned, he had used it in his affairs.

When outward business diverted him a little from the thought of **God**, a fresh remembrance coming from **God** invested his soul, and so inflamed and transported him, that it was difficult for him to contain himself.

That he was more united to **God** in his outward employments, than when he left them for retirement.

That he expected hereafter some great pain of body or mind ; that the worst that could happen to him was, to lose that sense of **God** which he had enjoyed so long ; but that the goodness of **God** assured him he would not forsake him utterly, and that he would give him strength to bear whatever evil he permitted to happen to him ; and therefore that he feared nothing, and had no occasion to consult with any body about his state. That when he had attempted to do it, he had always come away more perplexed, and that as he was conscious of his readiness to lay down his life for the love of **God**, he had no apprehension of danger. That perfect resignation to **God** was the sure way to heaven, a way in which we had always sufficient light for our conduct.

That in the beginning of the spiritual life, we ought to be faithful in doing our duty, and denying ourselves ; but after that, unspeakable pleasures followed. That in diffi-

culties we need only have recourse to **JESUS CHRIST**, and beg his grace, with which every thing became easy.

That many do not advance in the Christian progress, because they stick in penances, and particular exercises, while they neglect the love of **GOD**, which is the end; that this appeared plainly by their works, and was the reason why we see so little solid virtue.

That there needed neither art nor science for going to **GOD**, but only a heart resolutely determined to apply itself to nothing but him, or for his sake, and to love him only.



#### CONVERSATION IV.

*Nov. 25, 1667.*

**HE** discoursed with me very fervently, and with great openness of heart, concerning his manner of going to **GOD**.

He told me, that all consisted in one hearty renunciation of every thing which we are sensible does not lead to **GOD**; that we might accustom ourselves to a continual conversation with him, with freedom and simplicity. That we need only to recognize **GOD** intimately present within us, to address ourselves to him every moment; that we may beg his assistance for knowing his will in things doubtful, and for rightly performing those which we plainly see he requires of us; offering them to him before we do them, and giving him thanks when we have done.

That in this continual conversation with **GOD**, we are also employed in praising, adoring, and loving him incessantly, for his infinite goodness and perfection.

That without being discouraged on account of our defects, we should pray for his grace with a perfect confidence, as relying upon the infinite merits of our **LORD**. That **GOD** never failed offering us his grace at each action; that he distinctly perceived it, and never failed of it, unless

when his thoughts had wandered from a sense of God's presence, or he had forgotten to ask his assistance.

That God always gave us light in our doubts, when we had no other design but to please him.

That our sanctification did not depend upon changing our works, but in doing that for God's sake, which we commonly do for our own.

That the most excellent method he had found of going to God, was that of doing our common business without any view of pleasing men, and (as far as we are capable) purely for the love of God.

That it was a great delusion, to think that the times of prayer ought to differ from other times; that we were as strictly obliged to adhere to God by action, in the time of action, as by prayer in its season.

That when the appointed times of prayer were past, he found no difference, because he still continued with God, praising him and blessing him with all his might; so that he passed his life in continual joy; yet hoped that God would give him somewhat to suffer, when he should grow stronger.

That we ought once for all, heartily to put our whole trust in God, and make a total surrender of ourselves to him, secure that he would not deceive us.

That we ought not to be weary of doing little things for the love of God, who regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed. That we should not wonder if in the beginning we often failed in our endeavours, but that at last we should receive grace, which will naturally produce its fruits in us, to our exceeding great delight.

That the whole substance of religion was faith, hope, and charity; by the practice of which we become united to God. That all beside is indifferent, and to be used only as means, that we may arrive at our end, and be swallowed up therein.

That "all things are possible to him who believes,"

that they are easy to him who hopes, and pleasant to him who loves.

That the end we ought to propose to ourselves is, to become in this life the most perfect worshippers of God we can possibly be, as we hope to be through all eternity.

That when we enter upon the spiritual life, we should consider and examine to the bottom what we are; and then we should find ourselves worthy of all contempt, and such as do not deserve the name of Christians; subject to all kinds of misery, and numberless accidents, which trouble us, and cause perpetual vicissitudes in our health, in our humours, in our internal and external dispositions; in fine, persons whom God would humble by many pains and labours, as well within as without. After this, we should not wonder that troubles, temptations, oppositions, and contradictions, happen to us from men; we ought, on the contrary, to submit ourselves to them, and bear them as long as God pleases, as things highly advantageous to us.

That the greater perfection a soul aspires after, the more dependant it is upon divine grace.

Being questioned by one of his own society, (to whom he was obliged to open himself,) by what means he had attained such an habitual sense of God? He told him, that since his first coming to the monastery, he had considered God as the end of all his thoughts and desires, as the mark to which they should tend, and in which they should terminate.

That when he had thus in prayer filled his mind with great sentiments of that infinite Being, he went to his work appointed in the kitchen; (for he was cook to the society;) there having first considered severally the things his office required, and when, and how each thing was to be done, he spent all the intervals of his time, as well before as after his work, in prayer.

That when he began his business, he said to God, with a filial trust in him, 'O my God, since thou art with me,

and I must now, in obedience to thy commands, apply my mind to these outward things, I beseech thee to grant me the grace to continue in thy presence ; and to this end, do thou prosper me with thy assistance, receive all my works, and possess all my affections.'

As he proceeded in his work, he continued his familiar conversation with his Maker, imploring his grace, and offering to him all his actions.

When he had finished, he examined himself how he had discharged his duty. If he found well, he returned thanks to GOD ; if otherwise, he asked pardon ; and without being discouraged, he set his mind right again, and continued his exercise of the presence of GOD. ' Thus,' said he, ' by rising after my falls, and by frequently renewed acts of faith and love, I am come to a state, wherein it would be as difficult for me not to think of GOD, as at first it was to accustom myself to it.

As B. LAURENCE had found such advantage in walking in the presence of GOD, it was natural for him to recommend it earnestly to others. But his example was a stronger inducement than any arguments he could propose. His very countenance was edifying ; such a sweet and calm devotion appearing in it, as could not but affect the beholders ; and it was observed, that in the greatest hurry of business in the kitchen, he still preserved his recollection and heavenly-mindedness. He was never hasty nor loitering, but did each thing in its season, with an even uninterrupted composure and tranquillity of spirit. ' The time of business,' said he, ' does not, with me, differ from the time of prayer ; and in the noise and hurry of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess GOD in as great tranquillity as if I were upon my knees at the sacrament.

A LETTER  
TO ONE TROUBLED IN MIND :

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

---

I HAVE a desire to write to you, but I know not what to say. However, I have put pen to paper, in hopes that GOD will furnish me with such matter as he shall think fit.

I understand, my dear Friend, that you have been somewhat troubled in mind, upon account of the discovery you have made of your wretchedness. I praise GOD for it: it shows that he will no longer delay the accomplishment of his divine work in you. To this all his dispensations concerning you tend, and especially the great trials which you have hitherto sustained by his divine assistance.

As for me, all unworthy as I am, I have formerly often besought the LORD with many tears, that he would grant me the grace to make me know myself. His great goodness has condescended to my earnest request; but to say what I thereupon discovered within myself, as I alone felt it, so I alone can rightly comprehend it: but I must say, that before this I was very ignorant of my true condition.

Before this, I thought I had a great zeal for the glory of GOD, and that I was sufficiently instructed in the faith and knowledge of JESUS CHRIST. But by the direction of GOD, a certain person well known to you, who had an affectionate concern for my soul, told me one day, "That I had not a true faith in JESUS CHRIST, as a Redeemer, who should deliver me from my sins." It was at this time that I began to be uneasy about my state; and as I did

not yet know myself, it was to me a strange and unintelligible language to hear, that I had not yet the true faith. He would not then further explain himself; but only advised me, that I should offer myself up entirely to him, who alone could make me free; and that with the holy Patriarch JACOB, I should not cease striving with prayers and tears, till the LORD had heard me favourably. I thought this very good advice; for I saw plainly, that to call upon GOD must be a secure way, and free from delusion. So without any further delay, I, by the grace of GOD, resigned myself totally into his blessed hands, that he might do with me what he pleased.

The good GOD accepting that moment the oblation I had made of myself, vouchsafed so to touch my heart with his divine love, that I became, as it were, all inflamed with its ardours. I made a resolution, never, for the future, to value any thing but him; and that to please him should be my only business. I would no more use any of my faculties, but to honour and serve him. I seemed to myself perfectly ready to follow him, through whatever ways he should please to lead me. I thought no crosses too heavy for me; and my love made me embrace them all within my heart. I said to him, "Take me in hand, O LORD, and spare me not: Here I am before thee, O take me in hand." As for the world, I let it pass for what it is, and took no farther thought about it; my heart seemed to me too noble to cleave to any thing in it. I valued my Divine Lover to such a degree, that nothing in the earth could any more affect me. One only thing sufficed me, and that was, to be able to follow him. No way was too difficult for me; no cross too bitter; no troubles too many; and, in a word, I was ready to endure every thing with him. I was content with all that might happen, provided only that I might find him. If all the kingdoms of the earth had been offered me, I would have disdained so much as to think of them. I would gladly have been stripped of all things; my Divine Lover sufficed me. I embraced him sweetly in my heart with the arms of love; and he, on his part, condescended

towards me, and made me know, that he is the true **Lover** of souls. It was a wonderful state which I was in at that time; if it could have been manifested to the world, it would have appeared very extraordinary; but there was still within me matter of reprehension, though I was not sensible of it. However, I continued so happy in my **Beloved**, that although I should have been forced to live without other company, vagabond in a desert, I should have found no difficulty in it. This state had not lasted long, when, in effect, I found myself led into a desert; but it was the desert of myself, and there I lost him whom my soul loved. This loss was so intolerable, that being extravagant with the vehemence of my love, I ran about like one distracted in search of him, but without finding him; "for the Spouse had withdrawn himself."

Then it was that I found myself in a forlorn condition, that I knew myself altogether poor, wretched, and miserable; and that I saw my vessel to be filled with uncleanness and iniquity.

The proper source of this grief is, the knowledge of ourselves, by which we find that there is an extreme unlikeness between **God** and us. We see ourselves most opposite to him, and that our inmost soul is entirely corrupted, depraved, and full of all kind of evil and malignity, such as self-will, self-love, vain glory, and, in a word, all the injustice which selfishness includes: and thus I found within me sin, death, **SATAN**, hell, the world, the flesh, and all sorts of abominations.

You may imagine what consternation I was in; it was so great, that if the **God** of mercy had not, by his infinite love, drawn me unto him, I should never have presumed to have gone to him, so extreme were the shame and confusion that covered me. Even yet, when I reflect upon it, I say to him sometimes, "How, **O** my **God**, could I be so presumptuous, as to offer thee such a heart, so impure, so depraved, and corrupted! Alas! I knew not that I was in such a depraved condition, till thy goodness manifested it unto me! Yet, blessed be thy holy name for this un-

speakeable benefit, I mean, that thou hast discovered to me my corruption, that thou mightest deliver me from it. It is indeed thy principal business to exercise man, and bring him home to his own heart, that he may be capable at length to enjoy thee, ‘for thy delights are to dwell with men;’ but first the dwelling-place must be cleansed and purified, for thou art the Holy One, before whom no impurity may subsist, and whom only the pure in heart can see. The love of pleasure, the love of creatures, concupiscence, and selfishness; all these must be done away: They must be not only mortified, but dead, to render us capable of thy full communications.

“It is for this thou hast so often invited, and even besought us, that we would come to thee, that thou mightest be our deliverer, our physician, and our SAVIOUR: it is for this thou didst forsake thy glory, and endure so much pain and misery upon earth, even that thou mightest reduce wandering sinners, and exterminate sin. O how horrid a mischief must sin be in thy sight, seeing it cost thee so dear to expiate it! O what bitterness of grief, what agonies of pain, possessed thee, when the bloody sweat trickled down thy sacred body to the ground! O the powerful and piercing love which thou didst bear towards souls! That great love still constraineth thee to accomplish thy holy work in us. Those who persevere in the spiritual life, know it well; but to express what they experience is impossible. May the LORD be eternally praised, honoured, and magnified by his whole creation: Amen.”

I am not ignorant, my dear Friend, that you have many crosses and afflictions; but they will all turn to your good. The divine Spouse of your soul will direct them all to your advantage; only continue faithful to him unto the death, and (so far is he from forsaking you) he will certainly protect you from all danger. Your soul is dear and precious to him, and he keeps it as the apple of his eye: he holds it secure in his hand, that none may ravish it from him. Neither men, nor SATAN, can hurt it. Your

SAVIOUR is your defender. He will be your buckler, and exceeding great reward; for he is love, and love must be communicative, and impart itself to others. I have found so by experience; but my pen is not capable of expressing the exceeding great love, which he has showed to so unworthy a creature as I am. But if the LORD has vouchsafed so great favours to such a wretch, (and God knows what reason I have to call myself so,) what shall not those, who are faithful to him, find at his hands?

Do you then cast all your cares upon him, that he may conduct you, and give you such success as he thinks fit. He will be your guide through all the ways he makes you to walk in. And though you sink deep in the waters of affliction, so that they come in even to your soul, and seem ready to overflow it; yet the Lover of your soul will help you out again: for, as I said, he is love itself; and that love being God, is so powerful, so jealous, so intense, so inflamed, so penetrating, that I know not what name to call it by; its force and efficacy are unutterable: the floods and tempests of affliction, instead of quenching it, serve rather to make it more inflamed in our soul, even to such a degree, that sometimes she dissolves, as it were, in the sacred ardours of love, especially in those moments, when the LORD makes her know, in a sensible manner, that he would rather choose to suffer over again all the griefs and pains of his passion, than forsake her.

O my dear Friend, what a great and incomparable love is this! Be then of good courage. That love can well conduct you, and bring matters to a good conclusion, although you seem to find yourself daily more and more indisposed. Know it is this love himself who discovers to you your indispositions, and the disorders of your soul, only to deliver you from them, and thereby to prepare you for himself, and render you acceptable in his sight; for he desires to dwell in you, according to his gracious promise: "We will come unto you, and make our abode with you." (*John xiv. 23.*) Certainly for the entertainment of such guests, so worthy of all honour and praise,

the place ought to be prepared according to the quality of those who are to dwell there.

O strange humiliation of the Divine Majesty, to stoop so low, as to concern himself with the abominations of sin, that he might cleanse our hearts from it, and prepare in them a place for himself! Offer him then your heart continually, for that end. I know well in what condition you will be, as you come nearer to him: for, as I told you, he makes us know ourselves, and our wretchedness, on purpose to deliver us from ourselves, that is, from evil.

The most deplorable wretchedness is to continue in sin; for that is to continue separated from God: sin being the only thing that hinders our union with him. I believe, and know, O LORD, that thou canst deliver me from my sin; that thou art the Truth, which canst set me free from myself: and yet I bless thy holy name, that thou hast vouchsafed to make me know this self, and what it is capable of. The knowledge of myself ought to humble me, not only before God, but also before the creatures; and particularly, it ought to cure me of all inclination to judge my neighbour, and make me for the future never complain of any body but myself.

That is a grievous fault, and yet a very common one; I mean, Censoriousness, and finding fault with others; whence it often happens, that even the servants of God are suspected, and men warn one another to be aware of them, while they are actually employed by God as his instruments to reclaim men to his service. All this comes from our ignorance of ourselves; for if we knew ourselves, we should rather warn men to be aware of us, for fear of being infected with our corruption. May the LORD vouchsafe to open our eyes, that we may see our own darkness, and our own faults!

O Father of Mercies, may I find acceptance in thy sight, and with my prayers and tears, obtain of thee a heart sunk in the profoundest humility! I ask not joy nor consolation; I ask only a pliant heart, a heart always submissive and resigned to thee in all accidents, or what-

ever ill usage may happen to me. Dispose of me as thou pleasest, and may thy will be done, O GOD, in time and in eternity! Amen.

O dearest Friend, methinks I cannot leave off writing, my heart is so enlarged towards you, you employ it night and day. Well, then, let love have its way: I speak not of any natural affection, but of a supernatural love, which the LORD himself produces in the soul; "that love which is shed abroad in our hearts by the HOLY GHOST." This divine love has no selfish motive or aim: and though it should meet crosses and sufferings from the beloved object, yet they would not discourage it: nay, more, though it were to die by the hands of the beloved, yet would it applaud the execution, and at the same time do all it could to serve him: so powerful is the ardour of this love. (John xiii. 5.)

But who is the Beloved, to whom it thus adheres? It is He from whom it drew its existence; it is its own source and original, who makes it what it is, who so powerfully inflames it, that it is no more solicitous about sufferings or enjoyments, provided only that it may love: to love, suffices love.

This is what all self-love is absolutely incapable of; for nature is ever seeking her own satisfaction: she seeks comfort and delight; and when she misses them, grows uneasy and dissatisfied. She fancies that every thing belongs to her; she would have her share in every thing: she is ignorant that she has no claim to any thing, that she must die, and be destroyed; and if she knew it beforehand, she would pine away with grief and despair.

For nature will not consent to sufferings, and she dreads them, so that she shudders for fear; and yet she must go through them: but the LORD at first conceals them, and after makes her enter into them when he thinks fit; and then she must go on whether she will or no, for all resistance is vain. Blessed be the LORD, that then he has no regard to her complaint: nature only detains the soul in prison, and the LORD will deliver it thence, "having

redeemed it with his own blood." The precious soul has cost him too dear to forsake or neglect it, till he has brought it back to its source, that is, himself, that it may enjoy him.

Such love does the **LORD** bear to the soul of man; and whatever opposition its enemies, the flesh and **SATAN**, may make to detain the soul captive in their chains, all their efforts will be confounded under his almighty power. He is the stronger, who will come upon them, and overcome them, and divide their spoils. He is the king and conqueror of the soul's enemies: he is a buckler and defence, upon which the soul may securely rely; and he will re-établish its peace, for the love he beareth it.

Indeed his love of souls is so exceeding great, that it is impossible to describe or express what one feels of it. He is their surety, their corner-stone, and their support. If the soul be weak, let it come to him, and he will be its strength; if it be sick, he will be its physician; if it be hungry, he will feed it with love; if it be thirsty, he will give himself to it for refreshment; if it be in darkness, he will enlighten it; if it be encompassed with enemies, he will defend it; the soul need only keep quiet and retired within itself, and love will do all the rest: for "his is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

Let us, my dear Friend, from this time forward, pass our life in a spiritual recollection. Let us always turn our attention inward; and although we find there pain and uneasiness, yet let us remember, that such is the will of Him, who loves us, and will make all things work together for our good. Let us receive all, then, as from his hand, without distinction or exception. How happy should we be, if the view and sense of our wretchedness would but lead us to humility! My desires are exceedingly inflamed for a heart perfectly obedient. I seek not sweetnesses nor consolations, I wish only for a heart perfectly submissive to **GOD**.

O LORD of lords, O Fountain of love and goodness, grant me such a heart, subjected to thee, and humbled beneath all men! O LORD, thou knowest what I am, and I too partly know it, for thy goodness has discovered it to me; and may thy name be ever blessed for that benefit! O that this would sink me continually in the abyss of my vileness! Grant, O LORD, that I may never make any account of myself, or imagine myself something; for that would be to fall from thee, and give place to SATAN. O let me rather live a life of continual affliction with my crucified JESUS! JESUS, whom I heartily beseech to be my dear friend's defender. When you bear his holy cross, you will then be adorned with those jewels, which your sacred Lover bestows upon you, even the same he wore himself; with which I recommend you to his love, beseeching him to preserve you from all evil.

Take in good part the plain open-heartedness of this letter, and believe me, yours, &c.,

*Amsterdam.*

MARY HENRICS.

# PIOUS REFLECTIONS:

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

---

## *I. How scarce true Faith is.*

1. "WHEN the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (*Luke xviii. 8.*) If he should now come, would he find it in us? What fruits of faith have we to show? Do we look upon this life only as a short passage to a better? Do we believe that we must suffer with **JESUS CHRIST**, before we can reign with him? Do we consider this world as a deceitful appearance, and death as the entrance to true goods? Do we live by faith? Does it animate us? Do we relish the eternal truths it presents us with? Are we as careful to nourish our souls with those truths, as to maintain our bodies with proper diet? Do we accustom ourselves to see all things in the light of faith? Do we correct all our judgments by it? Alas! the greater part of Christians think and act like mere Heathens. If we judge (as we justly may) of their faith by their practice, we must conclude they have no faith at all.

2. Let us fear lest the kingdom of **God** should be taken from us, and given to others who may bear better fruits. That kingdom of **God** is faith reigning in us, and governing all our thoughts. Happy he who has eyes to see this kingdom. Flesh and blood cannot discern it; the wisdom of the animal man is wilfully blind to it; the inward operations of **God** appear as a dream to him. To know the wonders of **God's** kingdom we must be born again; and to be born again we must die: this is what the world

cannot consent to. Let the world, then, despise, and censure, and condemn the truth as it pleases. As for us, O LORD, thou hast commanded us to believe, and to taste thy heavenly gift. We desire to be of the number of thine elect, and we know that no person can be of that number who does not conform his life to what thou teachest.

## *II. Of the only Way to Heaven.*

1. "STRIVE to enter in at the strait gate." (*Matt. vii. 13.*) The kingdom of heaven is not to be entered but by violence; it must be taken as it were by assault, like a besieged place. The gate is strait and narrow; we must bow, we must bend, we must make ourselves little to gain admittance. The great gate, which opens wide, and is passed by multitudes, leads to perdition. All broad and smooth ways are dangerous. Woe to us when the world favours us, and our life seems void of trouble. Crosses and difficulties are the surest marks of the way to heaven. Let us be aware, therefore, of going on with the multitude, and let us seek the traces of the few; let us follow the footsteps of the saints along the craggy paths of repentance; climbing over rocks, seeking secure places in the sweat of our face, and expecting that the last step of our lives should be still a violent struggle to enter the narrow gate of eternity.

2. We are not predestinated by GOD, but to be made conformable to the image of his SON; to be fastened, as he was, to a cross; renouncing, as he did, all sensual pleasures, and to be content, like him, in the midst of sufferings. But, blind as we are, we would get down from this cross which unites us to our Master. We cannot leave the cross, but we must also forsake CHRIST crucified; for the cross and he are inseparable. Let us then live and die with him, who came to show us the true way to heaven; and let our only fear be, lest we should not finish our sacrifice on the same altar whereon his was consummated. Alas! all our endeavours here tend only to

be more at ease, and thereby to withdraw ourselves from the true way to heaven. We know not what we do. We do not comprehend the mystery of grace, which joins a beatitude with tears, pronouncing the mourners happy. The way which leads to a throne is delightful, although it should be overgrown with thorns : the way which leads to a precipice is dreadful, although it should be covered with roses. We suffer indeed in the strait way, but we hope ; we suffer, but we see heaven open ; we suffer, but we choose to suffer ; we love God, and are beloved of him.

### *III. Of Patience in Suffering.*

1. "IN your patience possess ye your souls." (*Luke* xxi. 19.) The soul loses itself by impatience ; whereas, when it submits without repining, it possesses itself in peace, and it also possesses God. To be impatient, is to will what one has not ; or not to will what one has. An impatient soul is a slave to passion, having cast off the restraints of reason and faith. What weakness ! what error is this ! As long as we will the evil we endure, it is not evil ; why then should we make it a real evil by refusing to bear it willingly ? The inward peace resides not in the senses or inferior appetites, but in the will ; it may be preserved amidst the bitterest sorrows, as long as the will continues in a firm resignation. Peace here below consists not in an exemption from suffering, but in a voluntary acceptance of it.

2. To hear your murmuring and repining, it would seem that you are the most innocent soul living ; and that it is a great injustice that you are not admitted into the terrestrial paradise. Remember how you have offended God, and you must acknowledge his righteous dealing with you. Confess to him, with the humility of the prodigal son, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee ;" thy merciful hand executes what I should never have had the courage to do ; it corrects me in love. Grant also that I may endure with patience its salutary correc-

tions. If a sinner has a just indignation against himself, the least he can do is to receive the medicine which he has not the fortitude to choose.

#### *IV. Of Submission and Conformity to the Will of GOD.*

1. "THY will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Nothing is done here, any more than in heaven, but by the will or permission of GOD; but men do not always love that will, because it is often opposite to their desires. If we sincerely loved this will of GOD, and only this, we should change our earth into a heaven; we should thank GOD for every thing, for evil as well as good, because evil would become good from his hand; we should not then murmur at the guidance of Providence, but approve and adore it. O my GOD! what do I see in the course of the stars, in the revolutions of seasons, in the events of life, but the accomplishment of thy will? May it also be accomplished in me. May I love it. May it sweeten and endear all events to me. May I annihilate my own, to make thy will reign in me; for it is thine, O LORD, to will, and mine to obey.

2. Thou hast said, O LORD JESUS, of thyself, with relation to thy heavenly Father, "That thou always didst what pleased him." (*John* viii. 29.) Teach us how far that example should lead us. Thou art our pattern; thou didst nothing upon earth but according to the will of thy Father, who vouchsafes also to be called ours. Do thou fulfil his will in us, as thou didst in thyself. Grant that we, being inseparably united to thee, may never seek to do our own will, but his; so that not only our religious actions, but even our eating, sleeping, conversing, may all be done with no other view but that of pleasing him. Then shall our whole conduct be sanctified. Then shall all our deeds become a continual sacrifice, incessant prayer, and uninterrupted love. When, O LORD, shall we arrive at this disposition? Do thou vouchsafe to conduct us thither. Do thou vouchsafe to subdue our rebellious will

by thy grace, for it knows not what it would have, and nothing is truly good but a conformity to thy will.

### *V. Of the right Use of Afflictions.*

1. "THEY who are CHRIST's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." (*Gal. v. 24.*) The more we fear crosses, the more reason have we to think that we want them. Let us not be discouraged, when the hand of GOD lieth heavy ones upon us. We ought to judge of the violence of our disease, by the violence of the remedies which our spiritual Physician prescribes us. It is a great argument of our own wretchedness, and of GOD's mercy, that, notwithstanding the difficulty of our recovery, he vouchsafes to undertake our cure. Let us then draw from our very afflictions a source of love, of comfort, and trust in GOD; saying with his Apostle, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (*2 Cor. iv. 17.*) Blessed are they which mourn, and sow in tears, because they shall reap with ineffable joy the harvest of eternal felicity.

2. "I am crucified with CHRIST," said ST. PAUL; we are fastened to the cross with him, and by him; for his grace keeps us there, and for his sake we choose to continue there, lest by forsaking it, we should depart from him. O suffering and adorable JESUS! to whose sacrifice I unite myself, do thou communicate to me, together with thy cross, also thy spirit of love and resignation. Make me think less of my sufferings, than of the happiness of suffering with thee. Make me love thee, and I shall not fear the cross; and though my sufferings may be very great, yet will they not be greater than I choose to endure.

### *VI. Of Meekness and Humility.*

1. "LEARN of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart." (*Matt. xi. 29.*) If any other than JESUS had taught this lesson, the imperfection of the teacher would have fur-

nished us with objections to the doctrine. He therefore taught it himself, and that too by his own example, which is such as should silence all objections; such as should make us adore, be confounded, and imitate. What! the SON of GOD descends from heaven to earth, takes a corruptible body, and dies upon the cross, to shame us out of our pride! He who is All, annihilates himself; and I, who am nothing, would be, at least would have others think me, quite other than what I am! What an impudent vanity, and diabolical presumption is this! Our LORD saith not, Be ye meek and lowly; but he saith, "I am meek and lowly of heart." It is enough to know that he is humble, to conclude that we ought to be so. His example is such an authority as none may find a dispensation from; much less the sinner, who may well choose humility, when he has deserved damnation.

2. Our LORD joins meekness with humility, because humility is the source of true meekness. Pride is ever haughty, impatient, and captious; but he who despises himself, is content to be despised; he who thinks nothing due to him will not think himself neglected. The true virtue of meekness is never the effect of constitution; all appearances of it, that are the product of mere nature, arise from weakness, indolence, or cunning. To be meek towards others, we must renounce ourselves.

### *VII. Of the One Thing needful.*

1. "THOU art troubled and careful about many things, but one thing is needful." (*Luke x. 41.*) We think we have many businesses to do, and we have but one. If that be performed, the others are included in it; if that miscarry, whatever success the others may seem to have, they will all come to nothing. Why should we then divide our heart, and our care? O my only business, thou shalt henceforth be my only care! In the ray of divine light, I will each moment peaceably perform, according to my abilities, what Providence puts in my way. I will be

careful for nothing else, because nothing else is my business.

2. "I have finished the work which thou, O FATHER, gavest me to do." (*John xvii. 4.*) Each of us should be able to say as much at the day of judgment. I ought to consider the business which occurs in the daily order of Providence, as the work which GOD appoints me: and I should apply myself to it in a manner worthy of GOD, *viz.*, with exactness and tranquillity. I ought not to neglect any thing, or be passionately vehement about any thing, for it is dangerous to do the work of the LORD negligently, on the one hand; or, on the other, to appropriate it to ourselves by self-love and false zeal: in this last case we do our actions from a principle of self-will; we are eager and anxious for the success, and that under the pretence of seeking the glory of GOD. Thus self-love disguises itself under the appearance of zeal, and grieves, and is afflicted, when it miscarries in its designs. O GOD, grant to me the grace to be faithful in the action, and resigned as to the success! My only business is to do thy will, and to do it as thy will, not forgetting thee in the performance of it: it is thine to give my feeble endeavours the success thou pleasest, even none if thou seest fit.

### *VIII. Of inward Peace.*

1. "PEACE I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you." (*John xiv. 27.*) All men seek peace, but they seek it where it is not to be found; they seek it in the world; which is ever promising, but can never give us a solid peace: that is the gift of CHRIST alone, who reconciles the man to himself, subdues the passions, sets bounds to the desires, inspires the hopes of eternal bliss, and gives the joy of the HOLY GHOST; such a joy as persists in the midst of sufferings, and, flowing from an inexhaustible source, becomes a perpetual spring of delight, which the world cannot interrupt or diminish.

2. True peace is not to be found but in the possession of GOD; and the possession of GOD cannot be attained but by faith and obedience : remove all forbidden objects ; renounce all unlawful desire ; cast off all earnest care and anxiety ; desire only GOD ; seek only GOD ; and then you shall have peace, such a peace as the world shall not be able to disturb. For what can trouble you ? Is it poverty, disgrace, disappointments, outward or inward crosses ? You should see all these in the hand of GOD as real favours, which he distributes to his friends, and which he vouchsafes to give you a share in. Then the world will have a new appearance to you, and your peace prove inviolable.

### IX. *Of Deceitful Joys.*

1. "I SAID of laughter, it is mad; and of mirth, what doeth it ?" (*Eccles. ii. 2.*) The joys of worldly-minded men are like those of delirious persons, who have lost their reason by distemper. Delusion is the only cause of their pleasure; they think themselves in abundance, when in reality they are quite destitute. Death will end this dream of folly, and when they awake, they shall be confounded at their poverty. Miserable therefore are those whom the false pleasures of the world render incapable of true consolation. Let us say continually of such vain "mirth, What doeth it ?" Nothing is a solid subject of joy but our hopes of GOD's favour ; all other delight is but a dream.

2. JESUS said to the woman of Samaria, "Whosoever drinketh of this water, shall thirst again." (*John iv. 13.*) This may be applied to all worldly satisfactions ; the more we enjoy them, the more we want them. The possession of riches does but increase our thirst after them. Avarice and ambition are more uneasy about what they have not, than pleased with what they have. The enjoyment of pleasure softens the soul, depraves it, and makes it insatiable. The more we divert ourselves, the more we want diversion ; and it is easier to persevere in a state of

fervour and penitence, than to recover it again when we have given way to pleasure and relaxation. Let us therefore watch over ourselves, and abstain from those waters, which will but increase our thirst. Let us keep our heart with care, that it be not seduced by the vain joys of the world, which will end only in despair.

### *X. Of Holy Tears.*

1. "BLESSED are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." (*Matt. v. 4.*) What new kind of tears are these? (saith ST. AUSTIN,) they make happy those who shed them. This happiness consists in being afflicted for the wickedness of the world; many dangers which surround us, and the inexhaustible corruption of our own hearts. It is a great gift of GOD to fear losing his love; to fear lest we should wander from the strait way. The saints shed tears for this. It is difficult to rejoice while one is in danger of losing what one values most, and of losing one's self with it. It is impossible not to be afflicted, while one sees nothing but vanity, error, offences, forgetfulness, and contempt of the GOD we love. Grief is due to so many sad occasions of sorrow: our grief shall be pleasing in the sight of GOD. He himself inspires it; his love causes our tears to flow, and he himself shall wipe them from our eyes.

2. We hear JESUS CHRIST say, "Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation." (*Luke vi. 24, 25.*) And yet men seek mirth and riches. He also saith, "Blessed are they that weep;" yet they fear nothing more than sorrow. We should grieve here, not only for the dangers of our own state, but for every thing that is vain and criminal. We should weep for ourselves and for others: all deserve our tears. Happy the tears which spring from grace, which makes us disrelish these transitory things, and produce in us the desire of the good things of eternity.

### *XI. Of Worldly Wisdom.*

1. THE wisdom of worldly-minded men must needs be great, since our LORD assures us, that it is greater than that of the children of GOD; yet with all its pretensions and fair appearances, it is fatal to those who follow it. This crooked and subtle wisdom is most opposite to that of GOD, which is ever plain and simple; and what does it avail its professors, seeing they are always taken in their own devices? The Apostle ST. JAMES saith of this kind of wisdom, that it is “earthly, animal, (or sensual,) and devilish.” (*Jam.* iii. 15.) “Earthly,” because it confines its care to the getting or possessing the things of the earth; “animal, or sensual,” because it seeks only to make provision for gratifying the passions or sensual appetites; and “devilish,” because to the subtlety and penetration of a demon, it joins also the malice. Men so qualified, think to impose upon others, but in the event, they deceive only themselves.

2. Blind therefore are all those who think themselves wise without the grace of JESUS CHRIST, which only can make us truly wise. They are like those who in a dream think themselves awake, and believe all the objects they imagine to be true and real: and while they are pursuing their vain projects of pleasure or ambition, (so great is the infatuation that possesses them,) they see not what lies in the way before them, sometimes disgrace, always death, judgment, and eternity. These great objects daily advance, and approach nearer to profane men; yet they see them not. Their political skill foresees every thing, but the inevitable fall and annihilation of all they set their hearts upon. O mad and infatuated, when will ye open your eyes to the light of JESUS CHRIST, which discovers the emptiness of all grandeur here below?

### *XII. Of the Easiness of CHRIST's Yoke.*

1. "MY yoke is easy, and my burden light." (*Matt. xi. 30.*) Let not the name of yoke deter us, for it is the yoke of CHRIST, and he helps us to bear it; he makes us love it; he endears it to us by the inward charms of righteousness and truth: He gives a disgust for false pleasure, and renders the practice of virtue delightful: He supports the man against himself, frees him from original corruption, and makes him strong notwithstanding his weakness. What fearest thou, O man of little faith? Let GOD exert himself in thee: abandon thyself to him: you shall suffer, but you shall suffer with love and inward tranquillity: you shall fight, but you shall gain the victory; the LORD himself shall fight for you, and reward your success: you shall weep, but your tears shall be pleasing, and GOD shall himself wipe them from your eyes: you will be restrained from following your passions, but after a free sacrifice of your liberty, you will find another kind of liberty, unknown to the world, and more valuable than universal empire.

2. What blindness is it to fear engaging too far with GOD! The more we love him, the more we shall love his commandments. That love will comfort us in losses, sweeten our crosses, set us free from all other dangerous affections, make us see even through a cloud of afflictions, the mercy that dispenses them to us, and make us discover in death itself eternal glory and bliss. What then are we afraid of? Can we have too much of GOD? Is it a misfortune to be freed from the heavy yoke of the world, and to bear the light burden of JESUS CHRIST? Do we fear to be too happy, too much delivered from ourselves, from the caprices of our pride, the violence of our passions, and the tyranny of this deceitful world?

*XIII. Of Spending our Time well.*

1. "LET us do good while we have time." (*Gal.* vi. 10.) "The night cometh, in which no man can work." (*John* ix. 4. Time is precious, but men know not its true value; nor will they learn it, till it is too late. Our friends ask it of us, and we bestow it as if it were nothing worth; nay, sometimes it is a burthen we want to get rid of; yet the day will come when we shall think one quarter of an hour more valuable than all the treasures of the earth. God, most liberal and bounteous of all other things, teaches us, by the frugal dispensation of his providence, how careful we ought to be to make a good use of time, because he never gives two moments together, nor grants us a second, till he has withdrawn the first, still keeping the third in his own hand, so that we are in a perfect uncertainty whether we shall have it or not. Time is given us to prepare for eternity, and eternity will not be too long to regret our lost time, if we have made an ill use of it.

2. All our life, as well as all our heart, is due to God; they are neither of them too much for him: he gave them only that we might love and serve him: let us therefore rob him of nothing. We cannot every moment do great matters for him, but we may always do what is proper for our condition. To be silent, to suffer, to pray, when there is no room for outward action, is an acceptable offering to God. A disappointment, a contradiction, an injury received and endured for God's sake, is of as much value as a long prayer; and the time is not lost which is spent in the practice of meekness and patience. But we must be cautious that those interruptions do not happen by our own fault. Thus we should regulate our life, and "redeem the time," as ST. PAUL speaks, flying from the world, its vain amusements, useless correspondencies, and unprofitable conversations, which serve only to dissipate our minds, and indulge our self-love. By these means we shall find time for the service of God; all that is spent otherwise, is lost.

*XIV. Of the Love we ought to have for God.*

1. "WHOM have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." (*Ps. lxxiii. 25.*) When we say to GOD, that we love him with all our heart, it is often a mere form of words, without truth or meaning. Men learn it when they are young, and they continue to use it when they are grown up, without thinking of what they say. To love GOD, is to have no other will but his; to keep faithfully his law, and have in abhorrence all violation of it. To love GOD is to love what CHRIST loved, poverty, humiliations, and sufferings; it is also to hate what he hated, the world and its vanities. Can we be said to love an object which we do not desire to resemble? To love GOD, is to desire to converse with him, to wish to go to him, to sigh and languish after him. That is but feigned love which does not desire to see the Beloved.

2. Our LORD "came to bring fire upon the earth," (*Luke xii. 49,*) and desired that fire might overspread it: yet men live in a deadly coldness and indifference: they love money, buildings, titles, and a chimera they call reputation; they love even the meanest and most contemptible things; but divine love rarely finds a place in their hearts. Do thou, O LORD, vindicate thy right in us, and reign over us, notwithstanding our infidelities. Let the fire of thy love extinguish all other fire. What can we see lovely out of thee, which is not to be found in its full perfection in thee, O thou Fountain of all good! Grant us but the grace to love thee, and we shall then love thee only, thee eternally.

*XV On the Words, "LORD, teach us to pray."*  
(*Luke xi. 1.*)

O LORD, I know not what I should ask of thee: thou only knowest what I want; and thou lovest me better than  
VOL. XXIII. E

I can love myself. O LORD, give to me, thy child, what is proper, whatever it may be: I dare not ask either crosses or comforts: I only present myself before thee: I open my heart to thee: behold my wants, which I am ignorant of; but do thou behold, and do according to thy mercy. Smite or heal; depress me, or raise me up: I adore all thy purposes, without knowing them. I am silent, I offer myself in sacrifice. I abandon myself to thee. No more any desire, but to accomplish thy will. Teach me to pray: pray thou thyself in me.

### *XVI. Of the good Use of Crosses.*

WE find it difficult to convince ourselves of the goodness of GOD in afflicting those he loves. Why (it may be said) should he have pleasure in our sufferings? Cannot he render us good without afflicting us? Yes, certainly, GOD could do it, for nothing is impossible to him. He has an absolute power over the heart of man, and moves all the springs of it at pleasure. But though he can save us without sufferings, yet he will not; in the same manner as he will not produce us in the state of perfect manhood, but causes us to pass gradually through the troubles and weaknesses of childhood and youth. In these cases he is absolute master, and we have nothing to do but to submit, and silently adore his profound wisdom, without comprehending the reasons by which he acts. What we may discern plainly is, that we cannot become good, but in the measure we become humble, disinterested, and free from self-love, so as to ascribe all to GOD, without arrogating any thing to ourselves.

Now the operation of grace, which destroys self-love, is generally painful. He weans us from the love of the world, by the inconstancy of men, and the frequent disappointments that attend the most prosperous conditions: he weans us from the love of ourselves, by a sad experience of our depravity and corruption: by such a series of

events he makes us die to sin. We would gladly be consumed all at once, to escape the lingering sufferings of a tedious mortification: self-love makes us murmur at the length of our sufferings; and that is the very thing which God would destroy; for while it lasts, his work cannot be perfected.

Why, then, should we complain? Our disease is the love of the world, and ourselves. God prepares a train of events, which by little and little mortifies our love of the world, and weans us from self-love. The operation indeed is painful, but our depravity makes it necessary. "The whole need no physician," but the diseased part must suffer the surgeon's incision: he cuts only that he may come at the bottom of the sore: if he puts us to great pain, it is only because our malady is great: we suffer not from his cruelty, but from his care and skill; for he would treat his own son in the same manner.

It is thus God treats us: he never puts us to pain but unwillingly: he loves us with the tenderness of a father, and can take no pleasure in our misery; but he cuts to the quick to cure the ulcer of our heart: his goodness obliges him to deprive us of what we love too much, what we love inordinately, and in such a manner as to hinder our loving him: and when God thus treats us, we grieve like children who are deprived of something which they were pleasing themselves with, and with which they would have hurt themselves; they cry and take on with passion against those who have saved them from harm. So we are apt in our folly to murmur against God; but he saves us in our despite, and by correcting he amends us. When his hand lies heaviest upon us, it is only to hinder the evil we would do ourselves. The things whose loss we lament, would have made us lament eternally if we had not lost them: and God takes away what we doat upon, that he may have our whole heart to himself, and in due time fill it with greater felicity than our fondest wishes could invent.

Nothing happens in the world but by the will of God: he made, and he governs all things: he numbers the hairs of

our head, the leaves of each tree, the sands of the sea-shore, and all the drops which fill the ocean : his wisdom has measured and weighed every atom of the universe : he each moment produces and renews the breath of life which animates us : he has numbered all our days, and holds in his hands the keys of the grave, to shut or open it.

What seems of great moment to us, is as nothing in the sight of **GOD**. The difference of a little longer, or a little shorter life, disappears in the presence of his eternity. What matters it whether this frail vessel, this body of clay, be broken and reduced to dust a little sooner, or a little later?

How short and fallacious are our views of things ! We are in a consternation to see a friend die in the flower of his age. What a lamentable loss, we cry ! But to whom is this loss ? What does the dying man lose ? Some years of vanity, delusion, and danger of eternal death. **GOD** delivers him from the midst of iniquity, from the corruption of the world, and from his own frailty. And what do his friends lose ? They lose the poison of a worldly felicity, they lose a perpetual intoxication, the forgetfulness of **GOD** and themselves, in which they were plunged ; or, to speak properly, they gain by this affliction the benefit of being set free from these evils.

How apparent, therefore, is the goodness of **GOD** ! How tender and merciful is he with regard to our real evils, at the very time when we are most afflicted, and most tempted to complain of his severity !

What difference find we now, between two persons who lived a hundred years ago ? The one (suppose) died twenty years before the other, but in fine they both died : their separation, which at that time seemed so long and grievous, does not appear so now to us, and was in reality but a short separation : what was parted, soon became united again, and no trace was left of the division that was made. Life passes on like a swift current : the past time appears as a dream : the present escapes us every moment : the future will prove like the present ; it will soon

become past in the continual flux of time : days, months, and years, press one another forward, like the waves of a torrent. Yet a few moments, yet (I say) a little while, and all will be finished. Alas! that which now appears long and tedious to us, because it is mournful, will seem short when it is over.

It is the weakness of self-love that makes us think our misfortunes so tedious. The sick man, who rests ill, thinks the night of an immeasurable length, yet that night is as short as others. Our cowardice exaggerates our afflictions ; they seem much greater than they are, through our want of fortitude. The only way to make them lighter, is a courageous resignation. We shall indeed still suffer, but **GOD** will thereby purify us, and make us fit for himself. Shall we choose to pass our whole life, even till the dreadful moment of death, in voluptuous ease, in splendour, in vain joy, in the triumphs of pride, in the savoury enjoyment of the world, (that declared enemy of **JESUS CHRIST**,) and in an aversion to sufferings, which alone can sanctify us ? The world will cast us off, will ungratefully forget us, will despise us, will persecute us. It is very well : nor should we wonder that the world acts like itself, always unjustly, deceitfully, and perfidiously : yet this is that world which we have been fond of, which we, perhaps, still desire to love.

**GOD** forces us away from this hateful world, to free us from its detested slavery, and make us enter into the liberty of his children : and for this we are in distress ! We must needs be very much our own enemies, to be so uneasy at the world's neglecting us. What ! cannot we bear a thing so beneficial to us. And do we regret the want of what is so mischievous ? Such is the source of our tears and our grief.

O **GOD**, who seest the depth of our misery, thou alone canst heal us. Give us quickly, O **LORD**, that faith, hope, love, and christian fortitude, which we stand in so much need of. Make us turn our eyes incessantly unto thee, O Almighty **FATHER**, (who givest nothing to thy dear

children, but to promote their salvation,) and to JESUS thy SON, who is our pattern in suffering. Thou didst fasten him to the cross for us: Thou madest him "a Man of Sorrows," to teach us how useful sorrows are. Let toward nature then be silent, in the contemplation of JESUS filled with reproaches, and crushed with sufferings.

Give me, O LORD, a heart according to thine own; a heart that may be hardened against itself, that may fear nothing but to displease thee; or may at least fear eternal pains, and not those which prepare us for thy kingdom. Thou seest, O LORD, the weakness and distress of thy poor creature; he is helpless, and can find no support in himself. So much the better, provided that thou wilt not fail him, and that he continues to seek from thee, with an humble confidence, what he despairs to find in his own heart.

# A MOTHER'S ADVICE

TO HER DAUGHTER :

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

---

## SECTION I.

### *Some Directions for Devotion.*

As you are now, dear daughter, of an age capable of being instructed in the obligations of Christianity, I have thought it my duty no longer to delay the giving you some little directions, which will make your life happy, as well as religious, if you follow them.

There are, dear child, many kinds of devotion, which are both burthensome and unprofitable too. As the Heathen had each an idol according to his own fancy, so now a days, men devise a sort of religion, each to his own humour : some make religion consist only in repeating so many prayers, psalms, chapters, &c.; and provided they omit nothing of the task which they have prescribed themselves, they think they have done their duty, and that God must be satisfied with the tribute of their lips, though the world has full possession of their hearts. The piety of others is to be always abroad, about what they call works of charity ; and of others, to pass great part of their lives at church, neglecting their families ; to be busied in matters, which, though good in themselves, are not so for them, but in such degree only as they are consistent with the principal duties incumbent on them, in that state of life wherein God has placed them.

I hope that you will be secure from all these errors, if you follow faithfully what the Lord enables me to say to you. And I trust in his goodness it may be a means of

obtaining for you such grace, as may confirm and establish you in his love.

As you consist of soul and body, both must be regulated. I begin with the nobler part.

My child, "you are the temple of God," if so be, that "God dwell in you by faith." His will is, that he may reign in you; and how can he reign there, if he does not dwell there?

Be very careful therefore not to profane his temple. Do not force him to withdraw himself, by committing any wilful sin; and if such a misfortune should happen, delay not one moment to return to him, and to invite him in the bitterness of your soul, to enter again into his habitation. If you let him be long absent, it is much to be feared, he may not return: there is indeed no danger on his part, for he always desires to return into the heart of man; but man, when gone astray, and at a distance from God, hardens his heart, and that more and more, the longer he is absent. Let not a vain fear, (which ignorant persons call humility,) hinder your returning to God, as soon as you are fallen from him. This is of the last consequence, and, without it, it is not possible to lead a Christian life.

But as it is far better not to commit offences than to repent of them, I must give you a preservative to secure you from them.

The rule which God gave to ABRAHAM, was, "Walk before me," or in my presence, "and be thou perfect." (*Gen. xvii. 1.*) And DAVID saith, "I have set God always before me; therefore I shall not fall." (*Psa. xvi. 8.*) You see then, that the way to exercise your faith is, "to walk in his presence." This is indispensably necessary.

## SECTION II.

*Of the Divine Presence.*

There are two ways of maintaining a sense of this divine presence. The first, is prayer; the second, doing the will of God in your daily business.

As for your prayer, you see plainly, that you must address yourself inwardly to him, who dwells within you; and that it would be an useless trouble to seek him, as afar off, whom you have so very near you. It may be a satisfaction to you to hear what ST. AGUSTINE saith upon this subject. He thus laments his having sought GOD out of himself: ‘I sought thee, O my GOD, (saith he,) in heaven, in earth, and in the creatures, and I found thee not there: I sought thee afar off, and thou wert very near. As soon as I sought thee in my heart, I found thee there.’ (*Confess.* Book x. chap. vi. and xxvii.)

Pray to him with faith, confidence, and love, and ever from the heart. Let love more than books instruct your devotion. Ask what you want, with confidence in his goodness: think often what CHRIST has suffered for you; but above all, beseech him to be your Master, and to teach you himself to pray. Say often to him, LORD, I am but a child, I know not what to say. Receive with a full conviction what ST. PAUL affirms: (*Rom.* viii. 26:) “We know not what we should pray for, as we ought; but the SPIRIT itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Beseech, then, the HOLY SPIRIT to ask for you the power to do what he requires of you.

You may sometimes consider GOD as your Master, and keep close to him as a scholar, who desires only to be instructed; saying to him, from the bottom of your heart, Teach me, O divine Master, to do thy will, and to please thee: and then continuing in silence, as to hear him, say with SAMUEL, “Speak, LORD, for thy servant heareth.” And with DAVID, “Teach me thy statutes. I will hear what the LORD GOD will speak.” (*Psa.* lxxxv. 8.)

Think, then, that he saith to you, as in *Psa.* xlv. 10, 11, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider; incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house, (*i. e.*, the world :) So shall the King have pleasure in thy beauty; for he is the LORD thy GOD, and worship thou him."

Sometimes you may behold GOD as a King, and beseech him, that his kingdom may come, and that he may reign within you. Present your heart to him, that he may take possession of it; and make himself obeyed there, with an absolute authority. Say unto him, O my GOD, subdue this rebellious heart to perfect subjection. He saith to you, "Behold, thy King cometh full of meekness." (*Matt.* xxi. 5.) Bid your heart, then, "open, that the King of glory may come in." After which, make a thorough resignation of yourself to this divine King: continue in his presence with reverence, ready to receive his orders, as he shall please to give them.

At other times you may behold him as your Father, and be filled with grateful acknowledgments of his goodness in taking you for his child. For if this quality of Father engages him to enrich you with his graces, and makes you inheritor of his kingdom, it obliges you at the same time to love him above all things, and to endeavour to please him in all you do: and this should engage you to speak to him often with freedom, and confidence in his goodness. A child is familiar with his father, who is pleased with the expressions of its love, excuses its weaknesses, and easily forgives them. O thou best of Fathers, keep me as a little child; so you should say to him: then continue in peace, as in the arms of your Father, without any other care, than to do his will.

Say to him often, My Father! My Father!—"Ye have received," saith ST. PAUL, "the SPIRIT of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father; the SPIRIT itself bearing witness with our spirit, that we are the children of GOD." (*Rom.* viii. 15, 16.) And again, "Because ye are sons, GOD hath sent forth the SPIRIT of his SON into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (*Gal.* iv. 6.) This word

*crying*, well expresses a child's manner of speaking to a father whom he loves: love makes him rather cry, than say, My Father! My Father! And as a little child, who in its fondness cries only Father, insinuates a thousand nameless things to a father's heart; so when by the SPIRIT of adoption, we cry only this word, GOD hears and accepts our addresses to him. The term crying, shows plainly, that GOD is not satisfied with an unmeaning lifeless word, which the tongue pronounces out of custom, but in which the heart has no share: it must be a cry from the bottom of the heart, to recognize so gracious a father

Sometimes present yourself to JESUS CHRIST as one sick, and all over wounded by sin. Behold him as an affectionate Physician, who comes to cure you; nay, more, to take your diseases upon himself: "The chastisement of our peace is upon him, and by his stripes we are healed." Fear not then to draw near to him, however full of sores you may be; and say to him, with the leper, "LORD, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean:" then continue in silence, exposed before him, as an object of his compassion. The diseased wretch, who, with few words, only shows his maladies, moves pity much more, than he who exaggerates them with an affected eloquence. It is sufficient to dwell upon such a thought as this: "Heal me, O LORD, lest my wounds be corrupted: Speak but one word, and thy servant shall be whole."

Always behold him as your SAVIOUR and REDEEMER, who redeems you from the guilt and slavery in which you had wilfully engaged yourself. Say with DAVID, "Bless the LORD, O my soul, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction." (*Psa.* ciii. 2—4.) But with what a price hath he redeemed you? Even with all his blood, his life, in a word, with his whole self. He became a slave to make you free; and he asks nothing more of you, but your hearty consent to be delivered from your captivity. There is no deliverance for you but by him; and you will be your own enemy, if you hinder him. He saith himself,

“If the SON make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”  
 (*John* viii. 36.) You belong to him by the title of acquisition; you are his dominion, and his inheritance.

As his blood is the price of your redemption, beseech him to wash you in it. Keep yourself close to him, as it were to receive the blood that flows from his wounds. Say to him, “LORD, I am oppressed, undertake for me.” (*Isai.* xxxviii. 14.) Then, after acknowledging his goodness, with the tenderest sentiments of love and gratitude, keep yourself in silence by him, while he pleads for you by all the merits of his sufferings.

You must endeavour to continue in a spirit of prayer all the day long, by fervent ejaculations suitable to the subject of your morning’s meditations; sometimes invoking GOD as your Master, King, Father, &c., agreeable to the directions here given.

The other way I recommended to you of maintaining a sense of the divine presence, was, the doing the will of GOD in your daily business. Now the will of GOD is continually revealed to you in the daily dispensations of Providence; and our business is faithfully to follow it from moment to moment, cheerfully accepting all that befalls us, (sweet or bitter, pleasing or vexatious,) whether from the hand of GOD by afflictions, or from men by ill usage, or from ourselves by imprudence and mistakes; and in doing thus, we cannot be deceived; for it is most certain, that whatever happens to us, (excepting only sin,) is the will of GOD.



### SECTION III.

#### *How to pass the Day religiously.*

RISE, and go to bed, at a certain hour; for where there is no fixed rule, disorders will soon ensue. You should not lie late in the morning, nor sit up later than ten at night.

As soon as you awake, present your first thoughts to the LORD, and offer him the first-fruits of the day.

As soon as you rise, fail not to fall on your knees before GOD ; it is an homage due to his supreme Majesty.

As soon as you are dressed, spend half an hour in devotion. There unite yourself to the sacrifice which CHRIST made of himself to the eternal FATHER, and offer yourself to him, that he may do with you, and in you, what he pleases. Let your principal exercise be an absolute submission to the whole will of GOD ; be subject, be entirely subject to it. To serve him is to reign.

Be not long in dressing. Remember, time is a precious talent, that must be accounted for. Be not affected or expensive in your clothes ; and, on the other hand, be not dirty : be dressed clean, so as to give no offence. Let your virtue, candour, and discretion, make you distinguished, and not what you wear. They must be very destitute of solid merit, who seek distinction by dress and equipage.

Never pass the morning without reading some spiritual book, such as *Thomas à Kempis*, *John Arndt*, or the like. Read little, but with relish and application. Read slowly, that you may profit by it : and when you come from devotion, be careful not to dissipate your thoughts, but preserve what you have received thereby, as a precious liquor, which you fear will be evaporated. The fire kindles in prayer ; but it soon goes out, if it be not kept up the rest of the day. The fuel you must feed it with, is frequent recollection, and acts of love, thanksgiving, and oblation of yourself to GOD ; and, as it were, sinking inwards, to find him there, who is the centre of your soul.

But above all other books, my advice is, that you read the Holy Scripture, which will show you particularly, what Christianity engages you to. Read it often : make it your principal study : let it be your daily bread. You will learn there, from CHRIST himself, what you must do not to offend him. You will see there, what he has done and suffered for you : your religion is there in its purity.

You will be there encouraged by the examples of the Patriarchs of the old Law, as well as of those who were the first pillars of Christianity; and therefore, my dear child, I advise you not to pass one day, without reading a certain portion of it. Sometimes you may read where the book opens, but let your general method be, to read it in order, beginning where you left off last, that you may better understand its beauties, and relish its sweetnesses. Read with humility, not to appear knowing, but to edify and nourish your soul; that you may be fully instructed in your duty, and what the covenant which God has made with you, obliges you to.

You may pass your afternoon at work, and in visiting your friends: but never spend an afternoon without reserving some part of it for recollection and prayer.

At night, examine yourself, and make an act of contrition: then continue with tranquillity in the presence of God until you drop asleep. This will make you rest well. Rise again in the same dispositions, and persevere in this inward "peace of God, which passeth all understanding."

It must be a general rule with you, to endeavour to suppress all vain and useless thoughts, and stop the working of your head, to preserve that of your heart. When many reflections crowd upon your mind, give them no entertainment, but let them drop, that you may open your heart to God. Continue the day as you began it, that so from time to time you may repose in God.



#### SECTION IV.

##### *Concerning Mortification.*

EVERY day deny yourself some satisfaction, like PAUL, who was "always bearing about in his body the dying of the LORD JESUS." (2 Cor. iv. 10.)

As for the eyes, which are a source of numberless sins, we may mortify these by shutting our eyes against all outward objects, that we may gather the force of the mind inward, and apply it to God. We should moreover mortify the eyes, in refusing them all objects of mere curiosity. This kind of mortification is very profitable, and can by no means prejudice the health.

The tongue must be mortified, in refraining from saying any thing that may feed vanity, or vent enmity: we must keep a continual guard upon our lips, that we may not say what tends to our own commendation, or our neighbour's disparagement. The taste too must be mortified, by refusing it what it most delights in, and using it to what it least cares for: this may be done so privately, that nobody may perceive it; and with such discretion, that our health be not impaired. The hearing must be mortified, by rejecting all flattery, and every kind of conversation that tends to corrupt the heart; and it must be brought to delight itself in attending to the word of God, and to the secret whispers of his SPIRIT.

You must subdue and mortify your body, by renouncing all delicacy and luxurious ease, and sometimes by breaking your rest a little, to spend the time in devotion. But the true and principal manner of chastising the body, which you may, and ought to do in all times and places, is, to bear, for the love of God, all the inconveniences of life which happen in the order of his providence; the cold, the heat, a bad bed, a restless night, ill health, the neglect of persons we live with, the unhandiness of servants, the ill-will of men, their scorn, and their calumnies; in fine, our own faults, and the pain we find in conquering our vicious inclinations.

The most beneficial and difficult humiliation is that which arises from our own follies, wretchedness, and sins: but we must bear it patiently, and proceed herein, as if, for the love of God, we had the care of some person infected with the leprosy, whose sores we were to wash every day, without being tired, or offended at his putrid ulcers.

It is necessary then, my dear child, that your prayer be ever accompanied with a true and solid mortification. Let us not deceive ourselves, prayer and mortification are two sisters, so essentially linked together, that when one diminishes, the other must decay with it. Oftentimes dryness, or want of devotion in prayer, is occasioned merely by want of mortification. GOD is jealous, and withdraws himself, for the punishment of our neglecting that self-denial which he has commanded. Make then daily, as I have directed you, this double sacrifice to GOD, in refusing what pleases you most, and in doing what is most repugnant to your natural inclination. Do not flatter yourself in this point: be sincere with GOD, and perform what you do for his sake, as having no other view but to please him; for he regards the intention, as much or more than the action.

Give yourself to GOD with a heart upright, sincere, and disengaged: mortify and deny yourself continually. When you find your inclinations tending towards the creatures, and your mind and heart taken with them, you must return to GOD with a humble confidence, dropping the worldly thoughts, and enduring the pain they give you; so as to continue in tranquillity before GOD. But avoid, as much as possible, the occasions of sin, and die to all the little satisfactions and desires of talkativeness and curiosity.

Do not make yourself uneasy for the troubles, temptations, and continual vicissitudes, to which human nature is subject, but bear them meekly, and accustom yourself to peace and tranquillity of spirit.

You ought to do every thing in the order of GOD, and for GOD's sake; and to regard every thing that happens, as the appointment of GOD, as the manifestation of his will, which, to fulfil in the present moment, should be as the food of your soul. Mind not what others think to be better or more holy: the order of GOD manifested in the course of his providence, must be the only rule of your conduct.

Keep always an inward solitude, without which the outward is unprofitable. By an inward-solitude, I mean, that you should shut out the thoughts of the world and yourself, that your mind may be vacant to God; but you should not disturb yourself for things that come into your mind against your will.

All that we desire with passion and eagerness, is not of God. God dwells in peace.



## SECTION V

### *Some Rules for Conversation.*

YOUR conversation should be mild, with good breeding, and without debate. Be never obstinate in an argument, but give way freely: make no person uneasy, and bear with the faults of others.

Never talk of your neighbour, but to his advantage; and, as much as you can, take the part of the absent, who is evil spoken of. Judge nobody, and be backward to believe ill reports. Speak simply the truth, without exaggeration.

Let your conversation be free and cheerful, but without vanity.

Avoid flatterers, and those who commend you: think them your true friends, who tell you of your faults; and be assured, that they who commend them, mean only to make a jest of you.

Never make a friendship with persons that take too great freedoms: do not so much as keep them company. Choose for your friends, persons of piety and good sense: give them full liberty to tell you of your faults, and be pleased with them for so doing, without which, (take what pains you please besides,) you will never be truly good.

Never break with your friends, unless they prove

vicious ; in which case, you should not have begun a friendship.

Never suffer men to take any freedom with you, but carry yourself with gravity towards them. Do not receive frequent visits from any man. Never give room to suspect that you give any preference in your heart, which good breeding obliges you to conceal : but, being civil to all men, be familiar with none. Never be alone with a man, nor give any an opportunity of saying what you ought not to hear. Guard well the avenues of your heart : if once the bank be broken down, you cannot hinder an inundation.

Give alms according to your substance. Visit the sick. Be particularly careful of the poor. Comfort the afflicted, and afflict nobody. Let all your works be done with discretion and charity.

Be meek and peaceable : have no odd humours. Never blame without reason, that when you have reason, you may be more minded. Never reprove with passion. Treat your servants with great firmness, and with love, but with little familiarity. When they are sick, do not put them out of your house, if you can help it ; but if their disease be such as makes a removal necessary, sweeten it by kind treatment, and plentiful provision for them elsewhere. Remember that your own servants have the first title to your charity.

Hurt nobody, not even in spirit ; and speak not what you think may make any body uneasy. Be ready to pardon injuries, and give no one occasion to practise that virtue upon your account. Never make a jest of any body, it is a notable grievous sin.

In fine, my daughter, often implore the assistance of God ; and if you follow these directions, you will be happy in this world, and in the next.

---

---

**AN EXTRACT**

**FROM**

**MOLINOS'S SPIRITUAL GUIDE.**

---

---



# THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE.

---

## PART I.

OF THE TEMPTATIONS WHEREWITH GOD PURGES SOULS,

---

### CHAPTER I.

*To the end God may rest in the Soul, the Heart is always to be kept peaceable in whatsoever Temptations.*

THOU art to know thy soul is the habitation and kingdom of GOD. That therefore the sovereign King may rest on that throne of thy soul, thou oughtest to take pains to keep it clean, quiet, and peaceable; clean from guilt and defects; quiet from fears; and peaceable in temptations and tribulations.

Thou oughtest always then to keep thine heart in peace, that thou mayest keep pure that temple of GOD; and with a right and pure intention, thou art to work, pray, obey, and suffer, without being in the least moved, whatever it pleases the LORD to send unto thee; because it is certain, that for the good of thy soul, and for thy spiritual profit, he will suffer the enemy to trouble that city of rest, and throne of peace, with temptations, suggestions, and tribulations; and by the means of creatures, with troubles and persecutions.

Be constant, and cheer up thine heart in whatsoever disquiet these tribulations may cause to thee. Enter within it, that thou mayest overcome it, for therein is the divine fortress, which defends, protects, and fights for thee. If a man hath a safe fortress, he is not disquieted, though his enemies pursue him, because by retreating within it, these are disappointed. The strong castle that will make thee triumph over all thine enemies, visible and

invisible, and over all their snares and tribulations, is within thine own soul ; because in it resides the divine aid and sovereign strength : retreat within it, and all will be quiet, secure, peaceable, and calm.

It ought to be thy continual exercise to pacify that throne of thy heart, that the supreme King may rest therein. Thy protection is prayer, and a loving recollection in the divine presence. When thou seest thyself more sharply assaulted, retreat into that region of peace : when thou art more faint-hearted, betake thyself to this refuge of prayer, the only armour for overcoming the enemy : thou oughtest not to be at a distance from it in a storm, to the end, thou mayest, as another NOAH, experience tranquillity, security, and serenity, and to the end, thy will may be resigned, devout, peaceful, and courageous.

Finally, Be not afflicted nor discouraged, he returns to quiet thee : this divine LORD will be alone with thee, to rest in thy soul, and form therein a rich throne of peace : within thine own heart, with his heavenly grace, thou mayest look for silence in tumult, solitude in company, light in darkness, vigour in despondency, courage in fear, resistance in temptation, peace in war, and quiet in tribulation.



## CHAPTER II.

### *The Soul ought to persevere in Prayer.*

THOU wilt find thyself full of confusion and doubts, because it will seem to thee, that GOD does no more assist thee as formerly ; that the exercise of prayer is not in thy power ; that thou lovest time, whilst hardly, and with great trouble, thou canst make one single ejaculation as thou wast wont to do.

Thou oughtest then to be persuaded, that thou mayest not draw back when thou wantest expansion in prayer :

it is a clear sign that the LORD will have thee walk by faith in his divine presence, which is the most profitable path; when with a simple view, or attention to GOD, the soul appears like a humble supplicant before its LORD, or as an innocent child, that casts itself into the bosom of its dear mother. Thus did GERSON express it: 'Though I have spent forty years in reading and prayer, yet I could never find any thing more efficacious, than that our spirit should become like a young child and beggar in the presence of GOD.'

When GOD had a mind to instruct his own captain MOSES, (*Exod. xxiv.*), and give him the two tables of the law, he called him up to the mountain; at what time GOD being there with him, the mount was darkened, and environed with thick clouds, MOSES standing idle, not knowing what to say. Seven days after, GOD commanded MOSES to come up to the top of the mountain, where he showed him his glory, and filled him with consolation.

So in the beginning, when GOD intends to guide the soul into the school of the eternal law, he often makes it go with darkness and dryness, that he may bring it near to himself: because the divine Majesty knows very well, it is not by the means of one's own industry, that a soul draws near to him, and understands the divine teachings; but rather by humble resignation.

The Patriarch NOAH gave a great instance of this; who after he had been by all men reckoned a fool, floating in the middle of a raging sea, wherewith the whole world was overflowed, without sails and oars, and environed with wild beasts in the ark, walked by faith alone, not knowing nor understanding what GOD had a mind to do with him.

What most concerns thee, O redeemed soul, is patience, not to desist from prayer: walk with firm faith, trusting that GOD, who changes not, neither can err, intends nothing but thy good. He who is dying, must needs feel it; but how well is time employed, when the soul is dead, and resigned in the presence of GOD, without any distraction, to receive the divine influences?

If thou wouldest be happy, believe, suffer, and have patience, be confident and walk on; it concerns thee far more to hold thy peace, and to let thyself be guided by the hand of **God**, than to enjoy all the goods of this world. And though it seem to thee, that thou doest nothing at all, yet it is of infinite fruit.

Who would not think, during so long a time that the seed lies in the earth, but that it were lost? Yet afterwards it is seen to spring up, grow, and multiply. **God** does the same with the soul: whilst it thinks it does nothing, and is in a manner undone, in time it comes to itself again, improved, disengaged, and perfect.

Take care, then, that thou afflict not thyself, nor draw back, though thou canst not enlarge thyself in prayer; suffer, hold thy peace, and appear in the presence of **God**; persevere constantly, and trust to his infinite bounty, who can give unto thee constant faith, true light, and divine grace: put thyself into his kind and paternal hands, resolving to do nothing but what his divine will and pleasure is.

**St. Augustine** complained, ‘**I, Lord**, went wandering like a strayed sheep, seeking thee with anxious reasoning without, whilst thou wast within me: I wearied myself much in looking for thee without, and yet thou hast thy habitation within me: I went round the streets and places of the city of this world, seeking thee, and found thee not; because in vain I sought without, for him who was within myself.’ (*Soliloq.* c. 31.)

And wouldest thou disquiet thyself, and leave off prayer, because thou knowest not, or canst not tell how to enlarge therein, though thou mayest have a good will, and pure intention? What will **God** do to redeemed souls, though they cannot speak nor reason, if they believe, trust, and open their mouths to heaven? Is it not certain, that the divine bounty will provide for them, and give them their necessary food?

It is no small gift of **God**, for the soul, finding itself deprived of the sensible pleasures it had, to walk by holy

faith only. Wherefore, endeavour to be constant, and not draw back ; though discourse be wanting to thee in prayer, believe at that time firmly, and patiently persevere, if thou wouldest attain to the divine union.



### CHAPTER III.

*The Soul is not to afflict itself, nor intermit Prayer, because it sees itself encompassed with dryness and darkness.*

THERE are two sorts of prayer, the one tender, delightful, amiable, and full of joy ; the other, dry, desolate, tempted, and darksome. GOD gives the first to gain souls ; the second, to reprove them. With the first, he uses them like children ; with the second, he begins to deal with them as with strong men.

Know that the LORD often makes use of the veil of dryness, to the end we may be humble ; because if we felt and knew what he is working in our souls, presumption might get in, reckoning ourselves very near to GOD ; which would be our undoing.

Thou oughtest not then to afflict thyself, nor think that thou reapest no fruit, because in coming from a communion or prayer, thou hast not the experience of joy. The husbandman sows in one time, and reaps in another : so GOD, in his own due time, when least thou thinkest, will give thee holy purposes, and more effectual desires of serving him. Some of the infinite fruits that thy soul may reap from dryness, are, 1. A loathing of the things of the world, stifling the bad desires of thy past life, and producing new ones of serving GOD. 2. A deeper sense of many failings, on which formerly thou didst not reflect. 3. Stronger desires of suffering, and of doing the will of GOD. 4. Greater ease in overcoming thyself, and con-

quering the passions, and enemies that hinder thee in the way. 5. A high esteem of GOD above all created beings, a contempt of creatures, and a firm resolution not to abandon prayer, though thou knowest that it will prove to thee a most cruel martyrdom. 6. Greater peace in thy soul, humility, confidence in GOD, submission, and abstraction from all creatures.

All these, and many other fruits, are like new buds that spring from the prayer which thou wouldest give over, because it seems to thee, that thou seest no fruit of it, nor reapest any advantage therefrom.

Thou oughtest not to grieve and disturb thyself, judging that GOD hath failed thee; thou oughtest rather at that time to persevere constantly in prayer. O how happy wilt thou be, if thou embrace it with peace and resignation.

What thou oughtest to do, is to believe, that thou art before the LORD, and in his presence; but thou oughtest to do so, with a sweet and quiet attention, and not desire to know any thing, nor do any thing, but what is the good will and pleasure of GOD; because otherwise thou wilt only make circles all thy life-time, and not advance one step towards perfection.



#### CHAPTER IV.

*It is necessary that God purge the Soul after his way, because the Exercises that of itself it sets about, are not sufficient.*

So soon as thou shalt firmly resolve to mortify thy senses, that thou mayest advance towards union with GOD, his divine Majesty will set his hand to the purging thy evil inclinations, inordinate desires, vain complacency, self-love, and pride, and other hidden vices, which reign in the inner parts of thy soul, and hinder the divine union.

Thou wilt never attain to this happy state, though thou tire thyself out with the external acts of mortification, until the **LORD** purge thee inwardly, and discipline thee after his own way, because he alone knows how secret faults are to be purged out.

**GOD** will do this in thy soul by means of the cross, if thou freely givest thy consent to it by resignation. All thou hast to do, is to do nothing by thy own choice : quietly resign thyself up in every thing, whereby the **LORD** shall think fit internally or externally to mortify thee ; because that is the only means by which thy soul can become capable of the divine influences, whilst thou sufferest internal and external tribulation, with humility, patience, and quiet ; not the penances, disciplines, and mortifications which thou couldest impose on thyself.

The husbandman sets a greater esteem upon the plants which he sows in the ground, than those that spring up of themselves. In the same manner, **GOD** is better pleased with the virtue which he infuses into the soul, than all the virtues which the soul pretends to acquire by its own endeavours.

Exercise thyself in another manner than hitherto, giving thy consent to receive the secret and divine operations, and to be polished and purified by the **LORD**, which is the only means whereby thou wilt be purged.

The creatures will forsake thee, nay, those too from which thou lopest for most favour and compassion.

Thy invisible enemies will pursue thee with scruples, lascivious suggestions, and unclean thoughts, perhaps with incentives to impatience, pride, rage, cursing, and blaspheming the name of **GOD**, his sacraments and holy mysteries. Thou wilt find a great lukewarmness, loathing, and wearisomeness for the things of **GOD** ; an obscurity and darkness in thy understanding ; a faintness, confusion, and narrowness of heart ; such a coldness and feebleness of will to resist, that a straw will appear to thee a beam.

But fear not : all this is for the purging thy soul, and

making it know its own misery, and sensibly perceive the annihilation of all the passions and inordinate appetites, wherewith it rejoiced itself.



## CHAPTER V.

*The Soul ought not to be disquieted, nor draw back in the Spiritual Way, because it finds itself assaulted by Temptations.*

OUR own nature is so base, proud, and ambitious, and so full of its own appetites, its own judgment and opinions, that if temptations restrained it not, it would be undone without remedy. The LORD then seeing our misery and perverse inclination, and thereby moved to compassion, suffers us to be assaulted by divers temptations, and by violent suggestions of impatience, pride, gluttony, rage, blasphemy, despair, and an infinite number of others, to the end we may know ourselves: with these, that infinite goodness humbles our pride, giving us in them the most wholesome medicine.

“All our righteousnesses,” as ISAIAH saith, (lxiv. 6.) “are as filthy rags,” through the stains of vanity, conceitedness, and self-love. It is necessary they be purified with the fire of temptation, that they may be pure, perfect, and agreeable to the eyes of GOD.

Therefore the LORD purifies the soul which he calls, and will have for himself, with the rough fire of temptation, with which he polishes it from the rust of pride, avarice, vanity, ambition, presumption. With the same he humbles, pacifies, and exercises it, making it to know its own misery. By means thereof, he purifies and strips the heart, to the end, all its operations may be pure, and of inestimable value.

Many souls, when they suffer these, are troubled and

disquieted, it seeming to them, that they already suffer eternal punishments; and if by misfortune they go to an unexperienced Pastor, instead of comforting them, he leaves them in greater perplexities.

That thou mayest not lose internal peace, believe that it is the divine mercy which thus afflicts and tries thee; since by that means the soul comes to have a deep knowledge of itself, reckoning itself the worst of all living, and hence, with humility and lowliness, it abhors itself. O how happy would souls be, if they would be quiet, and believe that these temptations are for their spiritual profit.

But thou wilt say, it is not the work of the Devil, but the effects of thy neighbour's faults and malice, in having wronged and injured thee.

Dost thou receive an injury from any man? There are two things in it; the sin of him that does it, and the punishment that thou sufferest: the sin is against the will of God, and displeases him, though he permits it; the punishment he wills for thy good: wherefore thou oughtest to receive it, as from his hand. The passion and death of our **LORD CHRIST**, were the effects of the wickedness of **PILATE**; and yet it is certain, that **GOD** willed the death of his own **SON** for our redemption.

The **LORD** makes use of another's fault for the good of thy soul. O the greatness of the divine wisdom, who can pry into the depth of the means whereby he guides the soul, which he would have purged, and transformed into his own likeness!

That the soul may be the habitation of the celestial King, it is necessary it should be pure, and without any blemish; wherefore the **LORD** purifies it as gold, in the furnace of temptation. Certain it is, that the soul never loves nor believes more, than when it is afflicted with temptation.

The effects that remain, make this clear; and commonly these are a loathing of itself, with a most profound acknowledgment of the greatness and omnipotence of **GOD**, a great confidence in the **LORD**, that he will deliver it

from all danger; believing and confessing with far greater vigour of faith, that it is **GOD** who gives it strength to bear these temptations, because it would naturally be impossible, considering the violence wherewith sometimes they attack, to resist one quarter of an hour.

The more temptations beset thee, the more thou oughtest to rejoice in peace, instead of being sad, and thank **GOD** for the favour he does thee. In all those temptations, and odious thoughts, the remedy is to despise them with a stayed neglect, because nothing more afflicts the proud Devil, than to see that he is slighted and despised. Therefore tarry, as one that perceives him not, and possess thyself in peace without repining, and without multiplying reasons and answers; seeing nothing is more dangerous, than to vie in reasons with him who is ready to deceive thee.

The saints in arriving at holiness, passed through this valley of temptations; and the greater saints they were, the greater temptations they grappled with: nay, after the saints have attained to holiness, the **LORD** suffers them to be tempted, that their crown may be the greater, and that the spirit of vain-glory may be checked, or hindered from entering in them.

Finally, Thou art to know, that the greatest temptation is to be without temptation; wherefore thou oughtest to be glad when it assaults thee, and with resignation, peace, and constancy, resist it.



## CHAPTER VI.

### *The Nature of Internal Recollection.*

**INTERNAL** recollection is faith, and silence in the presence of **GOD**. Hence thou oughtest to be accustomed to recollect thyself in his presence, with an affectionate atten-

tion, as one that is given up to **God**, and united unto him, with reverence, humility, and submission, beholding him in the most inward recess of thine own soul by the eye of living faith.

There thou art to be with attention and a sincere regard, with a sedate heedfulness, and full of love, resigning and delivering thyself up into his hands, to the end he may dispose of thee, according to his good will and pleasure.

The prayer of internal recollection may be well typified by that wrestling which the Holy Scriptures say **JACOB** had all night with **God**, until day broke, and he blessed him. Wherefore the soul is to persevere, and wrestle with the difficulties that it will find in internal recollection, until the sun of internal light appear, and the **LORD** give it his blessing.

As to the various, impertinent, troublesome, and ugly thoughts thou then hast; the best thing that is to be done is, sweetly to despise them, to know thine own wretchedness, and peacefully make an offering to **God** of the trouble.

Though thou canst not get rid of them, yet be not afflicted, neither leave off recollection; resign thyself at that time with vigour, endure with patience, and persevere in his presence; for whilst thou perseverest after that manner, thy soul will be internally improved.

Dost thou believe that when thou comest away from prayer dry, in the same manner as thou didst begin, that it hath done thee no good? That is a fallacy; because the fruit of true prayer consists not only in enjoying the light, but in enduring with patience, and persevering in faith, believing that thou art in the **LORD's** presence, turning to him thy heart with tranquillity and purity of mind. Whilst thou perseverest in this manner, thou hast the only preparation which at that time is necessary, and shalt reap infinite fruit.

War is useful, in this internal recollection, to try, humble, and purge thee. Invisible enemies will assault thee with continual suggestions, to trouble and disquiet thee. Nature

herself will torment thee, she being always an enemy to the spirit; often it remains weak, melancholy, and full of irksomeness, so that it feels a hell in spiritual exercises, particularly in prayer; hence it grows extremely impatient to be at an end of it, through the uneasiness of thoughts, lassitude of body, importunate sleep, and thy not being able to curb the senses. Happy art thou, if thou canst persevere amidst this martyrdom.

In recollection, the Devil frequently charges the soul fiercely with a battalion of thoughts, to discompose the quiet of the soul, and alienate it from that internal conversation. But provided they be not consented to, they double the profit.

As many times as thou exercisest thyself, calmly to reject these vain thoughts, so many crowns will the LORD set upon thy head; and though it may seem to thee that thou doest nothing, be undeceived; for a good desire, with firmness and steadfastness in prayer, is very pleasing to the LORD.

GOD loves not him who hears most, but who suffers most, if he pray with faith and reverence in the divine presence.

GOD hath no regard to the multitude of words, but to the purity of the intention. His greatest glory at that time, is, to see the soul desirous, humble, quiet, and resigned. Proceed, persevere, pray, and hold thy peace; for where thou findest not joy, thou wilt find a door whereby thou mayest enter into thine own nothingness; knowing thyself to be nothing, that thou canst do nothing; nay, and that thou hast not so much as a good thought.

How many have begun this happy practice of prayer and internal recollection, and have left it off, pretending that they felt no pleasure, that they lose time, that their thoughts trouble them, and that that prayer is not for them. All this is no more but to seek themselves, and not GOD, because they cannot suffer a little pain and dryness; whereas by the least act of reverence towards GOD, amidst dryness, they receive an eternal reward.

FRANCESCA LOPEZ, of Valenza, tells us three things of great consequence in order to internal recollection :—

“ In the first place, That a quarter of an hour of prayer, with resignation and humility, does more good to the soul than five days of penitential exercises, hair-cloths, disciplines, fastings, and sleeping on bare boards ; because these are only mortifications of the body ; but with recollection the soul is purified.

“ *Secondly*, That it is more pleasing to the divine Majesty to have the soul in quiet and devout prayer for the space of an hour, than to go in great pilgrimages.

“ *Thirdly*, That constant prayer was to keep the heart always right towards GOD, and that a soul ought rather to act with the affection of the will, than the toil of the intellect.”

Know, that to fix the will on GOD, restraining thoughts and temptations, with the greatest tranquillity possible, is the highest pitch of praying.

Thou oughtest to go to prayer, that thou mayest deliver thyself wholly up into the hands of GOD, with perfect resignation, exerting an act of faith, believing that thou art in the divine presence, afterwards settling in that holy repose with quietness and tranquillity ; and endeavouring for a whole day, a whole year, and thy whole life, to continue that first act of faith and love.

Meantime thou oughtest to exercise thyself outwardly in the external works of thy calling ; for in so doing, thou doest the will of GOD, and walkest in continual and virtual prayer. ‘ He always prays,’ said THEOPHYLACT, ‘ who does good works ; nor does he neglect prayer, but when he leaves off to be just.’

Strive when thou comest from prayer, to the end thou mayest return to it again, not to be distracted nor diverted ; but to carry thyself with a total resignation to the divine will, that GOD may do with thee, and all thine, according to his heavenly pleasure, relying on him as on a kind and loving Father. Never recall that intention ; and though thou art taken up about the affairs of the condition wherein

God hath placed thee, yet thou wilt still be in prayer in the presence of God, and in perpetual acts of resignation. Therefore ST. CHRYSOSTOM said, 'A just man leaves not off to pray, unless he leaves off to be just; he always prays, who always does well; the good desire is prayer, and if the desire be continued, so is also the prayer.'

All this time remember, that our LORD CHRIST is the Guide, the Door, and the Way; as he himself hath said in his own words: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (*John* xiv. 6.) And before the soul can be fit to enter into the presence of the Divinity, and to be united with it, it is to be washed with the precious blood of a Redeemer, and adorned with the rich robes of his passion.

OUR LORD CHRIST, with his doctrine and example, is the mirror, the guide of the soul, the way, and the only door by which we can enter into those pastures of life eternal, and into the vast ocean of the Divinity. Hence it follows, that the remembrance of the passion and death of our SAVIOUR ought never to be blotted out; nay, it is also certain, that whatsoever high elevation of mind the soul may be raised to, it ought not to separate from the most holy humanity.

The way for souls to enter by the humanity of CHRIST, and entertain a remembrance of him, is, the eyeing that humanity, and the passion thereof, by a simple act of faith, looking and reflecting on the same as the tabernacle of the Divinity, the beginning and end of our salvation; JESUS CHRIST having been born, suffered and died a shameful death, for our sakes.

This holy remembrance of the humanity, can be no obstacle to internal recollection; nay, the remembrance of the humanity of the divine Word, gives no impediment to the highest and most transformed soul.

Let the soul then, when it enters into recollection, place itself at the gate of divine mercy, which is the amiable and sweet remembrance of the cross and passion of the Word that was made man, and died for love; let it stand there

with humility, resigned to the will of **God**, in whatsoever it pleases the divine Majesty to do with it.

Wonderfully does **ST. PAUL** favour this our doctrine in his Epistle to the Colossians, wherein he exhorts them and us, that whether we eat, drink, or do any thing else, we should do it in the name of **JESUS CHRIST**. **God** grant that we may all begin by **JESUS CHRIST**, and that in him and by him alone we may arrive at perfection.

This perfection consists not in speaking, nor in thinking much on **God**; but in loving him. This love is attained by means of perfect resignation. The love of **God** has but few words.

That a rational creature may understand the secret desire and intention of thy heart, there is a necessity that thou shouldest express it to him in words; but **God**, who searcheth the heart, standeth not in need that thou shouldest assure him of it; nor does he rest satisfied with love in word nor in tongue. What avails it to tell him, that thou perfectly lovest him, if at one bitter word, or slight injury, thou dost not resign thyself for the love of him? A manifest proof that thy love was a love in tongue, and not in deed.

Strive to be resigned in all things; and in so doing, without saying that thou lovest him, thou wilt attain to the most perfect love.

## PART II.

OF SPIRITUAL MARTYRDOMS ; OF CONTEMPLATION,  
PERFECT RESIGNATION, HUMILITY, AND INTER-  
NAL PEACE.

---

### CHAPTER I.

#### *Who are truly Spiritual Men.*

TRULY spiritual men retire with resignation into the hands of GOD, putting off and forgetting themselves ; and always go with a raised spirit to the presence of the LORD, by the means of pure faith, with great assurance, tranquillity, and rest internal ; in whom the SPIRIT draws with so much force, that it makes the soul contract inwardly, the heart, the body, and all the powers of it.

As they have been cleared by GOD with the fire of tribulation, they are entirely subdued and denied, which makes them live with great repose and internal peace ; and though in many occasions they feel resistance and temptations, yet they become victorious, because being already souls of proof, and endued with divine strength, the motions of passions cannot last long upon them ; and although vehement temptations and troublesome suggestions of the enemy may persevere a long time about them, they are all conquered with infinite gain, GOD being he that fights within them.

These souls have already a true knowledge of CHRIST our LORD, both of his divinity and his humanity. They exercise this infused knowledge with a spirit that is pure and stripped of all creatures ; they are raised also from outward actions to the love of His humanity and divinity ; so much as they enjoy they forget, and in all of it they find that they love their GOD with all their heart and spirit.

These blessed souls take no pleasure in any thing of the world, but in contempt, and in being forsaken and forgotten by every body; they live so disinterested, that though they continually receive many supernatural graces, yet they are just as if they had not received them, keeping always in the inmost of their hearts a great lowliness and contempt of themselves; always humbled in the depth of their own unworthiness and vileness; they are always quiet, serene, and possessed with evenness of mind in graces and favours as in the most bitter torments. There is no news that affrights them; no success that makes them proud; tribulations never disturb them; nor the divine communications make them vain and conceited; they remain always full of holy and filial fear, in a wonderful peace, constancy, and serenity.

As the LORD is he that works, virtue is established, interests are rooted up, imperfections are destroyed, and passions removed; which makes the soul free unexpectedly, and taken off, when occasions are represented.

These souls, as they have the true light of GOD, by it know profoundly their own weaknesses and imperfections, and what they yet want to arrive at perfection, towards which they are walking; they abhor themselves, they exercise themselves in a loving fear of GOD, and contempt of themselves; but with a true hope in GOD, and diffidence in themselves. The more they are humbled, the more they please GOD, and arrive at a singular respect and veneration in his presence. Of all the good works they continually do, and of all they continually suffer, as well within as without, they make no manner of account before that divine presence.

But know, that few are the souls which arrive at this happy state, because few there are that are willing to embrace contempt, and suffer themselves to be refined and purified; upon which account, although they are many that enter into this interior way, yet it is a rare thing for a soul to go on, and not stick upon the entrance. The LORD said to a soul, This inward way is trodden by few; it

is so high a grace, that none deserve it ; few walk in it, because it is no other than a death of the senses ; and few there be that are willing so to die ; in which disposition this sovereign gift is founded.

It is the saying of **ST. BERNARD**, That to serve **GOD** is nothing else but to do good and suffer evil. He that would go to perfection by the means of sweetness and consolation is mistaken. You must desire no other consolation from **GOD**, than to end your life for his sake. Our **LORD**'s way was not that of sweetness and softness, nor did he invite us to any such, either by his words or example, when he said, "He that will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (*Luke ix. 23.*) The soul that would be united to **CHRIST**, must be conformable to him, and follow him in the way of suffering.

Thou wilt scarce begin to relish sweetness in prayer, but the enemy will be kindling in thy heart desires of the desert and solitude, that thou mayest without any body's hinderance spread the sails to continual and delightful prayers. Open thine eyes, and consider that this counsel and desire is not conformable to the true counsel of **CHRIST** our **LORD**, who has not invited us to follow our own will, but to deny ourselves. As if he should say, He that will follow me, let him part with his own will, wholly, and, leaving all things, let him entirely submit to the yoke of obedience and subjection, by means of self-denial, which is the truest cross.

O what a happiness is it for a soul to be subdued and subject ! What great riches is it to be poor ! What mighty honour to be despised ! What a height is it to be beaten down ! What a comfort to be afflicted ! And, finally, what a happiness of happinesses, to be crucified with **CHRIST** ! This is that lot which the Apostle gloried in. (*Gal. vi. 14.*) Let others boast in their riches, dignities, delights, and honours ; but to us there is no higher honour than to be denied, despised, and crucified with **CHRIST**.

But what a grief is this, that scarce is there one soul

which is willing to be denied for CHRIST, embracing his cross with love. Many are called to perfection, but few arrive at it; because they are few who embrace the cross with patience, constancy, and resignation.

To deny one's self in all things, to mortify continually all inward passions, to annihilate one's self in all respects, to follow always that which is contrary to one's own will, appetite, and judgment, are things that few can do. Many are those that teach them, but few are they that practise them.

Many souls have undertaken, and daily do undertake this way, and they persevere while they keep the sweet relish of their primitive fervour; but this sweetness is scarce done, but presently, upon the overtaking of a storm of trouble, temptation, and dryness, they falter, and turn back.

May it please God, that the souls which have had light, and been called to an inward peace, and by not being constant in dryness, and tribulation, and temptation, have started back, may not be cast into outward darkness, with him that had not on him a wedding garment.

The seven-headed beast of self-love must be beheaded, in order to get up to the top of the high mountain of peace. This monster puts his head every where: sometimes it gets about relations, which strangely hinder with their conversation, to which nature easily lets itself be led; sometimes it gets, with a good look of gratitude, into passionate affection towards the confessor; sometimes into affections for niceties of honour, which things stick very close; sometimes it cleaves to spiritual pleasures, staying even in the gifts of God; sometimes it desires the preservation of health, and, with disguise, its own profit and conveniences; and lastly, it cleaves with a notable propensity to our own judgment and opinion in all things. All these are effects of self-love, and if they be not denied, impossible it is that a man should ever get up to the happiness of the loving union.

## CHAPTER II.

*Of the spiritual Martyrdom, wherewith GOD cleanseth the Soul that he unites with himself.*

GOD frequently uses two ways for cleansing the souls which he would unite to himself. The first is, with the bitter waters of affliction ; the second is, with the fire of an inflamed love. Sometimes he maketh use of both.

O that thou wouldest understand the great good of tribulation ! This is that which cleanses the soul, and produces patience ; this in prayer inflames it, enlarges it, and puts it upon the exercise of the most sublime charity ; this rejoices the soul, brings it near to GOD, calls it to, and gives it entrance into heaven : the same is that which tries the true servants of GOD, and renders them valiant and constant ; that is it which makes GOD hear them with speed ; it is that which refines and perfects them, transforming and uniting them in an admirable manner with the LORD'S humanity and divinity.

O blessed soul ! if thou knewest how to be content in the fire of tribulation, and wouldest but let thyself be washed with the bitter waters of affliction, how quickly wouldest thou find thyself rich in heavenly gifts ! How soon would the divine bounty make a rich throne in thy soul, and a goodly habitation for thee to refresh thyself in it !

But thou wilt never arrive at this happy state, until thou art purified from disordered passions, concupiscence, self-esteem, and many other secret vices which lie within the very soul, hindering the peaceable entrance of that great LORD into it, who would be united with thee.

O how much is there to be purified in a soul that must arrive at the holy mount of perfection ! O how naked and denied ought the soul to be, which would not hinder the entrance of his LORD, nor his continual communication !

This disposition of the soul must of necessity be made by the divine wisdom. If a seraph is not sufficient to

purify the soul, how shall a soul that is frail, miserable, and without experience, ever be able to purify itself?

Therefore the **LORD** himself will dispose thee, by a way thou understandest not, without any other disposition on thy side, than a consent to the internal and external cross.

Possibly thou wilt find within thyself dryness, darkness, continual and strong suggestions, and vehement temptations of the enemy; perhaps thou wilt see thyself so afflicted, that thou wilt not be able to lift up thy heart, being full of sorrow and heaviness, nor do the least act of faith, hope, or charity.

But though thou shalt see thyself so oppressed, seeming to thyself to be proud, impatient, and wrathful; yet these temptations shall lose their power upon thee; they have no place in thy soul, by the sovereign gift of inward strength, which rules in the inmost part of it, conquering the most affrightening pain, and the strongest temptation.

Keep constant, O blessed soul, keep constant; for it will not be as thou imaginest, nor art thou at any time nearer to **GOD** than in such cases of temptation; for although the sun is hid in the clouds, yet it changes not its place, nor a jot the more loses its brightness. The **LORD** permits this to purge and polish thee, to cleanse and disrobe thee of thyself; and thou mayest in this manner be all his, and give thyself up to him, as his infinite bounty is entirely given to thee.

It may be, thy sorrow will seem insuperable, and thy afflictions past the power of comfort; thou wilt see thyself begirt with griefs, and besieged with sorrows; strong temptations will afflict thee, painful distrusts, and troublesome scruples; nay, light and judgment will forsake thee.

And although at this time the **LORD** will not abandon thee, because it would be impossible to live one moment without his help; yet the succour will be so secret, that thy soul will not know it, nor be capable of hope and consolation: nay, it will seem to be without remedy, suffering like condemned persons the pains of hell.

But if thou, O blessed soul, shouldest know how much

thou art beloved, and defended by thy LORD, in the midst of thy torments, thou wouldest find them so sweet, that it would be necessary GOD should work a miracle to let thee live. Be constant, O happy soul, be constant and of good courage; for however intolerable thou art to thyself, yet thou wilt be protected, enriched, and beloved, by that greatest good, as if he had nothing else to do than to lead thee to perfection; and if thou dost not turn away, but perseverest constantly, without leaving off thy undertaking, know that thou offerest to GOD the most accepted sacrifice; so that if the LORD were capable of pain, he would find no ease until he has completed this loving union with thy soul.

If from the chaos of nothing, his omnipotence has produced so many wonders, what will he do in thy soul, created after his own image and likeness, if thou keepest constant and resigned, with a true knowledge of thy nothingness? Happy soul, which even when it is disturbed, afflicted, and disconsolate, keeps steady within, without going forth to desire exterior comfort.

Persevere in humility, and go not out of thyself to seek aid; for all thy good consists in holding patience with rest and resignation. There wilt thou find the divine strength to overcome so hard a warfare; he is within thee, that fighteth for thee; and he is strength itself.

When thou shalt come to this, weeping and lamentation are not forbidden thy soul, whilst it keeps resigned. Who can bear the LORD's heavy hand without tears and lamentation? That great champion, JOB, even he lamented; so did CHRIST our LORD in his forsaking; but their weepings were accompanied with resignation.

Afflict not thyself, though GOD do crucify thee, and make trial of thy fidelity. If the scales were taken from thine eyes, as they were from ST. PAUL's, thou wouldest see the necessity of suffering, as he did, esteeming more the being crucified, than being an Apostle.

The other martyrdom in souls already advanced, is a fire of divine love, which burns the soul, and makes it

painful with the same love. Sometimes the absence of its beloved afflicts it; sometimes the ardent and welcome weight of his loving presence. This sweet martyrdom always makes it sigh: sometimes if it enjoys and has its Beloved, for the pleasure of having him, so that it cannot contain itself; other times, if he does not manifest himself, through the ardent anxiety of seeking, finding, and enjoying him.

So much as light and love increase, just so much increases the grief in seeing that good absent which it loves so well. To feel it near itself, is enjoyment; and never to have done knowing and possessing it, consumes its life. It sees itself swallowed up in a sea of love, whilst the powerful hand that is able to save it is near it, and yet doth not do it; nor doth it know when he will come, whom it so much does desire.



### CHAPTER III.

*Inward Mortification, perfect Resignation and Humility, are necessary for obtaining internal Peace.*

THOU wilt never taste the delicious manna, unless thou overcome thyself; because he who endeavours not to die to his passions, is not disposed to receive the gift of understanding, without the infusion whereof it is impossible for him to be changed in his spirit.

Never disquiet thyself for any accident; for inquietude is the door by which the enemy gets into the soul to rob it of its peace.

Resign and deny thyself wholly; for though true self-denial is harsh at the beginning, it is easy in the middle, and sweet in the end.

Thou wilt find thyself far from perfection, if thou dost not find God in every thing.

Know that the pure, perfect, and essential love consists in the cross, in self-denial and resignation, in perfect humility, and in poverty.

In the time of strong temptation get close into thy centre, that thou mayest only look at God, who keeps his throne in the bottom of thy soul.

True love is known, with its effects, when the soul is profoundly humbled, and truly mortified.

To the mortified, the recreation of the senses is a sort of death; they never go to it, unless compelled by necessity and edification of their neighbours.

An humble and resigned soul seeks no more than merely to please God, and the holy and loving SPIRIT teaches it every thing with its sweet and enlivening unction.

There are some who continually suffer with patience indispositions of body, of which God takes great care; but high is their gift, who by the strength of the HOLY GHOST, suffer both internal and external crosses with content and resignation. This is that sort of holiness so much the more rare, as it is more precious in the sight of God. They who walk this way are rare; because they are few in the world who totally deny themselves, to follow CHRIST crucified, with simpleness of spirit, through the thorny ways of the cross.

A life of self-denial is above all the miracles of the saints; but although it should be a long time before thou comest to this state, and thou shouldest think not to have made one step towards it, yet affright not thyself at this; for God uses to bestow upon a soul that blessing in one moment, which was denied it for many years before.

The spiritual man that lives by God, and in him, is contented in the midst of his adversities, because the cross and affliction are his life and delight.

Tribulation is a great treasure, wherewith God honours those that be his: therefore evil men are beneficial for those that are good; and so are the Devils themselves, who, by afflicting us, try to ruin us; but instead of doing us harm, they do us the greatest good imaginable.

With the wind of tribulation **GOD** separates, in the floor of the soul, the chaff from the corn.

Those are to be pitied, who cannot believe that tribulation and suffering are their greatest blessing. Vain is the man who doth not suffer, because he is born to toil and suffer; but much more the friends and elect of **GOD**.

That the soul may arrive at perfect quietness, it ought first to die itself, and live only in **GOD**, and for him; and the more dead it shall be in itself, the more shall it know **GOD**: But if it doth not mind this continual denying of itself, and internal mortification, it will never arrive at this state, nor preserve **GOD** within it, and then it will be continually subject to judging, murmuring, resenting, excusing, defending, to keep its honour and reputation, which are enemies to peace.

How happy wilt thou be, if thou hast no other thought but to die in thyself? Thou wilt then become not only victorious over thine enemies, but over thyself: in which victory thou wilt find pure love, perfect peace, and divine wisdom.

The true lesson of the spiritual man, and that which thou oughtest to learn, is, to leave all things in their place, and not meddle with any but what thy office may bind thee to: because the soul which leaves every thing to find **GOD**, doth then begin to have all in the eternity it seeks.

The disesteem of delights is the property of a truly mortified man.

Enjoyment and internal peace are the fruits of the **SPIRIT**; and no man gets them into his possession, if he is not a resigned man.

Look not upon other men's faults, but thine own: Mortify thyself in all things, and at all hours, and by this means thou wilt get free from many imperfections.

Mortify thyself in not judging ill of any body at any time; because the suspicion of thy neighbours disturbs purity of heart, discomposes it, and takes away its repose.

Never wilt thou have perfect resignation, if thou reflectest

upon the little idol of what people say. **God** makes greater account of a soul internally resigned, than of another that doeth miracles.

Hold it for a true maxim, That nobody can do a grievance to a soul despised by itself, and that is nothing in its own account.

Hope, suffer, be silent, and patient: let nothing affright thee: all of it will have a time to end: **God** only is unchangeable: patience brings every thing. He that hath **God**, hath all things; and he that hath him not, hath nothing.

There are two sorts of humility; one false, the other true. The false one is theirs, who, like water which must mount upwards, receive an artificial submission to rise up again immediately. These avoid esteem and honour, that they may be taken to be humble. They say of themselves, that they are very evil, that they may be thought good; and though they know their own misery, yet they are loath that other folks should know it. This is dissembled humility, and feigned, and nothing but secret pride.

Theirs is the true humility, who never think of it, but judge humbly of themselves: they live and die in **God**; they mind not themselves nor the creatures; they are constant and quiet in all things; they suffer molestation with joy, desire more of it, that they may imitate their dear and despised **JESUS**; they are contented with what **God** allots them, and are convinced of their faults with a pleasing shame: there is no honour that they look after, nor injury to disturb them; no trouble to vex them; no prosperity to make them proud, because they are immoveable in themselves, with absolute peace.

True humility doth not consist in external acts, in taking the lowest place, in going poor in clothes, in speaking submissively, in condemning thy ways, calling thyself miserable, to give others to understand that thou art humble: it consists only in the contempt of thyself, with a low and profound knowledge, without concerning thyself

whether thou art esteemed humble or not, though an angel should reveal such a thing to thee.

The light wherewith the LORD enlightens the soul, doth two things; it discovers the greatness of GOD, and at the same time the soul knows its own stench and misery, inso-much that no tongue is able to express the depth in which it is overwhelmed; it sees that grace of GOD to be the mere goodness of him, and nothing but his mercy, which is pleased to take pity on it.

Thou shalt never be hurt by men or Devil, but by thyself, thy own pride and passions: take heed of thyself, for thou art the greatest devil of all to thyself.

Have no mind to be esteemed, when GOD incarnate was called fool, drunkard, and said to have a devil. O the folly of Christians! That we should be willing to enjoy happiness, without being willing to imitate him on the cross!

The truly humble man is at rest and ease in his heart; there he stands the trial of GOD and men, and the Devil himself, possessing himself in peace, looking for the pure pleasure of GOD, as well in life as death: things without do no more disquiet him, than if they never were. The cross to him, and death itself, are delights, though he make no such show outwardly.

Hope thou, and desire, and suffer, and die without any body's knowing it; for herein consists the humble and contrite love.

Thou wilt never be perfectly humble, though thou knowest thy own misery, unless thou desirest all men should know it; then thou wilt avoid praise, embrace injuries, despise every thing that makes a fair show; and if any tribulation comes, blame none for it, but judge that it comes from GOD's hand, as the Giver of every good.

Finally, if thou wouldest be blessed, learn to despise thyself, and to be despised by others.

Encourage thyself to be humble, embracing tribulations, as instruments of thy good; rejoice in contempt, and desire

that **God** may be thy holy refuge, comfort, and protector.

None, let him be ever so great in this world, can be greater than he that is in the favour of **God**; and therefore the truly humble man despises whatever is in the world, even himself, and puts his only trust and repose in **God**.

The truly humble man makes great way in a little time, like one that sails before the wind.

The truly humble man finds **God** in all things; so that whatever contempt, injury, or affronts come to him by means of the creatures, he receives them with great peace and quiet, as sent from the divine hand; and loves greatly the instrument with which the **Lord** tries him.

He is not yet arrived at humility, that is taken with praise, though he does not desire it, nor seek it, but rather avoids it: because to a humble heart, praises are bitter crosses, although it be wholly quiet and immoveable.

The humble heart is not disquieted by imperfections, though they do grieve him; because they are against his loving **Lord**. Nor is he concerned that he cannot do great things; for he always feels his own nothingness; nay, he wonders at himself that he can do any thing, and thanks the **Lord** for it, with a true knowledge that it is **God** that doeth all, and remains dissatisfied with what he does himself.

The truly humble man doth always find an excuse to defend him that mortifies him, at least in a sound intention. Who, therefore, would be angry with a man of good intention?

So much (nay more) doth false humility displease **God**, as true pride does; because that is hypocrisy besides.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Of Inward Solitude.*

INTERNAL solitude consists in the forgetting of the creatures, in disengaging one's self from them, and in a perfect nakedness of one's own will. This is the true solitude, where the soul reposes with a sweet and inward serenity in the arms of its chief good.

O what infinite room is there in a soul that is arrived at this divine solitude! O what inward, what retired, what secret, what spacious, what vast distances are there within a happy soul that is once come to this? There the LORD converses inwardly with the soul; there he fills it with himself, because it is empty; clothes it with light and with his love, because it is naked; lifts it up, because it is low; and unites it with himself, and transforms it, because it is alone.

“O divine LORD! How is it that souls do not go from earth to this glory! How come they to lose so great a good, through the love and desire of created things! Blessed soul, how happy wilt thou be, if thou dost but leave all for GOD! Seek him only, breathe after none but him; let him only have thy sighs. Desire nothing, and then nothing can trouble thee; and if thou dost desire any good, let it be in such a manner, that thou mayest not be disquieted if thou missest it.”

If, with this liberty, thou wilt give thy soul to GOD, taken off from the world, free and alone, thou wilt be the happiest creature upon earth; because the Most High has his secret habitation in this holy solitude: in this desert and paradise is enjoyed the conversation of GOD; and it is only in this internal retirement that that marvellous, powerful, and divine voice is heard.

If thou wouldest enter into this heaven, forget every care and every thought; get out of thyself; that the love of GOD may live in thy soul.

Live as much as ever thou canst abstracted from the creatures, dedicate thyself wholly to thy CREATOR, and offer thyself in sacrifice with peace and quietness of spirit. Know, that the more the soul disrobes itself, the more it becomes clothed with GOD; and the more empty of itself the soul gets to be, the more the divine SPIRIT fills it.

In this happy life, GOD gives himself all to the creature, and the creature all to GOD, by an intimate and sweet union. O how few are there that come to relish this true solitude!

To make the soul truly solitary, it ought to forget all the creatures, and even itself; otherwise it will never be able to make a near approach to GOD. Many men forsake all things, but they do not leave their own will, and themselves; and therefore these truly solitary ones are so few: wherefore, if the soul does not get off from its own desire, and from its own will, it never can arrive at this high felicity.

Go on, blessed soul! Go on, without stop, towards this blessedness of internal solitude. See how GOD calls thee to enter into thy inward centre, where he will renew thee, change thee, fill thee, clothe thee, and show thee a new and heavenly kingdom, full of joy, peace, and serenity.

When once the soul is mortified, and desires wholly to deny its appetites; when once it efficaciously embraces internal and external mortification, and is willing to die heartily to its passions and its own ways, then GOD uses to take it alone by itself, and raise it to a complete repose, where he sweetly and inwardly infuses his light, his love, and his strength, inflaming it with a true disposition to all virtue.

There the soul, raised and lifted up, becomes united to its greatest good, without costing it any trouble or pains. There, in that supreme region and sacred temple of the soul, that greatest good takes its complacency, manifests itself, and creates a relish from the creature, in a way above all human understanding. There only the pure SPIRIT, who is GOD, rules it, and gets the mastership over it, com-

municating to it those sentiments which are necessary for the most pure and perfect union.

Sometimes the **LORD** gives greater light to the understanding, sometimes greater love to the will. There is no need here for the soul to take any pains or trouble; it must receive what **GOD** gives it, and rest united as he will have it; because he is **LORD**, he possesses and fills it, and works in it powerfully and sweetly, insomuch that before it is aware of this so great mercy, it is gained, convinced, and changed already.

The manner that thou must use on thy part, to fit thyself for this perfect prayer, is a total and absolute consignment of thyself into the hands of **GOD**, with a perfect submission to his holy will, to be busied according to his pleasure and disposition, receiving what he ordains with an even and perfect resignation.

Holiness does not consist in forming deep and subtile conceits of the knowledge and attributes of **GOD**, but in the love of **GOD**, and in self-denial: therefore it is often observed, that holiness is more amongst the simple and humble, than among the learned. How many poor old women are there in the world, who have little or nothing of human science, but are rich in the love of **GOD**! How many divines do we see that are over head and ears in their vain wisdom, and yet very bare in things of true light and charity.

Remember, that it is always good to speak like one that learns, and not like one that knows.

Although divine wisdom does commonly belong to the humble and simple, yet men of learning are not incapable of it, if they do not seek themselves, nor set any great value upon their own artificial knowledge; but more, if they can forget it, as if they never had it, and only make use of it in its own proper place and time, for preaching and disputing when their turn comes, and afterwards give their minds to the simple and naked contemplation of **GOD**.

The study which is not ordered for **GOD**'s glory only, is but a short way to hell; not through the study, but the

pride which it begets. Miserable is the greatest part of men, whose study only is to satisfy the insatiable curiosity of nature.

Many seek **GOD**, and find him not; because they are more moved by curiosity, than sincere, pure, and upright intention.

He that does not endeavour the total denying of himself, can never be capable of the light of the **SPIRIT**.

The **SPIRIT** of divine wisdom fills men with sweetness, governs them with courage, and enlightens those who are subject to its direction. Where the divine **SPIRIT** dwells, there is always simplicity, and a holy liberty; but craft and double-mindedness, fiction, artifices, policy, and worldly respects, are hell itself, to wise and sincere men.

**GOD** is more satisfied with the affection of the heart, than that of worldly science. It is one thing to cleanse the heart of all that captivates and pollutes it, and another thing to do a thousand things, though good and holy, without minding that purity of heart, which is the main of all for attaining divine wisdom.

A soul perfectly resigned, is already arrived to such a happiness, that it neither wills nor desires any thing but what its Beloved wills; it conforms itself to this will in all emergencies, as well in comfort as anguish, and rejoices also in every thing to do the divine good pleasure.

There is nothing but what comforts it; nor doth it want any thing but what it can well want: to die, is enjoyment to it: and to live, is its joy: it is as contented here upon earth, as it can be in paradise; it is as glad under privation, as it can be in possession; in sickness as it can be in health; because it knows that this is the will of its **LORD**. This is its life, this its glory, its paradise, its peace, its repose, its rest, its consolation and highest happiness.

This soul, that is entered into the heaven of peace, acknowledges itself full of **GOD** and his supernatural gifts; because it lives grounded in a pure love, receiving equal pleasure in light and darkness, in night and day, in afflic-

tion and consolation : through this holy and heavenly indifference, it never loses its peace in adversity, nor its tranquillity in tribulation, but sees itself full of unspeakable enjoyments.

And although the Prince of darkness makes all the assaults of hell against it, with horrible temptations, yet it makes head against them, and stands like a strong pillar ; no more happening to it by them, than happens to a high mountain in the time of storm and tempest.

The valley is darkened with thick clouds, fierce tempests of hail, thunder, lightning, and hail-stones, which look like the picture of hell ; at the same time the lofty mountain glitters, by the bright beams of the sun, in quietness and serenity, continuing clear like heaven, immoveable, and full of light.

The same happens to this blessed soul ; the valley of the part below, is suffering tribulations, combats, torments, martyrdoms, and suggestions ; and at the same time, on the lofty mountain of the higher part of the soul, the true sun casts its beams ; it inflames and enlightens it, and so it becomes clear, peaceable, resplendent, quiet, serene, being a mere ocean of joy.

So great, therefore, is the quiet of this pure soul, which is gotten up to the mountain of tranquillity, so great is the peace of its spirit, so great the serenity and cheerfulness within, that a glimmering of God does redound even to the outside of it.

Because in the throne of quiet are manifest the perfections of spiritual beauty ; here the true light of the secret and divine mysteries of our holy faith, here perfect humility, even to the amplest resignation, chastity, poverty of spirit, the sincerity and innocency of the dove, modesty, liberty, and purity of heart ; here the forgetfulness of every created thing, joyful simplicity, heavenly indifference, continual prayer, perfect disinterestedness, a most wise contemplation, a conversation in heaven ; and lastly, the most perfect and serene peace within ; of which, this happy soul

may say, what the Wise Man said of wisdom, That all other graces came in company with her.

This is the hidden treasure ; the blessed life, the happy life, the true life, and blessedness here below. O thou lovely greatness, that passest the knowledge of the sons of men ! O excellent supernatural life, how admirable and unspeakable art thou ! O how much dost thou raise a soul from earth, which loses in its view all things of earth ! Thou art poor to look upon, but inwardly thou art full of wealth ; thou seemest low, but art exceeding high ; in a word, thou art that which makest men live a life divine here below. Give me, O LORD, a portion of this heavenly happiness and true peace, that the world is neither capable of understanding nor receiving.

---

EXTRACTS  
FROM  
THE SERMONS  
OF  
DR. HENRY MORE.

---



## TO THE READER.

---

---

I SHALL not bespeak the acceptance of these papers by any large encomium, either of them, or of the Author. This would detain the Reader too long from the benefit of them; and indeed, to little or no purpose: for the discourses will sufficiently speak for themselves, without the artifice of any commendatory preface.

I only prefix to them a short prayer: which I wish the Reader may as seriously and devoutly put up, as the pious Author did before one of the following discourses.

“O LORD our GOD, the Fountain of light, and Well-spring of all holy wisdom and knowledge; without whose aid our search after thee and thy ways, is but tedious error and dangerous wandering from thee; assist us mercifully in our endeavours after thee; open our eyes, that we may see the wonders of thy law; sanctify our hearts unto obedience, that we may unfeignedly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.”

JOHN WORTHINGTON.

*London, Nov. 1st, 1692.*



# DISCOURSE I.

---

---

## ON DOING THE WILL OF GOD.

---

---

JOHN iv. 31—34.

*In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? JESUS saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*

OUR SAVIOUR CHRIST, here in the text, propounds a riddle or parable to his disciples: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." Whatever is in the text, may be hither referred, as the occasion or consequent thereof.

The occasion of the proposal of this enigma, is in verse 31: "In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat:" *i. e.*, so soon as he had broken off his serious discourse with the Samaritan woman, his disciples then took occasion to invite him to his seasonable repast; which gives him occasion to propound something to them enigmatically, of more concernment, and of a higher nature, than this outward perishable food: (*ver.* 32:) "I have meat to eat that you know not of." There is the proposal of the riddle; of which there is a double consequent; the disciples' misinterpretation, and then our SAVIOUR'S own true solution. Their misinterpretation: (*ver.* 33:) "Has any man brought him ought to eat?" His true solution *ver.* 34: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." These parts I shall prosecute in the same order that they lie in the text, without further preface or more curious division.

*First*, therefore, of the occasion. "In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat." "In the mean

while;" *i. e.*, in the interim, betwixt the departure of the Samaritan woman, and her return with the other Samaritans to confer with our SAVIOUR, and to see if it were so indeed, that he was the Messiah.

That you may the better know how this falls in with the departure of the Samaritan woman, it is said, *ver.* 8, "His disciples were gone into the city to buy meat; while he sat, being wearied with his journey, at the side of JACOB'S well:" whither came that Samaritan woman to draw water, whom our SAVIOUR held in discourse until such time, and after his disciples had returned from buying them victuals.

And here truly our Saviour CHRIST is represented, (according to that description of himself,) a man without house or harbour. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." The Eternal Truth of GOD, clothed in flesh, goes wandering up and down in this strange country of the world, as a stranger and pilgrim, neglected and despised of all, a man of sorrow and weariness, and of disrespect; a man scarce well known to his own disciples, not at all strengthened or countenanced by the favour, friendship, and alliances of the world, nor at all affecting the greeting in the market-place, or the precedency in solemn meetings; conversing mostly with the meanest of men, condemned and hooted at by the great rabbies of the world. "He hath no form or comeliness, no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." (*Isai.* liii. 2, 3.) This was the condition of the Everlasting Wisdom and Goodness of GOD, incarnate, and conversing amongst men.

And yet such was his humility and patience, that he would not set up himself by his own, or his FATHER'S power, to rid himself of this poor, sad, and contemptible condition. What! Could not he that raised LAZARUS'S body from the dead, have kept his own bones from pain

and weariness? Or, he that turned water into wine, could he not have commanded the very stones before him to become bread? Or, charged the cities of Samaria to bring him in provision, as to their sovereign and absolute LORD? And if they had discredited his word, to have made it good with the appearance of the heavenly host, even legions of angels? But none of this is done: for indeed our SAVIOUR did not any thing for himself; but for the glory of GOD, and the good of poor lost mankind. Wherefore omnipotency was not made use of to please his own flesh, or to show himself more than man, and to be admired of the world; but only then, when the FATHER saw fit, for the gaining of lost man to himself. Wherefore we see our SAVIOUR here in this chapter, weary, and resting his tired limbs on JACOB'S well; hungry also, and observing the usual hours of repast; as it is plain out of the 6th verse: "JESUS therefore being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour:" *i. e.*, about noon, dinner-time.

Wherefore we see plainly whence it is that our SAVIOUR'S disciples invite their Master, saying, "Come and eat:" for it was dinner-time, and they had now returned from buying food for them, and his and their labour required repast.

But that which I would observe, before I pass from this point, is this: Seeing that our Saviour CHRIST was, according to the outward view, but a piece of mortality covered with passiveness, weakness, and contempt; that his outside was neither formidable for majesty and authority, either ecclesiastic or civil, nor desirable for any external show, and yet was the inward habitation of the Divinity itself; let us learn from hence to contemn no man's outward condition, as concerning divine worth; but rather accept of HERACLITUS'S blunt, but friendly invitation into his poor contemptible cottage, *Introito, etiam hic Dii sunt*: 'Come in, Sir; GOD doth lodge here also.' *Sub sordido pallio latet sapientia*: 'Wisdom sometimes is no better covered than with rags.'

But I leave this point for yourselves to enlarge upon. I pass on from this first part, *viz.*, the occasion, with all the circumstances thereon depending, to the proposal of the parable: "In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of."

It is usual with our SAVIOUR to ascend from sensible and corporeal things, to those things which are inward and spiritual. I need not look for instances far off: here, in this very chapter, when our SAVIOUR had arrived at JACOB'S well, at the heat of the day, faint and thirsty, and desired the Samaritan woman that came there to draw water, that she would give him to drink, and she replied, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? JESUS answered, and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of GOD, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water;" (*ver.* 9, 10;) *viz.*, the very same water, that he speaks of *John* vii. 37, where he is said, "in the last day, that great day of the feast" of tabernacles, to stand and cry, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth in me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Which speech was occasioned, (as is not without reason conceived,) from the custom of the day: for upon this day, by the institution of HAGGAI the Prophet, and ZACHARIAS, they did, with joy and solemnity, bring great store of water from the river Siloah to the temple; where, it being delivered to the priests, it was poured upon the altar, together with wine, the people singing that of the Prophet ISAIAH, *Chap.* xii: "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." From this visible solemnity, and natural water, CHRIST took occasion to invite them to an invisible and spiritual water: As he doth the Samaritan woman here, showing her, that whosoever drinks of the water that he asked of her, "shall thirst again;" but whosoever should drink of the water

that he should give, "shall never thirst; but the water shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life."

Let us imitate this pattern, whether we would be teachers of others, or instructors of ourselves: for indeed the whole world is a large sign or symbol of spiritual truths that nearly concern our souls. Methinks, when the morning sun rises upon us, the eyes of our souls should open with the eyes of our bodies, and our hearts should send up this ejaculation: "LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us;" and our minds presage that promised happiness: "In thy light shall we see light." When we breathe in the fresh air, it might mind us of something like that of the Emperor: 'Not only to draw in the common air, but also to be of one mind with that intellectual Spirit that fills all the world.' Solitude and darkness that make our hearts shrink within us, and overwhelm our souls with horror and misdoubt, what are they in spirituals, but a privation of "perfect love, that casteth out fear," as the Apostle speaks? "He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth." (1 *John* ii. 11.) There is nothing that the natural man is sensible of in this outward world, but the SPIRIT of GOD has made use of to set out the nature of spiritual things; that hence the soul may receive hints to raise herself towards him that made her to inherit spirituality, and not always lie grovelling on the earth. Whatsoever we see, or hear, or smell, or taste, or feel, we may in all these even very sensibly feel some hidden mystery, and find out in those shells and husks some more precious food than this that pleases our mortal body, and perishable senses: and he that doth not feel through these sensible creatures something better than themselves, certainly is exceedingly benumbed, or rather spiritually dead; and has his conversation in the world no otherwise than the beasts of the field; and NEBUCHAD-NEZZAR'S curse is upon him, until such a mind be restored unto him, that he doth acknowledge the Most High.

and find him residing even in this lower world, the habitation of mortal men. Beauty, riches, strength, agility, sweetness, pleasure, harmony; these are all better relished in the soul than in the body.

Our blessed SAVIOUR, in the midst of his thirst after the water of JACOB'S well, which he begged of the Samaritan woman, was so refreshed with the remembrance of the spiritual and living waters which he enjoyed within, that he had forgot his first request, through the sweetness of that hidden spring in his heart. And this storehouse he found within, afforded him not drink only, but meat also, as it should seem by his answer to his disciples, when they invited him to eat. He did not as those starveling souls, that not being able to entertain themselves with their own store, no, not for a moment, so soon as the body's treasure is exhausted, ("men of this world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure," as the Psalmist speaks,) so soon, I say, as the outward man is emptied and impoverished, have their desire straitway furiously kindled like a broad fiery meteor, that is swiftly wafted hither and thither, accordingly as the earthly unctuous vapour is scattered in the air. And it is no wonder that they are thus furious and impatient; for what is desire but a living death? It is, for it is desire; but it is not, *viz.*, that which it desires to be. And what soul can endure to be in such a case? Wherefore that mind that can abstain from fleshly and bodily desires, (from their accomplishment I mean,) has some hidden contentment within, undiscovered to the world. "The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." Our SAVIOUR himself could not with such ease have slighted the cravings of nature, (for "he was a man like unto us in all things, sin only excepted,") and disregarded his seasonable sustenance, had it not been so as he professes it was, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of."

And thus much of the occasion and proposal of the parable. I come now to the double consequent thereof,

*viz.*, *First*, The disciple's misapprehension: "Hath any man brought him ought to eat?" *Secondly*, Our SAVIOUR's true interpretation of it: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me."

"Hath any man brought him ought to eat?" The ravens fed ELIJAH by the brook Cherith, which is before Jordan: "They brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening." (1 *Kings* xvii. 6.) And not the fowls of the air only, but the winged host of heaven might have been employed for this purpose: they owe more than this to the SON of GOD. But the mistake was not so much in the manner of the conveyance of this meat, as in the nature of the meat itself.

I will observe two things from this passage, and so leave it.

*First*, The slowness of the earthly mind to apprehend spiritual mysteries.

*Secondly*, The uneffectualness of even our SAVIOUR's presence, according to the flesh. If his SPIRIT had been in them, as his body was with them, I make no question but their minds had been so heavenly disposed, that our SAVIOUR's speeches would not have been such enigmas unto them. It is true, the very touch of CHRIST's garments healed the bodies of the sick; but nothing under his SPIRIT is effectual for curing the soul. "It is the SPIRIT that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." (*John* vi. 63.) "I have many things to say unto you; but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when the SPIRIT of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." (*John* xvi. 12, 13.) Our SAVIOUR's bodily presence could not convey those divine truths unto his disciples, that an inward principle of life, when they were partakers thereof, would convey to them. And therefore he prefers the mission of the HOLY GHOST, before his own bodily conversing with them, at the seventh verse of that chapter: "I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: But if I depart, I will send him unto you."

I haste on now to the last part of the text, our SAVIOUR'S own solution of this parable; "JESUS saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

The great truth and mystery contained in this interpretation, is, That the will of GOD is the food of the soul.

This I conceive to be plainly exhibited to us in this text. The Divinity of CHRIST cannot be said to feed on any thing: it is self-sufficient and immutable. Such spiritual food as the will of GOD, cannot belong to the body; it remains therefore, the soul of CHRIST was that which was fed with the will of GOD: and his soul and ours are like in all things, sin only excepted. Wherefore, I conclude, The will of GOD is the food of man's soul; I mean, of regenerate man. I know "the natural man is incapable of the things of the SPIRIT of GOD," (1 Cor. ii. 14,) ἢ δέχεται τὰ τῆ Πνεύματος. He has no room for them: they are too great for him, though he fancies they are too little.

But whatever it is to him, I will endeavour to raise some apprehension of it in us; if I may by any means speak that which may prove profitable unto us.

There must be some affinity and likeness betwixt that which is nourished, and the nutriment it receiveth. Man's body cannot be fed with stones or metals, but with plants and living creatures; their flesh and substance being near the nature of our bodies, which are of the like nature with other animals and plants.

Our souls, (I mean always of the regenerate,) or we ourselves, for it is all one, have our birth and being of the will of GOD: "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of GOD; even to them that believe on his name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of GOD;" of the will of GOD. (*John* i. 12.)

And certainly, the very depth of Christianity is the divine will; a will raised up in the soul of man, perfectly answerable to the will of GOD, though not so absolutely

powerful. This is the very new birth; and he that is thus in CHRIST, is a new creature; he that is not thus, never knew CHRIST, unless according to the flesh.

When I say the divine will is the very inward essence or heart of Christianity; I mean not, any desire toward GOD and his outward service; or the knowledge of him and his works, or the beautifying and adorning a man's soul with moral virtues; but a full and absolute resignation of a man's self unto the will of GOD; our desires not at all circling into ourselves: (for it is a sign then, that they sprung from ourselves:) but our desire and will being melted as it were-into one will with GOD, and desiring nothing but for GOD, and because GOD desires it and wills it.

Then shall not our natural will be the first mover in our desire of knowledge, or of virtue, or of power, or whatever is desirable; but the divine will in us, shall will all this for GOD, as he is in man. This is the very root of the new birth; this is the divine life; and whatsoever is not of this, is either natural or devilish. This is "the plant of GOD's own planting;" whose will is in "the law of the LORD, and in that law doth he exercise himself both day and night." This is the lamp of GOD, the eye of GOD fixed in the soul of man, that loathes all objects represented to it, that arise from the will of the flesh, or the false suggestions of man's heart; but has its whole desire after the will of GOD, hungers and thirsts merely after it.

This is that, which turns away at our prayers and praises, at our fasts and alms-deeds, at our censuring and conferring, at our zeal and devotion; as often as they are fouled with the filth of our own wills, or temporal projects.

Having thus found out the nature and constitution of the regenerate soul, it is no wonder to us to find out the proper food of it. The first ADAM is of the earth earthly; and therefore feeds on earthly food. The second ADAM is not of the earth, but of the free heavenly substance, born of the will of GOD; and therefore he breathes no other air, sucks in no other air, sucks in no other life or food,

than the will of GOD. This is that which satisfies, and this alone can satisfy.

And now we have found the food of the regenerate soul, it will not be hard to find out the poison. If the will of GOD be the soul's sustenance, then our own will, be it to us as sweet as it can be, is our poison and destruction: it is a cup of deadly wine, of which, by how much more deep every man drinks, by so much more is he made stupid and senseless, as concerning the life of GOD.

These things are safer felt than spoken. However it will not be amiss, a little by way of analogy, to open the nature of that spiritual food mentioned in the text: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." The soul set on fire by the will of GOD, and become one divine flame, must, as our natural flame, be kept alive by motion and agitation: the will of GOD is the food of this flame; but if it continue flaming, it must act and move, within at least, and without, as oft as occasion permits or requires; otherwise it will be suffocated and extinct.

But we need not dwell so low as upon inanimates: let us see what is food in reference to that which has life.

Health, growth, strength, sweetness of taste, and satisfying the stomach; these belong to the food of the body. Let us see if we can find these in the will of GOD, in reference to the regenerate soul.

1. Health: "Be not wise in thine own eyes; fear the LORD, and depart from evil:" (*Prov.* iii. 7, 8:) *i. e.*, think not that the desire and determination of thine own unregenerate mind, is the best; but abstain from that which it longs after, and "fear thou GOD;" *i. e.*, adhere to that which he has revealed to thee to be his will; fear to transgress his law. "It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones."

Yet the law of GOD is no charm, to cure the body; but it must do it by making the soul first healthful. But to despatch this truth in a word: What is the disease or languishment of the soul, but sin? What is sin, but to

will contrary to **God's** will? Wherefore he that wills as **God** wills, so long as he continues so, is safe from sin, the disease of the soul. This would not only keep the regenerate soul, but would even metamorphose **Satan** himself into a saint: when as self-will, and the feeding on our own desires, will so decay the constitution of the soundest saint, that he will be mis-shapen and transformed into the figure of an abhorred fiend.

2. Growth: As plants and living creatures spread and grow in bigness, in virtue of their nourishment; so the soul is enlarged by forsaking her own will, and by continual meditating upon, and endeavouring to do, the will of **God**: for our own will and desire is a poor narrow contracted thing, pinching us down next to nothing, by confining us to ourselves, and our own scanty bottoms. But the essential will of **God** is free and larger, ever boundless as himself; and the work of it upon us, when we receive it, is like unto it. Our drawing and concentrating all in our own will, is like the gathering together of the free light and warmth of the sun into a burning glass; those rays that before lay free, mild, and friendly, in a larger room, thus forced together become surly, irifull, and scorching: or like fire half stifled in a bundle of green wood, it fumes and glows, and is sad in itself, and utterly uncomfortable to others; but when it breaks out into a flame, how cheerfully doth it shine, and laugh, and look pleasant, filling the whole house with lightsomeness and joy! That is man's straitened will; this the free **Spirit** and will of **God**. Pride, and ambition, and thirst after knowledge, and the applause of men, puff up the soul, (when these are satisfied,) make her look big and bloated: but that this food is not wholesome, nor the growth sound, every small prick of adverse fortune demonstrates; the tumour of mind then shrivelling up like an emptied bladder. But that bulk and breadth it gets by feeding on **God's** will is sound and permanent, as the will of **God** is, which nothing can wash away.

3. And as strong as large doth the soul of man become,

by feeding on this celestial food ; insomuch, that it can "bear all things, and endure all things." What makes the miseries of the world so tedious to men ; what makes their souls sink and faint under this burden, but eating of that poisonous fruit, our own wills ? Which would not be, if we had no will of our own, but fed merely on the good pleasure of **God**, giving thanks for whatever he brings upon us : for in all outward things, and, to speak more fully, in all things that befall us, our soul, our body, our friends, or estate ; in all these the will of **God** is done, so far as sin intermeddles not : so that if we relish no will but the will of **God**, how strong shall we be to bear all these ! We shall be able to digest either life or death, honour or dishonour, riches or poverty ; all will go down, save our own will. This will choke the soul, or poison it ; make it lie in weakness or languishment, that it will be sickly, peevish, and infirm ; so that the whole creation of **God** will be a burden to it.

4. The fourth thing considerable in food is the Taste. And hitherto may be referred those affectionate expressions in the **Psalmist**, who, speaking of the law of **God**, which is the interpretation of his will, giveth abundance of sweetness and pleasantness to them. "The judgments of the **LORD** are true, and righteous altogether ; more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold ; sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb." (*Psa.* xix. 9, 10.) And hence it is, that the holy and happy man so meditates on the laws of **God**. "His delight is in the law of the **LORD** ; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." (*Psa.* i. 2.) "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches." (*Psa.* lxxiii. 5, 6.)

And certainly, if the will of the flesh be sweet unto the carnal-minded man ; the will of the **SPIRIT**, when it is once come, is much more sweet : for there is nothing in the sensual life, not so much as of seeming good, but it is really and fully in the spiritual ; which we must believe ;

for we cannot know until such time as we have experience of it; and that will be when we break off from the will of the flesh. "The lips of a strange woman drop as a honey-comb, and her mouth is sweeter than oil." This is thy carnal mind, the will of thy flesh, as MAIMONIDES expounds it; a subtle enticing serpent, lying ever in thy bosom; and yet a strange woman, thy harlot, with whom thou featest and sportest, and forgettest thy husband CHRIST JESUS, the will of GOD, the HOLY SPIRIT, the divine life. "But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword: her feet go down to death, her steps take hold on hell." And here is the great difference betwixt the sweetness of our own will, and the will of GOD. That ends in bitterness, in wrath, and vengeance, and death; but this is wholesome as well as pleasant, and is the very tie and bond whereby we are held in eternal life. Lust is sweet, revenge is sweet, and, above all, is the sweetness of craft and carnal policy; but remember that as sweet as it is, thou hast swallowed down poison, and it will burn in conclusion as the fire of hell.

GOD has brought thee into the wilderness, that thou mayest enjoy the promised land; offers thee angel's food; would feed thee with manna: let not thy mouth water after the flesh-pots of Egypt; say not with the grumbling Israelites, "Who shall give us meat to eat?" Lest the LORD in his anger give you flesh to eat, not two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days, but even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and become loathsome unto you; and while the flesh is betwixt your teeth, the wrath of the LORD be kindled against you: that you be so far engaged in your own will and headstrong ways, that nothing but destruction can deal with you. And thus much of the taste of this food.

The fifth and last thing is, the satisfying of the stomach. There is a magic and imposture in all those things that our deceived souls feed upon in this life: it is but, as the Prophet expresses it, a mere dream of eating and drinking. "It is even as when a hungry man dreameth,

and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or, as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite." (*Isai. xxix. 8.*) Such is the condition of all the adversaries of those that hunger and thirst after God and his righteousness, the fulfilling of the will of God; for this alone can fill the soul of man. He that feeds on any thing else, sucks but in a rotten mist or fog, scarce so good as the prodigal's husks, or no better than MAHOMET's ezeck, that infernal tree, whose fruit be but devils' heads, and root, streams with flames of fire, and tracts of smoke; of which, who tastes, feeds not, but is fed upon, ever consuming in insatiable fiery appetite, and restless desire.

But the sound and satisfying meal of the soul is the will of her Maker; not when it is done without her, but when her life is that, and she never finds herself to live, but in that. The very life and spirit of God drunk in by man's thirsty soul, that by continual repast from thence grows stronger and stronger, and sucks so sweet delight from these breasts, that she never hungers nor thirsts again; never desires the tempting poisons, the pernicious pleasures, and false contentments of this vain world. This is CHRIST alive in us, quite another principle of life, and another food, from all that feeds our eyes or ears, or worse than these, our inordinate desires of pleasure, profit, or honour. This is that true manna, that bread from heaven, of this our SAVIOUR witnesses, *viz.*, of himself; "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (*John vi. 35.*)

## DISCOURSE II.

---

ON DOING THE WORD OF GOD.

---

JAMES i. 22.

*Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

NOT to be troublesome by any tedious preface or introduction : the text will afford us these three doctrines :—

I. We must be hearers of the word.

II. We must be doers of the word, as well as hearers.

III. We are not to deceive ourselves.

I. We must be hearers of the word.

To exhort men to hear, (since there is naturally in them such a desire of hearing and knowing,) may seem but a losing of time and labour : but because some men's dispositions are low and grovelling, all their desires and imaginations tending downward, it will not be amiss to show what good causes there are, that men should give their mind to the hearing of the word.

1. And surely no mean one is the *awakening* that better part of man's soul, that lieth slumbering in a trance ; which, many times, being strongly called upon by the word, with much ado is reared up, and slowly and heavily moves its dull sight, that darkness so strongly had possessed before : but if a man here be not propitious to himself, and foster that life which is then given him, like one not perfectly recovered out of a swoon, he sinks down again out of the hands of him that held him ; and many such neglects may enter his name amongst the dead, whom death gnaweth upon, because he heard ~~not~~ the monitions

of his teachers. "The eye that slighteth his father's counsel, and despiseth the instruction of his mother, the ravens of the valley will pick it out:" he, lying thus like a dead carrion exposed to the fowls of the air, the accursed angels of darkness shall seize upon him, and quite root out the principles of true light and sight, in the valley of the shadow of death. Wherefore, "Awake thou that sleepest," that CHRIST may "give thee light."

*Surge, ne longus tibi somnus, unde  
Non times, detur.*

And, indeed, man least of all suspects his friend to be his deadly enemy: yet it fares so with foolish, wicked men. "Righteousness is immortal: but unrighteousness bringeth death; and the ungodly call it unto them both with hands and words; and while they think to have a friend of it, they come to nought." (*Wisd. i.*) Which wisdom might happily be prevented by giving due attention to the word.

2. For this word, if we are prepared for the receiving of it, is the seed of eternal life, whereby we may be "born again," and "regenerated" "into the image of CHRIST:" and it is our SAVIOUR'S own saying, "The seed is the word of GOD." (*Luke viii.*) Wherefore, as in nature, were it not for seed, there would be no herbs, no plants, no living creatures, so without the word there would be no generation of the new creature; which ST. PAUL also confirms: for this is plain, where no salvation, no regeneration; and without the calling upon the LORD, no salvation: for so it is written in the tenth to the *Romans*; "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be saved. But how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" And at last he concludes, "Then faith is by hearing, and hearing by the word of GOD."

But here some, perhaps, may demand otherwise than the Apostle; for he presently annexeth, "Have they not heard?" Some might be prone to say, "Have they

heard?" The answer is indifferent to both: "No doubt, their sound went through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." And this is the קול הרקיע, or קול השמים, *the voice of the heavens, or the voice of that vast expansum from the earth upward.* For that no man may too confidently restrict this preaching, and this word that ST. PAUL speaks of, the quotation is a part of the 19th Psalm, which begins, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work." This far-stretched firmament, or all-encircling air, we never let rest, ever anvilling out its Maker's praise, by air-beating sounds and voices. Yea, that lower noise of the breathing of men and beasts, calls aloud unto us for obedient thankfulness to Him that is the life and breath of all living things; that "Life of the World," (as R. MOSES, the Egyptian, calls him,) who, if he should draw in his rays out of this great universe, the world would be as a dead fabric, in silence and desolation.

If, then, without hearing, (at least, in some sense,) no faith; without faith, no calling upon God; without calling upon God, no salvation; without salvation from the old man, no regeneration; then surely it is very requisite, that we give heed to the word, and hearken to it, and receive it as the necessary seed for our new birth or regeneration.

According to this analogy of calling the word *seed*, the auditors or disciples of them that teach the word are called *children*, as begotten of their spiritual parents by this seed of the word. So amongst the Hebrews, *the sons of the wise men* are as much as the disciples, or those that hear and are instructed by the wise men. And accordingly ST. PAUL: (*Gal. iv. 19:*) "My little children, of whom I travel in birth again, till CHRIST be formed in you." Epistle to *Philemon*, verse 10, "I beseech thee for ONESIMUS, whom I have begotten in my bonds."

This regeneration is as true and real generation as is in visible nature; and there is, as it were, rather a succession of a new lord in this outward fabric of our bodies, than the old, new-clad with superficial habits. "Can the fig-

tree, my brethren, bring forth olives, either a vine figs? So can no fountain make salt water and sweet." So new actions must have a new centre or bottom of essence, which is the heart of life, which is the being of every living creature.

In some sense those words of **JOB** are excellent: "O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, and keep me secret till thy wrath were past, and wouldest give me time, and remember me! Thou shalt call me, I shall answer thee: thou lovest the work of thine own hands."

When this death is perfected, in which there is no life, but only a sense that we are utterly dead to all things, then **GOD** makes a new man, contrary to that of the Devil's framing, and inspires a new life, and a new breath, and loves this work of his own hands. "Thou turnest man to destruction; again thou sayest, Return, ye sons of men."

So, then, if this be destruction and death, then must a new sense and apprehension of things, new sympathy and antipathy, new embracing and abhorrency, be a new life, a new generation, a new creature. "Therefore, if any man be in **CHRIST**, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new."

If, then, this seed of the word be of such efficacy, that it beget a man into a new species, even into the beautiful image of **CHRIST**; and that hereby we be linked into such noble kindred, as to have to our fathers such as are the sons of **GOD** by regeneration; being born of **GOD** first themselves, and so begetting children in **CHRIST**;" surely it should be a sufficient incitement to receive the word with as much eagerness, as the dry womb of the earth doth the refreshing rain after a long drought.

3. But as the word is seed to beget, so it hinders not but that it may be nourishment for the conservation and increase of that which is brought forth. "As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word." (1 *Pet.* ii. 2.) "I could not speak unto you, brethren, as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in **CHRIST**. I gave you milk to drink, and not meat, for you were not yet able to bear it." (1 *Cor.* iii. 1, 2.) "And **JESUS** said unto them,

I am the Bread of Life : he that cometh to me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (*John vi. 35.*)

But as all are not to seize upon that which is not meant for them ; as we are modestly to decline that which we are as not yet fitted for receiving ; so no man hath excuse from receiving some or other of the variety of meats that He hath prepared, who feedeth with his goodness every living thing. Old men and babes, young men and children, they are all sustained by the word, according to every one's necessity and capacity. Or else how could the young ones increase, or they of full age subsist ? Both which is the will of GOD.

That which hath knowledge and sense, hath also an appetite to nourishment, a nourishment proper to sustain its own nature ; and the word being the proper nourishment of those spiritual new-born babes ; then, if there be no such desire in us to this word, it is a sign there is no such principle of life in us. But if this life, by not giving it its due nutriment, either for measure or quality, comes to be extinguished ; we prove ourselves no better than murderers of the innocent and just one : for murder is not the cutting and slashing of the visible body, but the extinguishing of life.

And thus we have seen in brief, that for the raising of our souls from death, for the begetting of the holy life, and for the conservation and increase of the same, we ought "to be hearers of the word."

II. We pass on now to that other doctrine : "That we ought not only to be hearers, but doers also of the word."

That awing sense of GOD which is impressed (if not upon all, yet at least) upon most men's souls, together with a natural desire of security and tranquillity of mind, and every pleasing good ; that experience and acknowledgment of our own weakness and insufficiency, doth easily induce even our natural minds, out of love to ourselves, to lay hold upon somewhat which we conceive stronger than ourselves : and this we call GOD ; and that outward

form of religion in all churches, as hearing and saying of prayers, and giving attention to the word, we call God's worship.

But it is a worship too easy; and so fit for the spirit of the natural man to play its wily pranks in, so that being well instructed by the old serpent, it turns those good constitutions which should have been introductions to further holiness, into a strong fort or castle of false satisfaction of conscience, and most pernicious diabolical delusion; whilst we take ourselves to be distinguished from the wicked brood, by outward performances of ear-labour, and lip-labour, without the practice of that which is taught us out of MOSES or CHRIST; plainly according to the Pharisees in our SAVIOUR'S time, whom the holy Baptist sharply rebukes for such kind of imaginations. "Bring forth fruit worthy of repentance," saith he. "And think not to say within yourselves, We have ABRAHAM to our father: For I say unto you, that GOD is able even of these stones to raise up children unto ABRAHAM."

Surely it is the want of that feeling knowledge of that which is so acceptable to GOD, and a fond over-estimation of our own poor, naked, and contemptible souls; or a conceit that GOD would want persons (if such Christians be excluded) to make up the numbers of the inheritors of heaven, that makes us think such superficial performances will make us allowable before GOD. But nothing is acceptable to him but a simple, humble, and unfeigned obedient spirit; nothing glorious in his eyes, but his own life, the soul enacted and quickened by CHRIST. "All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our GOD endureth for ever." This is the Word and Eternal Life, on whom whosoever doth believe, and by true faith in him is regenerate, shall obtain everlasting life; otherwise he abideth in the sentence of death, and the wrath of GOD is upon him.

It is true, there are notable privileges given even to the natural man. The whole world subsists for man's sake.

But this prerogative howsoever hath its condition. The world for man, but man for GOD. And how for GOD? To wit, that his life may be in us; that his CHRIST may be in us: not so many verbal points of Christianity, not so many notions of divinity, not so many moonshine imaginations. CHRIST is not a dead and unprofitable fancy, but the vigorous ebullition of life. Which life, if it be not in us, then are we not partakers of that we were destined to. Man was made for a tabernacle for GOD; he is materials for his holy temple: but if we will not be "living stones," (as the Apostle speaks,) we shall have the same doom that unprofitable trees or timber: "They are fit for nothing, but to be hewn down, and cast into the fire."

Wherefore let us not hug ourselves in a false conceit of knowledge, since not the hearers of the word, but the doers are justified before GOD. Let us not say within ourselves, We have CHRIST for the Head of our religion, we have read his words, we have heard his ambassadors, we are well instructed in all points of the holy faith, we are the holy Church, and true disciples of CHRIST. Let us not prize ourselves too high for these empty respects, and think that if we be excluded, GOD will want guests to sit down with ABRAHAM, ISAAC, and JACOB. No: GOD is able even out of stones and dust to raise up disciples unto CHRIST. But if we be the disciples of CHRIST, let us give more heed to the voice of our Master: "Whosoever heareth my words, and doeth the same, I will liken him to a wise man, which hath built his house upon a rock; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock." (*Matt. vii.*) The doing of the word is the sure foundation; a foundation no less strong than a rock. But "he that hears and doeth not, is like him that founds his house upon the sand," or builds castles in the air; he shall not abide the judgment of GOD that comes like a whirlwind, nor the fierce tempest of his destroying wrath; but he shall be confounded in his thought, and all his imaginations shall vanish into smoke.

But to handle this more distinctly : That we should be doers of the word, there are many reasons.

1. One argument is taken from the end of the word heard, which is practice and purification.

The word of GOD is no magical charm, that the mere hearing of it should be sufficient for this or that disease of the soul. It may indeed beget a desire or propension to that which is good, but if we go no farther, that motion is lost, and we recoil farther back into evil. So that we see what small profit we reap, if we rest in a bare hearing of the word.

If we were as faithful and industrious to perform the Christian life, as we are sedulous to be instructed in the Christian truth, surely the reputed Church of GOD would send a more acceptable savour into the nostrils both of GOD and man. But whilst religion is to whet our angry tusks in controversy, to scandalize one another, contemn one another, and hate one another, contending more for the setting up of opinion, than for the purchasing the precious life of CHRIST, it is no wonder if the holy Church, which should be as the fragrant paradise of GOD, be turned into the sink of SATAN, and a stinking sty of swine-like epicures.

The Gnostics, a wicked sect of Christians, in PLOTINUS's time, when they could get one to be of their heresy, and had instructed him well in their principles, (which was all they aimed at,) then they crowned him with the magnificent title of the child of GOD ; though their life was as abominable as the Dévil could wish.

‘What!’ saith PLOTINUS, ‘Can a man see GOD, and in the mean time abstain from no manner of pleasure ; in anger impotent, in good fortune insolent, in adversity impatient? Remember the name of GOD, and in the mean while be held with all manner of passions? Virtue arrived at its due pitch, with true wisdom and prudence, shows GOD unto us ; but without true virtue, the naming of GOD is but a name, a word, a sound, an echo, nothing.’

See how the heathen philosopher triumphs over those

unworthy Christians, whose religion was but opinion, and their life the depth of corruption. Or see rather how moderately and civilly he carries himself towards them, that in controversies are ready to eat up and devour one another.

2. But I will endeavour to convince them with the Apostle's own argument, *viz.*, "That they that hear and do not, deceive their own selves."

There be many testimonies of Scripture that will witness this deceit.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap: he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the SPIRIT, shall of the SPIRIT reap life everlasting." (*Gal. vi. 7, 8.*)

So ST. JOHN: "Little children, be not deceived; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the Devil; for the Devil sinneth from the beginning."

"Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor wantons, nor defilers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor railers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." (*1 Cor. vi.*)

How frequent are the Apostles in inculcating this truth: That righteousness of life is that which leads to God and his eternal kingdom! Surely those holy watchmen of Israel did see the time would come, that the delusions of the Devil would so strongly possess the heads and hearts of men, that they would be fast glued to some outward form of religion, as the formal hearing of the word, and such like, that they might with a more quiet conscience omit the greater things of the law, as justice, temperance, charity, and humility. The other they ought to do, but by no means to leave these undone.

But now I shall endeavour to show how this simple sort of souls are befooled.

"If any man seem to himself that he is somewhat, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." (*Gal. vi.*) Now that

these empty hearers of the word think themselves to be somewhat is plain, else would they seek something better; but as they set up their rest in this outward performance, it is a sign they seem to themselves to have got something.

But that they are as<sup>s</sup> surely nothing, as it is sure they take themselves to be something, is easily proved out of I *Cor.* xiii. : “Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal; and although I had the gift of prophecy, and knew all secrets, and all knowledge, yea, if I had all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and had not love, I were nothing.”

Now that idle hearers of the word have not charity, will be proved out of the effects of charity: “Love suffereth long:” they are impatient. “Love is bountiful:” they are griping and covetous. “Love envieth not:” they are choked with malice. “Love is not puffed up:” they are swollen with deceitful imaginations. “It seeketh not its own:” they are not contented with their own. “It is not provoked:” they are implacable. “It thinks no evil:” they meditate no good. “It rejoiceth in the truth:” they are contemners of the truth. “It believeth all things:” they believe no more than serves their own turn. “It fulfils the law:” they only hear the law.

That we are to sacrifice ourselves, that is, our wickedness and fleshly life, no man, I think, will deny; but so hard it is to flesh and blood to undergo this mortification, that there needs a steady, strong upholding instrument for this so weighty performance; which is all-bearing patience. This holds up the mortified soul, and therefore is not unlike an altar that bears the sacrifice.

Now they that fight against this real service of God, which is the mortification of our sinful lusts, the sacrificing of our evil life, let them dream never so strongly that such a righteousness will serve their turn,—a formal hearing of the word, and a favourable false application of the same; all this sweet repast and imaginary trust and persuasion, will prove but a vision of the night. For these

dreamers, instead of purging the flesh by the sacrifice of fire, defile the flesh with the fire of lust ; great pretenders to knowledge, that are sedulous hearers, but no doers ; clouds without water ; and they, you know, make a goodly show of whitish shining light, though not so thoroughly enlightened as the blue sky ; stars they are, but wandering stars, the end of whose staggering period is to set in everlasting blackness of darkness.

3. A third reason why we should be “doers of the word,” is the reward of keeping his commandments ; “By them is thy servant taught, and in keeping of them there is great reward.” (*Psa. xix.*) A reward in estate, a reward in body, and a reward in soul.

(1.) A reward in estate. “Blessed shalt thou be in thy basket and in thy dough. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, and the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.” (*Deut. xxviii.*) But if we think MOSES’s word not sufficient, CHRIST himself will put in security for supply of all necessaries, if we take but the condition of obedience : “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” (*Matt. vi.*) So the Psalmist : “The lions roar and suffer hunger, but they that fear the LORD shall want no manner of thing that is good.” There are manifold testimonies in Scripture to this purpose, and so obvious, that quotation is needless.

(2.) The second reward is in a man’s body. “Fear the LORD, and depart from evil ; so health shall be to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.” (*Prov. iii.*) Envy, anger, hatred, and discontented melancholy, weaken nature, and destroy the body ; but life and vigour are in the perfect law of charity. A cheerful conscience purifies and refines the blood ; but disobeying the inward light, is the choking of the vital spirits. “A sound heart is the life of the flesh,” saith SOLOMON, “but envy is the rottenness of the bones.” This for health and strength : Now for beauty. “The wisdom of a man doth make his face

to shine." (*Eccles. viii.*) If there be a continual vigorous habit in the heart of shining virtue and lovely charity, it will issue even into the face of a man in all friendly amiableness. MOSES was so filled with this heavenly beauty, that the children of Israel could not look upon him for his glorious splendour. But the works of darkness make the spirit of a man to set in gloomy obscurity and deadness.

(3.) We come to the third reward, which is in the soul. "The law of the LORD is an undefiled law, converting the soul." (*Psa. xix. 7.*)

For the clear understanding of this conversion, we are to take notice of the nature thereof. Conversion includes two things: A leaving, and a making toward somewhat. And in this Christian conversion, that which is to be left is the creature, and that which is to be turned unto is GOD.

The leaving of the creature is the forsaking of whatsoever is not GOD, but especially the renouncing ourselves; for while we cleave to the creature, we most of all cleave to ourselves; for we adhere to it for our own sake. Self-love is the hinge upon which we turn from GOD to the creature; and upon which we begin to circle from the creature to GOD again; but the accomplishment of conversion breaks this thing, abolisheth this centre; and then we have our fixation in GOD, and all our motion and operation of will and affection is upon him and from him.

No man would be so mad as to forsake the service of GOD, to be a drudge to an inferior master; but without question, the plot is to be his own god and his own master, and to employ all his strength for himself.

But how the law of GOD doth convert the soul from this idolatry; and that which we falsely seek after, how it brings us truly more near unto, will be seen from the manner of this conversion of the soul to GOD.

The conversion of things to their causes or principles, is to ascend nearer and nearer to them, and to become more and more like them. To return therefore to GOD, is to become like to Him, by the recovery of the lost image of

ADAM, who was made according to the similitude of GOD.

Now the image of GOD seems not to be unknown even to the very heathens. The ancient Greek poet brings in ULYSSES musing with himself, amongst his travels, what a kind of people he had fallen among, after this manner :—

ὦ μοι ἐγὼ τέων αὖτε βροτῶν ἐς γαῖαν ἰκάνω ;  
 Ἥ ῥ' οἴγ' ὑβρισαί τε, καὶ ἄγριοι, οὐδὲ δίκαιοι ;  
 Ἡὲ φιλόξενιοι, καὶ σφιν νόος ἐσὶ θεοῦδής ;

‘What a kind of people be the inhabitants of the land into which I am come? Are they injurious, barbarous, and unjust? Or are they of a loving disposition, courteous unto strangers, and of a godlike mind?’ Καὶ σφιν νόος ἐσὶ θεοῦδής; Are they *animo Deiformi*? Where the poet plainly makes the form or image of GOD consist in love, in righteousness or justice, and courteousness; they being contrary to injury, brutish fierceness, cruelty, and injustice.

PLATO speaks more expressly, though in fewer words: ‘To be like GOD is to be holy, just, and wise.’

I might multiply words for the setting forth the manifold benefits and graces that accrue to the soul of man from his conversion to GOD. But nothing more can be said than this image of CHRIST doth either express, or at least imply.

Justice, holiness, and prudence, comprise all excellence. That generous magnanimity of mind, that bears itself above all the contempts that can follow the practice of that which is good, or abstinence from that which is evil; pure temperance, manly and awful-eyed fortitude, gravity, and modesty, gently moving in all peaceful and steady tranquillity; and a godlike understanding, watering with showers of light this flourishing paradise of piety and virtue. This, and whatsoever else we can conceive that is good, is contained in this divine image; nay, more than we can conceive, before we be transformed into that likeness.

The wisdom of him that is regenerate into this image of

God, dives into the depths of darkness, unties the knots of that old serpent's train, breaks off the bonds of death and hell, pierceth like lightning into the inwardness of things, stands before the throne of immortal glory. That holiness winds itself from all corruption of the flesh, flies above the attraction of the body, looks upon God in unspotted purity. That justice gives every thing its own : that which is CÆSAR's to CÆSAR, and that which is God's to God, but nothing to itself; seeketh nothing for itself, exulteth not in itself; but gives all to God, seeks all for God, rejoiceth always in God. "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive honour, and glory, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy will's sake they are and have been created." (*Rev. iv.*) Thus they are nothing in their own eyes, as indeed they are nothing; but in profound humility and gratitude, (which is the most exquisite act of justice,) give all to the everlasting Majesty.

This is that lovely, beautiful, and most desirable image of CHRIST the SON of the FATHER. Who hath part here is an inheritor of eternity; but he that by false and lazy imagination remains in the Devil's nature, his doom is everlasting death, and unspeakable misery.

And thus much for the reasons, Why we should be doers of the word. I will only speak a word of the proposition that is left.

### III. That we are not to deceive ourselves.

To deceive one's self is a double fault. He that deceives himself is both fool and knave; both the deceived and the deceiver. Though to say the truth, he that is deceived by another, was first deceived by himself. The same defective principles that expose a man to be deceived of another, expose him as well to be deceived of himself. No man is discovered to be a fool by another, but he was so in himself first; and who made him so then?

But how can this be, that man should be so wise as to circumvent himself, and so foolish as to be circumvented by himself?

The soul of man, betwixt these two, the spirit and the flesh, heaven and hell, GOD and the Devil, is so placed, that accordingly as it inclines or cleaves to either, so is its wisdom and life. If it continually struggle to work itself upward toward GOD, GOD will put out his merciful arm to draw it out of those infernal waters. If it cleave unto the flesh and its deceivable lusts, the warmth of wickedness will attract it down lower and lower, until SATAN hath insnared it in all his nests, and hath chained it in his own chains; so that being made an absolute vassal of that tyrannic Prince that rules in the sons of disobedience, he shall be excluded from the everlasting light of GOD, and his holy truth.

“GOD, that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shine in our hearts, and give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD, in the face of JESUS CHRIST,” that we may walk before him in the truth of life.

## DISCOURSE III.

---

### ON RECOVERING THE DIVINE LIKENESS.

---

PSALM xvii. 15.

*As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.*

THE excellency of this holy resolution of the Prophet DAVID, will be better set off, if we bring into view that lively character of men of a quite contrary disposition, in the foregoing verse, who are styled, “men of the world, which have their portion in this life;” who are very belly-gods and cormorants, greedy devourers of the temporary good things which GOD has treasured up in these lower regions of the universe. These they dig out and rake up together, and lay on heaps, that they may satisfy their own appetite, and gratify themselves in “the lust of the flesh,” in “the lust of the eyes,” and in “the pride of life;” and when they have lived in all the jollity and gaiety of this world, bequeath to their posterity the like happiness, by leaving the rest of their substance to their babes; as is described in the foregoing verse.

This is the state of that blessedness which the mere natural man breathes after, neither his foresight nor desire piercing any further.

But this holy man of GOD has a thirsty presage of matters of far greater moment; whose mind is not fixed upon these treasures of the earth, but upon that treasure which is reserved in heaven; whose neither hopes nor enjoyments are in the things of this life, but deems this life as death or sleep, in comparison of that which is to come; who speaks the language of Christians before the coming of the MESSIAS, as if he would anticipate the words of ST. PAUL:

“Our life is hid with CHRIST in GOD; but when CHRIST, which is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.” (*Col.* iii. 3, 4.) Wherefore let others enjoy themselves as much as they will; let these men of the world please themselves in their wealth, pleasure, and honours; I do not at all envy their condition, nor place my happiness in these things. While these men’s eyes and minds are wholly taken up with these worldly objects, the pantings of my soul are entirely directed towards GOD, and to the blissful enjoyment of the light of his countenance. “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness:” or, as the Psalms in our Liturgy have it, “When I awake up after thy likeness; I shall be satisfied with it.”

That saying of HERACLITUS: ‘All that we see waking, is death; and what we see dreaming, sleep;’ (which is the brother of death, as another termed him; as if in this body, whether sleeping or waking, it were in the valley of the shadow of death;) bears an apparent conformity with that notable passage of ST. PAUL: “GOD forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; whereby the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.” What, was it not sufficient that ST. PAUL was crucified to the world, but the world must be also crucified unto him? That he was dead to the world, but the world must be dead to him? Or who ever, except ST. PAUL, ventured on such a phrase, as the world’s being crucified or dead to us, though we be rightly said to be crucified or dead to it? Why yes, HERACLITUS said so long before: *θάνατός ἐστιν ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ὁραμὲν*. All these things which we see with these bodily eyes, it is but a scene of death. That vivid and cheerful colour of the heavens which recreates the eyes of ordinary mortals, seemed to him not a bright azure, but a funeral black; nor sun nor moon real and true lights, but two painted scutcheons hung upon the melancholy tapestry of this house of mourning. Wherefore to be buried in the body, with him is a real death; and this terrestrial region, wherein we seem to live, but one

great dormitory. No life, no joy, no pleasure is here; no, not amongst those that seem to enjoy most, that have the greatest portion in this life, nay, their only portion therein. Wherefore, what expectation of happiness before that blessed resurrection? when we shall see the face of GOD, and be satisfied with His likeness, "in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore?" The present interval, (that is, the time of our immersion into the sense of this body,) the Prophet DAVID, as well as HERACLITUS, does plainly deem a state of sleep or death; which are the same in Scripture every where, as to any mystical meanings or purposes.

"As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."

The easy and accurate sense of the text is, "I will behold thy face in righteousness; at the awaking of thy image I shall be satisfied:" The image of GOD is CHRIST, who is called also, *ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης Θεοῦ*, "the brightness of the glory of GOD;" which glory, like the beams of the sun, reach and touch the very eyelids of him that is asleep, but are not seen or enjoyed till he awake; for then the image of the sun is also awoke in him, that is to say, excited into actual being. According to which is that saying of the Apostle: "Awake thou that sleepest; and CHRIST shall give thee light." The awaking, therefore, or resurrection of the image of GOD in us, is our awaking or resurrection in a moral sense into it; which, as soon as it appears, we also appear in glory with it. - But while CHRIST is thus hid, or dead, or asleep in us, we are in a state of death or sleep.

And this is the first truth comprised in my text,—That the immersion of the soul into the life of the body, and love of this present world, is as it were the sleep or death of the soul.

The second,—That there is no true satisfaction in this worldly life, which is but a torpid sleep, and the very shadow of death

The third,—That the true awaking, and real life of the soul, is the recovering the image of **GOD**; the resurrection of **CHRIST** in us according to the **SPIRIT**.

The fourth,—That this mystical resurrection of **CHRIST**, is the only solid enjoyment and satisfaction to the souls of the faithful, even in this life.

The fifth and last,—That we cannot attain to this satisfaction without righteousness and sincerity of heart. “I shall behold thy face in righteousness.”

These are the precious truths comprised in the text, which I shall handle with all possible brevity:—

I. That the love of this world, the image of the earthly **ADAM**, is as it were the sleep or death of the soul, the text does apparently intimate; especially that translation in our Liturgy: “When I shall awake into thy image,” (which is the image of the heavenly **ADAM**,) “I shall be satisfied therewith;” which implies, that until this awaking, we are in a state of sleep or death. For in that we can eat and drink, and go up and down, these are no arguments that we are truly alive, no more than the growing of the hair and the nails of them that have lain long buried is any argument of life in them; I mean, of the sensitive life. Nor though the flesh be full of worms, will the man be thought ever the more alive for that. For neither is sense the life of a man, nor mere carnal and worldly reason the life of the child of **GOD**. The divine image is the soul of his soul, the life of his life; of which seeing every soul is capable, it is rightly deemed dead until it partake thereof, until it be awakened into this image; but so long as the mind is addicted to the things of this world, so long she is dead or asleep; call it which you will. **HIEROCLES** calls it death: ‘The death of every rational essence,’ says he, ‘is the loss or suppression of her divine and intellectual excellencies.’ **PLOTINUS**, sleep: ‘So far forth as the soul is immersed into the body, so far she is asleep; and therefore, those that are wholly taken up with the concerns thereof, as relishing nothing but what is worldly, may justly be looked upon as fallen into a deep sleep.’

And what if they can walk, and talk, and go up and down, and do such things as men that are awake also do ; do not these, who walk in their sleep, the same ? Whose eyes being shut, yet unwittingly do several exploits ; some hazardous, others ridiculous ; other some, (as it sometimes happens,) safe and congruous ; but in the mean time they know not what they do, but without any free consultation or deliberation, are carried out hood-winked to action, by the mere suggestion of dreams and fancies. And is not this the very condition of those who have arrived no higher than to the image of the earthly ADAM ? Surely every such man walketh like a vain image or shadow ; he sees not whither he goes, nor in what plight he is, nor whom he may meet, nor what eyes are upon his nakedness, nor what sad events may attend his fortuitous motions. All wicked men, or unregenerate, not yet awakened into the image of GOD, have the eye of their mind closed, as the walkers in their sleep those of the body ; and do not walk by sight, but by fortuitous fancy, their whole life being but a series of dreams, and all the transactions thereof, the execution of the dictates of their imagination impertinently busy in this profound sleep. For these phantasms, under whose conduct they are in this condition, and which is their first mover in all their actions, creep upon them by mere chance, as dreams in the night, suggested by the temper of the external air, or of their own blood, or from some other casualty ; and so one phantasm or commotion occasions another, and the man, like a ship at sea, whose pilot is asleep, may be driven one while one way, another while another ; there being neither judge nor guide, to steer to any end, that due examination, or mature deliberation has made choice of.

And therefore all the passages of such a life, whether thoughts or actions, are (so as it fares in dreams) fortuitous. And although there be a great confidence that things are true and real, and such as they appear, and that we have concluded sure ; yet in all this we do but imitate those that dream, thinking those things they see to be clear

realities, while they are but dreams; as PLOTINUS speaks, and few but do experience it. Nor can we give judgment what is right or wrong, what false or what true; whether we have dreamed luckily, or all be falsehood and delusion, until that mystical resurrection, the resuscitation of the image of GOD in our souls. And this briefly may suffice for the first particular, That the immersion of the soul into the life of the body, and love of this world, is as it were the death, or sleep of the soul.

The second is, That there is no true satisfaction in this condition.

And indeed how can any true satisfaction be there expected, where we suppose nothing but delusions and dreams? No man thinks him that is grossly cheated, truly satisfied; no, not though he give it under his own hand he is so. And is not this state of sleep and dreams, a mere cheat and delusion? There only is true satisfaction, where that which satisfies, is truly that which it would appear to be, and will be found so by a man when he can judge aright. For that which every man means, in all his pursuits, is happiness; nor would he put forth his hand towards any thing that did not bear upon it that inscription; which, if it be false, he must needs at last find himself wrong; and what profit is there in those things whereof he then must be ashamed? And as in the sequels of reason, some one latent falsehood being admitted, it will discover itself by the inference of some more gross and palpable absurdity, to be false itself; so some practical mistake in adhering to some false good, though pleasing for the present, will in the conclusion prove itself a real evil, by the calamitous consequence that will necessarily issue from it; for the end of such things is death, as the Apostle speaks.

Thus plain it is, that though we should dream pleasingly, it is no true satisfaction, because at the long run we shall find ourselves disappointed and deceived. But the truth is, that those that dream most successfully are not

happy, (no, not so much as in this dream,) but have an unquiet night of it; there being so many interruptions and disturbances, from the fortuitous clashings of flying phantasms that rise by chance, and bring in scenes of discontent, as well as pleasure; insomuch, that those that have cast up the compute most accurately, have concluded it best never to be born; but next to that, quickly to die; as the epigrammatist infers upon his view of all the ways and conditions of human life. And SOLOMON, who was a King, whose reign also was peaceable, splendid, and prosperous; yet when he had lain all things together, and completed his account, the whole sum was "vanity and vexation of spirit." Nay, the scene of things in this present world, seemed to him so bad and tragical, that he "praises the dead, which are already dead, more than the living, which are yet alive; and accounts him better than them both, which hath not yet been, because he hath not seen the toil that is under the sun." So far is worldly life from affording any true satisfaction to them that are immersed into it. But this is a theme so trite, that it had been enough only to have named it; and therefore we will pass to the third particular.

Thirdly, That the true life of the soul is the recovery of the divine image.

The truth of which assertion we shall easily understand, if we consider what life is, and wherein its fulness does consist, and also what is the image of GOD. For we know that death is a privation of life; and sleep a partial death, as being a partial privation of the vital functions; and therefore the recovery of the soul into more full and ample functions of life, must needs be her awakening, if not resurrection from the dead. Now I conceive the fulness of life to be completed in these three things: In self-motion, or self-activity; in sense, or perception; and in pleasure, love, or joy; and that the heightening or enlargement of these in several degrees, is the enlargement of life, and a releasement from such a measure of sleep or death.

These principles are so plain and manifest, that scarce any one can be so dull and sleepy, but that he will acknowledge them at the first sight.

What the image of **GOD** consists in, we shall easily understand, if we have recourse to the attributes of his nature; which nature of **GOD** consists in omnipotency, omniscieny, and infinite goodness. Whence the image or face of **GOD**, (as it is called in the text,) so far forth as it is visible to us, is nothing else but our perception, or rather devotional admiration of these divine excellencies; and the being effectually impressed upon by them, to the transfiguration of our souls into this similitude, so far forth as human nature is capable to be assimilated unto **GOD**; for we cannot be absolutely omnipotent, nor omniscient, nor infinitely good.

But we may have a kind of communicated omnipotency, as to the affairs of our own sphere, in our own microcosm, or little world, where we ought to rule with an absolute hand, and never to be quiet, until we can profess with **ST. PAUL**, "I can do all things through **CHRIST** that strengthens me." Wherefore as **GOD** is omnipotent in the great universe, and does curb and keep up the whole corporeal creation within the limits of certain laws, which they cannot pass; so also we are to set bounds to our passions, and keep them in constant subjection to the laws of right reason, or to the rule of the **SPIRIT** of **GOD**.

Again, in the second place, Though we cannot be omniscient, yet we may become in a manner entirely intellectual, and throughly understand, and as affectionately relish, the true interest of our own souls, and perfectly discern all the concerns thereof, and be accompanied with all those divine truths and blissful speculations which are requisite for the perfecting of human happiness; which in our sphere is an imitation of the divine omniscieny.

And lastly, Though it is impossible that any creature should be infinitely good, yet it is capable of being filled with a spirit of inexpressible benignity; and to be a faithful well-wisher to every creature of **GOD**, and therefore in

perpetual readiness to help them that are in any distress, and to rejoice in the welfare of every part of the creation.

And this is briefly the amiable face or image of God, as it is visible or communicable to us; which we see by the beams of its own brightness, as we see the sun by its own light, though not in that real lustre nor bigness that it is.

And I hope now it will plainly appear, That the recovery of this divine image is the true resurrection of the soul from a state of sleep or death, into the most full and ample functions of life; of which the first degree was self-motion, or self-activity. For mere passivity, or to be moved or acted by another, either without a man's will, or against it, is the condition of such as are either dead or asleep; as to go of a man's self, is a symptom of one alive or awake. Wherefore, whatever is done in us by mere passion or ignorance, seems rather to be acted *upon* us, than *by* us, and to be a defect of that degree of life which we call self-motion or self-activity; in such cases we seem rather to be carried by surprise, than to go of our own accords, as men that are dead drunk may be haled or disposed of where others please. And every one that is acted by passion, is drunk; or if acted upon through ignorance, asleep; and so deprived of that degree of life which is self-activity, a doing things from an inward principle. Therefore he is in the state of death, out of which the image of God awakes him; namely, the power of CHRIST in him, which shows him his way clearly, that he may make a choice never to be repented of, and enables him to walk in that way, and to bear strongly and victoriously against all the assaults of the body, or suggestions of this worldly life; and so by the activity of that spiritual principle in him, he rules this little world of his, as God himself does the great one. And this I think is one considerable degree of the awaking of the soul through the divine image.

And the second is no less considerable, and which we have touched upon already in the former. For if

ignorance be sleep, the intellectual state of the soul must needs be an eminent awaking of her. And if to grow corporeal, be to become more inactive and drowsy, then surely to become more spiritual, must be joined with a greater measure of life and activity. And what actions are more spiritual than those which the soul exerts in the search of the most noble and momentous truths concerning **God** and nature? These operations certainly must be very intellectual and incorporeal, and therefore very much raised above the body, that sepulchre or dormitory of the soul.

But besides that the principle from whence these intellectual actions flow, argues a notorious excitation of the mind therein; that which is intellectual being plainly divine or godlike: that the soul in her intellectual operations is roused as it were out of a sleep, will farther appear, if we compare the functions of the terrestrial life with those of the intellectual. The largest operation of the former is that of our eye, which takes in but this visible hemisphere of the world; and if it could take in the whole, according to this contracted proportion, it were a pitiful scanty thing, such as is infinitely less than what our understanding conceives the universe to be; nay, many thousand times less than the earth, which is but as a mathematical point in comparison of the body of the world. How contracted, then, are touch, and taste, and the other senses! For the love of which, when the soul is immersed into the body, and wholly given up to them, it is plain that her functions of life are infinitely contracted, and that she lies asleep or dead to her largest faculties; and that therefore the excitation of them is her awaking into infinitely a more ample sphere of life.

To all which you may add, That those that are regenerate into the image of **God** or **Christ**, have by virtue of their second birth, an intellectual or divine sense, which discerns the beauty or deformity of things or actions. Without this, all his passions and actions would flow rudely and indeterminately, like the tumbling of the particles of matter committed to no other guide than chance.

Wherefore he that walks, "as in the day," decently and honestly, it is a sign his eyes are opened, and that he is not asleep. He that disrelishes every evil motion, whether in himself or others; that feels or sees plainly what is just or unjust; that abominates every appearance of haughtiness, or envy, or worldly baseness, or intemperance; to whom these things, and others of the like kind, are distasteful and unsavoury; it is a sign that he is awoke into this divine life. But such as have neither love of virtue, nor aversion of vice, whether in themselves or others, they have these senses bound by a lethargic sleep, out of which the recovery of the divine image, wherever it is, awakens men into a perpetual quickness of perception of what is truly good or evil.

Thus apparently is the image of CHRIST the resurrection of the soul into those two first parts of life, which we called self-activity, and sense or perception.

The last, but not the least considerable, is pleasure, love, or joy: which, how little it is in the worldly-minded, I have above declared: but how unspeakably great it must be in him, upon whom this glorious image of GOD is risen, is discoverable at first sight. For this image does most eminently contain in it the sense of love and goodness. "GOD is love; and he that abideth in love, abideth in GOD, and GOD in him." Which love or goodness is certainly the highest joy or pleasure that human nature is capable of, the flower and quintessence of all sweetness. Here is no afflicting care, nor consuming envy, no disquieting lust, nor tyrannical superstition, no distrust or fear of our future state, nor any jealousies concerning the favour of GOD; this spirit of love being an inseparable pledge thereof. And even the more miserable objects in this present scene of things, cannot divest him of his happiness, but rather modify it; the sweetness of his spirit being melted into a kindly compassion in the behalf of others: whom, if he be able to help, it is a greater accession to his joy; and if he cannot, the being conscious to himself of so sincere a compassion, and so harmonious

and suitable to the present state of things, carries with it some degree of pleasure, like mournful notes of music. But this not unpleasant surprise of melancholy cannot last long: and this cool allay, this soft and moist element of sorrow, will be soon dried up, like the morning dew at the rising of the summer sun; when once the warm and cheerful gleams of that light that represents the glorious and comfortable comprehension of the divine providence that runs through all things, shall dart into our souls the remembrance, how infinitely scanty the region of these tragical spectacles is, compared with the rest of the universe, and how short a time they last. For so the consideration of the happiness of the whole will swallow up this small pretence of discontent, and the soul will be wholly overflowed with inexpressible joy and exultation; it being warmed and cheered with that joy that is the joy of God, that free and infinite Good, who knows the periods and issues of all things, and whose pleasure is in good as such, and not in contracted selfishness, or in petty and sinister projects.

And certainly this is such an enlargement of life, that he must needs seem either dead or asleep, and fixed in some stupefying dream, whom the love and admiration of himself has made insensible and incapable of this transcendent happiness. Which leads me to the fourth particular, *vis.*:—

Fourthly, That this mystical resurrection of CHRIST, or the revelation of the face or image of GOD in us, is the only solid enjoyment and satisfaction to the souls of the faithful, even in this life; which I need not at all insist upon, the truth thereof being so exceeding manifest from the foregoing particular: and DAVID accordingly declared it in the fourth Psalm: “Many say, Who will show us any good? LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.” And so in my text, “At the awaking of thy image, I shall be satisfied therewith.” The LXX have it, “I shall be fed, when I shall see thy glory.” Not according to the condition of those whom the Prophet describes: “As when an hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth, but he waketh and his soul is empty; or

as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint;” but according as our Saviour CHRIST has promised: “I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” For being fed and transformed into the image of CHRIST by truly partaking of his body and blood, they have that which fills their vast capacities, and fits them for an eternal enjoyment thereof. Which perpetuity of the condition plainly shows that the condition is most natural; and that perfection which is most natural must needs be most satisfactory; for every thing seeks the perfection of its own nature; and when it is where it is most natural for it to be, is naturally satisfied, and rests therein. And this briefly shall serve for the fourth particular.

Fifthly. The fifth and last is, That we cannot arrive to this satisfaction, without righteousness or sincerity of heart: “I will behold thy face in righteousness.”

I must confess that righteousness is sometimes of so comprehensive a sense, that it takes in all that we have described in the image of GOD; and so is in a manner the same with it. And if it were understood so here, the sense would be good; for by this image we see the face of GOD. “In thy light we shall see light.” But by righteousness I rather understand here, faithfulness, uprightness, and sincerity of spirit; and I conceive that purity and sincerity is that righteousness that will lead us to the vision of GOD, according as our SAVIOUR has promised: “Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see GOD.” So the Psalmist: “This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob;” even of them that seek him in sincerity and truth, to whom GOD is so faithful that he will be found of them, nor shall their labour be in vain in the LORD.

And that a man may know whether he be in the way or no, I shall only briefly intimate what sincerity is; and that he may have no excuse to keep out of the way, I must add, that it is in his power to keep in it. For it is in a

man's power to be sincere ; for to be sincere is only to do what we can, and what our conscience witnesses we can do ; which **God** will graciously accept in **CHRIST**, and endue us with further strength, so long as we make use of that which we have already. Now it is evidently true, and wants no further demonstration, That we can do what we can do ; and therefore it is but the examination of ourselves, whether we do all that which our own consciences tell us we both ought to do and can do, and thereby we shall easily discover whether we be in the way toward this blissful vision or no. And if we find ourselves out of it, we cannot excuse ourselves for our wandering, since it is in our power to keep in the way, that is, to be sincere, as certainly as it is in our power to do what is in our power ; and therefore the falling short of this happiness lies at every man's door, and **God** and **Providence** must be quit of all that evil that these loiterers must once sadly complain of, when it is too late.

Every man, therefore, must daily examine his own conscience in this ; for as the keeping close to this way of sincerity, or doing what is in our power, will unfailingly, through assistance of fresh supplies of heaven, lead us directly to the vision of **God** ; so he that finds himself remiss and insincere, may be as certain that he is out of the way to that happiness. "He that lays his hand to the plough, and looks back, is not fit for the kingdom of **God**." But if we continue in the way of sincerity, it is impossible but that a man shall find an increase of divine assistances, and a successful progress ; **God** imparting strength, according to the fidelity of the user thereof ; for the aid of **God** is never wanting to such, but they hold on their journey in cheerfulness and constancy, with that song of the **Psalmist** in their mouths : "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, in whose heart are thy ways ; which going through the vale of misery use it for a well, and the pools are filled with water. They will go from strength to strength, and unto the **God** of gods appeareth every one of them in **Zion**."

## DISCOURSE IV.

---

### ON SUFFERING WITH CHRIST.

---

ROM. viii. 17.

*And if children, then heirs ; heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs with CHRIST : if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.*

THIS text is the evidence of our eternal inheritance.

There is none here, I suppose, so dull, so slow, and so senseless of his own good, and outward welfare, but that if he were to purchase any worldly possession, he would look that his conveyances were sure, and his title good. How much more solicitous ought we to be concerning our everlasting inheritance ? To inform ourselves whether there be any such possession or no ; and to whom it appertains ; that our hopes of future felicity may be settled upon good grounds : that they be not all blown away with our last breath ; and the extinguishing of this life leave us not to eternal horror of darkness.

This present text of Scripture will answer both those queries ; which contains these two doctrines :—

I. That GOD hath prepared an inheritance for his children.

II. That they that would have this inheritance, must suffer with CHRIST.

I. That GOD hath prepared an inheritance for his children, is plain out of Scripture. (And verily, I would not go about to prove so evident a truth, did not the lives of men contradict it ; who live as though there were neither heaven nor hell, no reward nor judgment to come.) “Come, ye blessed of my FATHER, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world ;” (*Matt. xxv. 34.*)

and, "Giving thanks unto the FATHER, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (*Col. i. 12.*)

And surely it is a very reasonable thing, that GOD should as well provide for our inward man as for our outward. The light of the sun, the seasonable showers of rain, the timely fruits of the earth,—all these hath he prepared, and many more, for this natural life of man; nay, his careful Providence extends itself to the young ravens, and the lilies of the field; and shall his goodness fall short in providing for that dear and precious life derived unto us by his own SPIRIT, making us his sons and holy offspring? No, surely GOD will not forget that which is so near to himself, when his fatherly benignity circuits the utmost verge of his creature.

Add unto this, that we ourselves are the house and inheritance of GOD. "Know you not that your bodies are the temples of the HOLY GHOST?" saith the Apostle. And the Prophet ESAIAS: "The vineyard of the LORD of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant." And elsewhere in Holy Scripture, GOD is said to "dwell in us, and walk in us;" and Israel is called "the inheritance of GOD." Wherefore GOD will provide us an inheritance, since we (as he himself testifieth) are an inheritance to him.

Now if any man be desirous to know what an inheritance this is that GOD hath prepared; it is no less than a kingdom. And how great an esteem is put upon an earthly kingdom, is well known to you all; which if it be so desirable, how much more desirable is the kingdom of heaven? This kingdom of heaven, of GOD, or CHRIST, is the inheritance of the sons of GOD with CHRIST.

But if any one rest unsatisfied yet, and would further know what the kingdom of GOD is, let him listen to ST. PAUL: "The kingdom of GOD is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST." (*Rom. xiv. 17.*)

But this will seem even nothing to him that hath not

the spirit of righteousness, peace, and joy. Wherefore saith the Apostle, "But we speak the wisdom of GOD in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which GOD ordained before the world unto our glory. Which none of the Princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the LORD of Glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that GOD hath prepared for them that love him. But GOD hath revealed them unto us by his SPIRIT; for the SPIRIT searcheth all things, even the deep things of GOD. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man that is in him? Even so the things of GOD knoweth no man, but the SPIRIT of GOD. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the SPIRIT that is of GOD, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of GOD." (1 Cor. ii. 7—12.)

In a word, therefore, beloved, the inheritance of the children of GOD is the SPIRIT of GOD, and all that it doth discover; as the sun is the lot and inheritance of the natural eye, and all visibles laid open by it in nature. And can any thing be wanting to them that are sharers in that inheritance? (If I may call them sharers, where every one is full possessor of the whole; as the sun is alike wholly in every eye.) Can our souls be larger than the life of GOD? Or our understanding not be satisfied by his all-knowing SPIRIT? Can our will wax restless or anxious, where the understanding finds out and feels the greatest good that any thing is capable of; where the pure and undefiled affection bathes her silver plumes in eternal love and delight? What is the soul more than infinite, that it should desire any inheritance greater than GOD?

But let us make some use to ourselves from this doctrine.

*First,* Who cannot hence condemn all avarice, drunkenness, fleshly lust, voluptuousness; the bartering away this glorious inheritance, this everlasting kingdom, for the muck of this world; all undermining our neighbours by

false and treacherous practices; overreaching them in bargains, and cheating ourselves of eternal life by our own cozenages; instead of being filled with the SPIRIT, to be full of base liquor, drowning our reason and conscience, and laying ourselves open to the despite of the Devil, and the shame of the world; chaffering away for a little momentary pleasure, the inheritance of the good SPIRIT OF GOD, the sweet and comfortable fellowship of the HOLY GHOST, the joys of heaven, the unspeakable delights of that hidden paradise?

*Secondly*, The consideration of this glorious royal condition, may afford much comfort to men of low degree. What though our means be small, our calling base before men; this time will certainly be over, and that quickly. Though I be poor here, a servant and bond-slave, a beggar; yet hereafter I shall be rich, free, noble, a Prince, a King, an Emperor; then shall I be Lord; not of a larger spot of ground, consisting of dirt, and gravel, and withering grass, and perishing trees, the sight of which every night's sleep takes from me, but of the boundless heavens, the everlasting beauty of GOD, where, with ever-waking eyes, I shall always behold his excellent glory.

This, I say, may comfort the poorest sort; they being as capable, if not more capable of this precious inheritance, than Lords or Princes of the earth, than Kings and CÆSARS, than Dukes and Emperors. "For you are all the children of GOD, by faith in CHRIST JESUS. For as many of you as have been baptized into CHRIST, have put on CHRIST. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in CHRIST JESUS. And if ye be CHRIST'S, then are you ABRAHAM'S seed, and heirs according to the promise." (*Gal. iii. 26, &c.*)

But *Thirdly* and *Lastly*, Is it so indeed that there is prepared for men of all conditions such a rich inheritance? Let then all men, of what condition soever, examine themselves, and try what assurance they find in their own souls of this future happiness.

What then is the sign? That brings me to my second doctrine, *viz.*:—

II. That the heirs of the kingdom must suffer.

So saith the text: “Heirs of GOD, and joint heirs with CHRIST; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified with him.” Which truth is manifest out of sundry places of Scripture; I will name only two: “We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of GOD;” (*Acts* xiv. 22;) and, “That ye might walk worthy of the LORD unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of GOD; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience, and longsuffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the FATHER, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” (*Col.* i. 10—12.)

What! shall we think, beloved, to obtain heaven at a more easy rate than we purchase any temporal honour or estate? Those that are designed for earthly preferment, sweat and toil for it even from their childhood, by industrious education. But we think to have heaven for an old song, (as they say,) for a word, a fancy, a thought, an empty faith, for nothing. Who, in the name of GOD, told us so? My text contradicts it; and Scripture will not contradict my text, because my text is Scripture. No, verily; it confirms it: “Be not deceived, GOD is not mocked; as a man sows, so shall he reap,” saith the same Apostle that wrote my text.

But I will prove by a threefold reason, that “the heirs of the kingdom of GOD” shall really suffer in themselves.

*First*, From the antipathy betwixt the world and the children of GOD. “Let us lie in wait, say they, for the righteous, because he is not for our turn, and he is clean contrary to our doings. He upbraideth us with offending the law, and objecteth to our infamy, the transgressions of our education. He professeth that he hath the knowledge of GOD, and he calleth himself the child of the LORD. He was made to reprove our thoughts; he is grievous unto

us even to behold, for his life is not like other men's, his ways are of another fashion." (*Wisd. ii.*) Hence do the children of GOD often incur much mischief, by the wicked plots of the ungodly; and if they escape this evil, they are grieved and vexed continually by their daily misdeeds.

But *Secondly*, The will of GOD is, that all that he admits to that glorious inheritance be tried first, and He "chastiseth every son that he doth receive." "Blessed be the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST from the dead; unto an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time; wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of JESUS CHRIST." (*1 Pet. i. 3, &c.*)

*Thirdly*, We cannot escape suffering, by reason of the frequent assaults the Devil makes against us, who "like a roaring lion goes about seeking whom he may devour;" as also for the close siege that sin lays continually against us, that "sin that so easily besets us." (*Heb. xii. 1.*)

But to display the sufferings of the heirs of the kingdom more distinctly, I will cast them into these four several kinds:—1. In Estate. 2. In Name. 3. In body. 4. In soul.

1. In Estate. If any man by his pious life, his delight in the word of GOD, in brotherly conference, or community in spiritual things; by his rebuking his neighbour for swearing, profaning the name of GOD; or by his frugality and sobriety, that he will not run to the same excess of riot with the rest of his neighbours, but lives temperately, honestly, and justly; if this man (as it is not improbable

but he may) bring on himself the envy of wicked men, or at least their dislike, and so they, having power, impair his estate by unequal mulcts, or deny him his due desires; I say, he suffers as an heir of heaven, as a member of **CHRIST**, as a child of **GOD**; and vengeance shall be poured out upon his enemies, but his happiness shall be increased.

2. In Name. So our **SAVIOUR**, for being in company with wicked men, to convert them, was termed “a glutton, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners;” (*Matt. xi.*;) for his casting out devils, a conjurer; for doing good on the Sabbath-day, a Sabbath-breaker; for telling the Jews that which was true,—that they were going about to kill him, a demoniac, or one possessed of the Devil; for teaching the people the mysteries of the kingdom of **GOD**, a seducer. And so **JOHN** the Baptist, for his abstemiousness, his temperance, and severe manner of life, was counted also “one possessed of a devil;” **ST. PAUL** for preaching the Gospel, “a pestilent fellow, one that turned the world upside down:” that young man, one of the sons of the Prophets, whom **ELISHA** sent to anoint **JEHU** King, the Captains of **JORAM** counted and called “a mad fellow:” “Wherefore came this mad fellow to thee?” (*2 Kings ix.*)

The frugal, they call niggards; the conscientious, timorous or superstitious; the humble, base spirited or silly; the harmless and quiet, fools; the fervent in spirit, puritans; godly and pious professors, hypocrites. The Devil hath found out a nick-name for whatsoever is good; that blasphemous mouth can miscall every attribute of **GOD**. But let us not be discouraged for all the reproaches of the world; for if we suffer in name for well doing, our shame here is nothing to that honour and glory that shall be revealed in us hereafter.

I will only raise one use from this point:—

Did our **SAVIOUR CHRIST**, his Apostles, the Prophets of old, and the holy men of **GOD**, undergo such harsh censures? Were they branded with such notorious names,

and undeserved calumnies? Then are not we to judge ill of any man merely from the report of men, until we see his life ourselves. They said of JOHN, that he had a devil; they made the Son of Man “a man gluttonous, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners;” but “wisdom is justified of her children.”

Wherefore let us mortify our sinful lusts, and purge our own souls of corruption, that they may be a habitation for the HOLY GHOST, rather than give ill names, or give credence to ill reports of others, ourselves being still slaves of sin and SATAN; servants of pride, of envy, of avarice, of drunkenness, of whoredom, of lasciviousness; which whosoever hath, let him be assured that he hath not the SPIRIT of GOD; wherefore he cannot judge of the things of the SPIRIT.

3. In Body. These kinds of sufferings you may read of, *Heb. xi*: “Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.”

It would be a long task to reckon up all the sufferings of the holy martyrs, which they underwent under the tyranny of bloody Heathens. The Devil spent all the skill and malice he had in finding ways and engines of torture for them.

GOD make us truly thankful unto him for his great mercy so long continued to us, that we have without terror or torment so many years enjoyed the christian religion in such purity; and give us grace to repent of our unworthy walking in so great a light!

But as concerning these sufferings of the body, such is the love of GOD to mankind, and so reasonable his service, that he hath made it no necessary condition of eternal life, actually to suffer them; yet we ought to be so minded, that rather than relinquish the true Christian faith, (or do

any thing which we know offends GOD,) we would die a thousand deaths. And this was ST. PAUL's resolution: "I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die for the name of the LORD JESUS." (*Acts* xxi.)

But there is a suffering in the body, that we must needs suffer if we will approve ourselves the "children of GOD, and heirs of the kingdom; and this suffering we must inflict upon ourselves: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." (*1 Cor.* ix. 27.) These sufferings are most acceptable to GOD, and requisite forerunners of eternal life. "If you live after the flesh, you shall die; but if you through the SPIRIT do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live." "Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, that war against the soul." (*1 Pet.* ii. 11.) And "they that are CHRIST's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts." (*Gal.* v. 24.)

You see plainly then, that we are not CHRIST's, nor GOD's, nor heirs of GOD with CHRIST, unless we suffer with CHRIST, in mortifying all bodily lusts, in curbing our inordinate desire of eating or drinking; unless we study to keep under the body, and live chastely and continently. If we will be heirs of that heavenly inheritance, we must bring under all evil and carnal concupiscence.

If we do not keep down the flesh and its suggestions, the SPIRIT will be stifled by that filth and corruption. "The carnal mind is enmity against GOD; for it is not subject to the law of GOD, neither indeed can be." (*Rom.* viii. 7.) "The carnal mind," that is *Φρόνημα σαρκός*, the bent, will, intent, liking, or desire of the flesh, "is enmity with GOD;" desires against the will of GOD, and will not be obedient to the law of GOD; "nor indeed can be." Wherefore we are to kill it, to mortify it, to crucify it, that we may be "dead to sin," or the desire of the flesh, and "alive to GOD," by his quickening SPIRIT, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Here is the patience of the saints; here their great suffering.

4. But I go on to their last affliction, which is in spirit.

And that is twofold:—1. The wrestling with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. 2. The suffering with the spirit of CHRIST.

For the first: “We wrestle not against flesh and blood; but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world; against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (*Eph.* vi. 12.)

Beloved, the great work of salvation is not then accomplished, when we have through the power of GOD, and the strength of JESUS CHRIST, overcome the lusts of the body,—as drunkenness, gluttony, whoredom, and the like; but we shall find a new task,—the taming of our proud spirit. For after our first conquest,—I mean, the overcoming the lusts of the body, then pride, and haughtiness, and contempt of our neighbour, the thinking ourselves somebody, rigour and unmercifulness to our sinful brother, censuring and contemning all men that are not of the same conceit with ourselves; these and many such like delusions the Devil will sow in our hearts. The Devil himself is neither whoremaster, nor drunkard, nor glutton; but he is proud, he is contemptuous, he is hypocritical, he is a blood-sucker, a murderer from the beginning; full of self-love, full of self-admiration, full of cruelty, full of deceit and injustice, full of ambition and desire of rule, even over the souls and consciences of men, full of self-applause and arrogancy, and strutting in his own supposed knowledge and power. But true denial of ourselves, and unfeigned deep humility, a sensible apprehension of our nothingness, as I may so say, or real detestable vileness, will often cause such agonies in our souls, as no tongue can express, nor heart conceive, that hath not had experience of those sufferings. With so great pain and torment are we torn and riven from our spiritual wickedness, disjointed and dislimbed, as it were, from our head, that Prince of pride and father of disobedience, the Devil.

But I will now show you the other kind of suffering, which is the suffering in spirit by reason of other men's wickedness.

When we are united to **GOD** and **CHRIST** in the union of the **SPIRIT**, then do those things that are contrary to the **SPIRIT** of **GOD**, as all manner of sin, trouble our spirit: envious or cruel acts, drunkenness, deceit, pride, rigour, fierceness, folly, and whatsoever else is sinful or vain; our spirit being enlivened by the **SPIRIT** of **GOD**, is grieved at these wickednesses or vanities: then we plainly see how **CHRIST** is cut, and lashed, and hewed, and stabbed with our wicked deeds, how he is "crucified afresh." Here may the true Church of **GOD**, the holy Jerusalem, take up fitly that lamentation in Jeremy: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." See how the Prophet **DAVID** was affected with the wickedness of men. "Mine eyes gush out with water, because men keep not thy law. I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved because men keep not thy word." (*Psa. cxix.*) So **LOT** was tormented at the wickedness of Sodom: "Vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing vexed his righteous soul from day to day, with their unlawful deeds." (*2•Pet. ii. 7.*) So **GOD** complains in the **SPIRIT** of his Prophet **AMOS**: "Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves." (*Amos ii. 13.*)

And there is good reason it should be so: For fire is not more contrary to water, nor light to darkness; nor any enmity in nature so strong, as that betwixt the **SPIRIT** of **GOD**, and the spirit of the Devil that is in evil men; according to which they live and act. So then, when that detestable ugliness flows out in their words or actions, it must needs offend the children of **GOD**; **GOD** being of pure eyes, and not abiding to behold wickedness. Hence, are they driven into consuming zeal, or deep inexpressible grief. And this is the second kind of suffering in the spirit.

But, beloved, take this in by the way; he that can be angry at other men's faults, and not much more angry at his own, is a dissembler, an hypocrite. Herein let every

man examine himself. Meantime, he that is not moved at all by the wickedness of others, or of himself, is perfectly dead in sin, and is in the full power of SATAN, covered with eternal death and darkness.

This second doctrine is now sufficiently plain, "That they that would be heirs of the kingdom of CHRIST, must suffer with CHRIST." I will again here stir you up to an examination of your spiritual state, whether you have any interest in the heavenly inheritance.

The sign and infallible seal is our suffering with CHRIST. But not every suffering: perhaps we may not suffer in estate, and yet we may be inheritors of heaven: nor have all, that are now with GOD, been tortured, put to death. But all the other sufferings as abstinence from voluptuousness, from the delights of the flesh, from priding ourselves in any thing that GOD hath bestowed upon us; a suppressing our anger, abstaining from the sweetness of revenge, denying the ever craving appetite of covetousness; keeping our tongues from speaking evil, our ears from hearing evil of our neighbour; these be necessary. All which will vex the corrupt natural spirit of a man: but he that doth, though with great agony of soul, fight against all this corruption of flesh and spirit; they that are troubled in spirit for the wickedness of men, the profanation of GOD'S name, and any manner of sin and iniquity; these men have the SPIRIT of GOD, and consequently they are the sons of GOD: "And if sons, then heirs; heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs with CHRIST."

Let every man herein examine himself, that he may find a true ground of his hope of eternal salvation. For none shall be saved but they that are the children of GOD, elect to this inheritance; none are the children of GOD, but those that have the SPIRIT of GOD; none have the SPIRIT of GOD, but those that suffer with CHRIST, that mortify their own sins, and are grieved for the sins of others.

Be not deceived, beloved, with flattering dreams and fancies: this is the very truth of GOD, and according to

the Gospel of **JESUS CHRIST**. And this truth being so apparently true, I need not exhort in many words, to those christian sufferings.

Stand fast in the true faith of the power of **GOD**, and quit yourselves like men. Cast away all softness and effeminateness; and be so stout-hearted as to endure the pangs of death, of the mortification of your sinful flesh, and carnal mind, for His sake that died for you. Resist unto blood; even to the effusion of the wicked life, and unrighteous devilish spirit that resideth in you.

For this is the good will of your **GOD**, that you be mortified, that you be thoroughly sanctified, that you destroy all things contrary to **GOD** in you: and let this be the first motive, “to run with patience the race that is set before us.” (1 *Thess.* iv.)

*Secondly*, These our sufferings, though great, are not comparable to the rich reward, that glorious inheritance in heaven. “For this cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 *Cor.* iv.)

*Thirdly*, If we compare the future state of the wicked and the godly, how all their glory and pleasure vanisheth, and how the children of **GOD** are received into everlasting happiness, crowned with eternal light, it will more firmly establish us in our Christian resolutions.

It cannot be better described, than it is in the **Book of Wisdom**: “The iniquities of the wicked shall convince them to their own face; and they shall approach the tribunal of **GOD** with fear and quaking. But then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness, before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours. When they see it, they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation.” And they, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall say within themselves: “This is he whom we

had some time in derision, and a proverb of reproach. We fools counted his life madness, and his end to be without honour. How is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot among the saints?"

*Fourthly*, and *Lastly*, The inheritance of heaven is conditional: "If we suffer with him, we shall be glorified with him;" which implies, if we do not suffer with him, we shall not be glorified with him. "This is a faithful saying, That if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." (2 *Tim.* ii. 11.)

Wherefore, beloved, sooth not yourselves in vain hopes; for without mortification there is no salvation. "He that hath not the SPIRIT OF CHRIST, is none of his." Now, nobody hath the SPIRIT OF CHRIST, unless he be "dead unto sin:" for if he be dead unto sin, then is he raised from death to life, by the SPIRIT OF CHRIST, that quickeneth us to righteousness: but if he be dead unto righteousness, and alive unto sin, he is a son of Belial, a child of the Devil, a vessel of perdition, a faggot for hell; and the devouring wrath of God remains upon him: no "heir of God," no "co-heir with CHRIST;" but he shall have his portion with those fiends, to whom is reserved "the blackness of darkness for ever."

Wherefore, beloved, awake from your beds of ease; shake off your idle dreams and bewitching fancies, that either the Devil or his false prophets have buzzed at any time into your heads. If you will be the sons of God, and the disciples of CHRIST, take up the cross of CHRIST; afflict your own carnal minds; give not way to wrath, to envy, to anger, to revenge, to lust, to wantonness, to backbiting, to revelling, to drinking, to pride, to contemning, to reproaching, to fighting, to censuring, or whatsoever else flesh and blood is easily carried out to; but deny yourselves in abstaining from all those evil acts, and so give no encouragement to the Devil to assault you.

Which if you shall do in the precious Christian patience,

even to the mortification of all manner of sin in you, **GOD** shall stir up in you the Spirit of his **SON**, and enrich you with the power of the **HOLY GHOST** : and “the peace of **GOD**, which passeth all understanding,” shall fill your hearts with all joy; and you shall find in yourselves an inexpressible taste of the delights of heaven, and receive an infallible earnest of your eternal inheritance. Which **GOD** grant that we may all do, through **JESUS CHRIST** our **LORD**.

# DISCOURSE V.

---

---

ON PURE RELIGION.

---

---

JAMES i. 27.

*Pure Religion and undefiled before GOD and the FATHER is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

THE text is a description of pure and undefiled religion. And certainly if any thing, religion it is that wants the pointing out by the most evident, plain, and conspicuous descriptions that may be, to be writ in capital letters, in so large and visible characters, that he who runs may read. For indeed most men are but at leisure to read it running, by the by; *tanquam aliud agentes*; still keeping on their course in that broad way, that beaten path, that leads to the reward of impiety and irreligiousness.

But yet I know not how it comes to pass, that though men make not religion their main business, yet they prove far more fortunate in this, than in their worldly occasions; where, though they take a great deal more pains, yet we shall more ordinarily hear them complain of ill success. But as for religion, how few are there that find themselves at a loss therein? nay, that are not suited to their own heart's liking? And from these slight and transient glances cast upon it, are kindled into so hot a zeal for it, that finding their own breasts too narrow for such a violent heat, they would even force open the hearts of other men. Every rash religion is Popery, and claims title to all, must be catholic: none must stand before it: a true Ur of the Chaldees, eating up and devouring all other deities.

Whatsoever is not this, is idolatry, blasphemy, and impiety: and therefore we can admit of none but our own. And yet ordinary religionists are in nothing so superficially and perfunctorily satisfied; whence it comes to pass, that many thousands of men, Ixion-like, embrace not Juno, but a cloud.

Wherefore, we cannot sufficiently commend the care and prudence of the blessed Apostle, who hath so amply set out to us, that which few men have the patience to peruse in a closer character: and therefore out of neglect and carelessness they are very subject to mistake; and if mistaken, mistake more dangerously than in any thing else possibly they can do; spending their dearest affections upon falsehood, their very hearts and souls upon unprofitable lies; and not only forfeiting their own happiness, but, as much as in them lies, pulling in others also into the same whirlpool.

But, beloved, that we be not led away with the same error of the wicked, let us again cast our eyes on the text, and learn the truth of religion.

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the FATHER is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep a man’s self unspotted of the world.” Here are four particulars.

I. That there is a pure and undefiled religion.

II. That God the FATHER is Judge of this pure and undefiled religion.

III. That to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep one’s self unspotted of the world, this is pure and undefiled religion.

IV. That it is pure and undefiled religion, even in the judgment and sight of God.

I. That there is a pure and undefiled religion.

That religion which consists in God’s immediate worship, is here meant; they being the dispersed Jews to whom St. JAMES wrote, whose native religion consisted in a multitude of rites and ceremonies, and was eminent for the outward form of worship and service of God. These

were all but a cloud, a veil, and mist, and were to be drawn aside and vanish at the approach of "the Sun of Righteousness."

And according to this notion, the two following terms, *viz.*, καθαρά and ἀμίαντος, will not only admit of, but call for, this exposition, *viz.*, pure and unpainted: "The true, pure, refined, unsophisticated religion is this."

Pure religion is that which is void of all heterogeneal mixture, cleansed and refined from that palpable gross luggage of unwieldy ceremonies; being pure extraction, mere essence or quintessence, perfect life and spirit.

Again, ἀμίαντος, undyed, unpainted with the pencil of human art or device; a naked truth; which though it hath been diversely figured and shaped by the outward dress of ceremonies, yet it has been from everlasting to everlasting; "CHRIST the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" the Gospel of eternal truth, the law of life, the perfect law of liberty.

But I am afraid I have by this exposition so spiritualized religion, that eyes accustomed to shadows and gross ceremonies, will doubt whether there be any thing of religion left, after so much sifting and cleansing. If they mean, by no religion left, no ceremony left; I grant it: but if by no religion, no truth of religion; I say, there is nothing but the truth of religion left. And that the truth of religion should not deserve the name of religion, as well as the shadow or type, I know no reason.

: Mistake me not; I speak not as if the kernel must of necessity be without a shell; but led on by my text, I speak of the kernel without the shell, and exalt it far above the dry shell. "Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?" (*Psa.* l. 13.) "The sacrifices of GOD are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O GOD, thou wilt not despise." (*Psa.* li. 17.) And *Psa.* iv. 5, "Offer the sacrifice of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD." "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of GOD, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to GOD, which is your spiritual service:"

So BEZA. They were not to offer any dead or unclean beast, under the Law; wherefore are we here under the Gospel, to offer ourselves a living and holy sacrifice, unpolluted of the world, and alive to righteousness and to GOD.

Give me leave here a little to enlarge myself. Who can doubt but that the heart of a Christian, from whence sweet odours of prayers and praises ascend up, is a better altar of incense than that in MOSES'S temple; that GOD is more truly fed by relieving his members, true and sincere Christians, than by feeding the insatiable fire by thousands of holocausts; that the seven spirits, the SPIRIT of the LORD, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD, are a truer and clearer light than the seven golden candlesticks of MOSES; that the Jewish temple was but a strait prison in comparison of the enlarged soul of man? So many loads of sand or gravel would have filled that up to the top, but no less than GOD himself can fill the heart of man: which therefore is the meetest temple or mansion for him. In brief, what is this religion, but to honour and worship GOD; and what doth that consist in, but in consecrating unto him, times, or places, or things, persons also, and actions? Is not this, therefore, "to worship GOD in spirit and truth?" Truly and unfeignedly to devote ourselves, and all we have, to the GOD of heaven, seeking his will in all our actions, and denying ourselves and our own desires? What comparison is there betwixt the offering the firstlings of our flock, or the fruit of our ground, whereby we acknowledge we hold all these things of GOD, the great LORD of heaven and earth? What comparison is there, I say, betwixt this, and the not arrogating any thing to ourselves, of either knowledge or power, but affectionately ascribing all to GOD, whatsoever we can do, think, or speak? And let me yet be bolder, What is baptism, or the washing of water, in respect of the real cleansing by the SPIRIT, the being baptized with the HOLY GHOST and with fire? What is bread and

wine, in comparison of that true bread from heaven, the flesh and blood of CHRIST ?

Tell me therefore, now, is nothing of religion left, when I only consider the inward essence or substance of it, abstracted from the shell or husk ? Is the very heart or kernel of it nothing ? The pure and unpainted religion is truly religion, if not the only true religion. And pardon me, if I seem too careful and curious in reserving the name of religion to it ; because that word strikes more powerfully upon the ears of men, and summons at the very first alarm, all the power we have, both of soul and body, to assist and maintain it. Wherefore, I would, under this name, commend unto myself, and all men, this truth of godliness, that we may as heartily and zealously both pursue it ourselves, and recommend it to others, as ever we did or can do the opinions and institutions of men : for this will not be found “pure and undefiled religion” in His eyes, who is the Judge thereof, *viz.*, GOD the FATHER ; which is the second particular.

II. GOD the FATHER is Judge of what is true, pure, and undefiled religion.

And indeed there is good reason for it : for what is religion, but the worship and service of GOD ? He therefore knows best how he would be worshipped and served. And here it will not be unseasonable to speak of that worship which the Apostle has found out a fit name for ; *ἑθελοδουλοῦσιν*,—will-worship ; serving GOD according to our will and liking, according to the dictates of our own vain hearts. A fault that a natural man is not only subject to fall into, but it is even impossible for him to avoid it : for who knows the will of GOD, saving to whom it is revealed from within ? For if the outward could do it without the inward, why is the whole Christian world entangled in so much error and confusion ? Why, unless for that they have served GOD, either according to their own will, or according to the will of other men : For that “they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters, and have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that will hold

no water?" Is ISRAEL a servant? Is he a home-born slave? Why is he become a spoil? Verily because he has ceased to be ISRAEL, a prince and prevailer with GOD, and hath put his trust in mortal men. What is PAUL, APOLLOS, or CEPHAS? What is BELLARMINE, CALVIN, or ARMINIUS? Was ARMINIUS crucified for you; or was you baptized into the name of CALVIN? "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my SPIRIT, that they may add sin to sin: That walk to go down into Egypt, (and have not asked at my mouth,) to strengthen themselves in the strength of PHARAOH, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt." (*Isai. xxx. 1, 2.*) Shall all the preparation of Egypt be your safety? Shall your chosen learned disputers, with all their knowledge of tongues and human arts, talk you into the truth? Where is that infallible judge? There are enough that say, "Lo, here is CHRIST! and, lo, there he is!" But it is a shrewd argument, that he is not here or there; or else, why did CHRIST say, "Believe them not?" He himself alone it is that is the truth, and let all men be liars before him. "Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is lie to be accounted of?"

If GOD then be that only infallible Judge of pure religion, and well pleasing to himself, who is to be sought unto but him?

But that no man deceive himself, I do not dehort from idolizing men, that every man may make an idol of himself, and cleave to sudden fancies, rashly sprung up in his polluted spirit; but that we may truly sanctify GOD in our hearts, and serve him from a true, though invisible principle of life; that we may attain to that righteousness of faith, which we are not born with, nor the mouth of man can confer upon us, but the breath of the HOLY GHOST; a light and life derived from GOD the FATHER, the Fountain of light and life, from whom proceedeth every good and perfect gift.

Of this it is written, "You have an unction from the

Holy One, and you know all things :” But as for us, it will be our wisdom to have this draught of pure religion, set out by the Apostle, ever before our eyes ; and endeavour to frame our service to GOD accordingly : “ To visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction ; and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.” And this is the third particular, *viz.*,—

III. “ That pure and undefiled religion is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.”

It is set out to us as once GOD showed himself to MOSES. “ Thou shalt see my back parts.” (*Exod. xxxiii. 23.*) Religion is here described in its effects ; which, as it is most feasible to the teacher, so is it most profitable to the learner : for the very face and essence of pure religion is inexpressible : no pencil can draw it, or exhibit the sight of it to other men. Hence there is, and ever has been, a veil drawn over it ; but it ought not to be environed with utter darkness. “ Let your light so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your FATHER which is in heaven.” The sacraments are a veil over the Christian religion ; but the Christian’s unfruitful, yea, impious conversation, a Cimmerian mist, a palpable Egyptian darkness.

The description of pure religion is from a two-fold effect. The first respects others : “ To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.” The second respects ourselves : “ To keep himself unspotted from the world.”

But before I fall upon these particulars, it will not be amiss, first to set out some general considerations, which the nature of this description affords. And *First*, That the Apostle chooseth to describe religion from the effects of it, rather than from the form, efficient, or end. *Secondly*, Why rather from these effects than any other.

1. For the first : The form of pure religion, as I intimated before, is inexpressible ; no man can describe it. It is that “ name written in the white stone, that no man knows, nor can know, but he that has it.” So PLOTINUS,

in a case not unlike to this; 'If thou beest it, thou seest it;' speaking of that eternal form or beauty. And if he had described it from the efficient, which should have been **God**, the Apostle knew very well what juggling and uncertainty there were in that: for all religions call **God** their Author, and pretend His glory for their end. So that this general delineation would have been subject to much mistake, abuse, and deceit. Wherefore, the safest mark to point out true religion, was the effects of it.

2. But why these effects rather than any other? Would not prayer, would not the hearing of the word, or reading of the Scripture, a great deal better have set out the nature of religion? No, verily: for I dare be bold to take the Apostle's part, and rely upon his judgment. As for the external act of prayer, a Pharisee may perform it, both largely and often. And as for hearing divine truth, to talk of it in a natural exercise of our memory and reason, is pleasant even to the unregenerate man: that very natural motion that is in words put in a tunable number, and set off with action, pleaseth all kinds of auditors; and if smartness of reason, and weight of argument, be added to it, the merest philosopher that is can be content to lend his attention thereto, and no acceptable point of religion exercised all the time. **God** himself bears witness against them. "They speak every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear the word that cometh from the **LORD**. They come unto thee, and sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: For with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo! thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not." (*Ezek.* xxxiii. 30—32.) And reading the Scripture privately, is so like the public preaching of it, that I need not refute the vanity of it, if it be not accompanied with obedience.

Let us not therefore, beloved, do as vain limners they say have done, drawn **VENUS** and the Virgin **MARY**

according to the feature of some face they themselves love best : let us not, I say, picture out religion to our own liking, and then be in love with an idol of our own making ; but love and like that which the Apostle has so plainly portrayed to us ; that, whose description consists in “ visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keeping ourselves unspotted from the world.” Which, in two words, is this, Charity and Purity. Of these two, consists that true religion, acceptable to GOD : for I conceive, “ visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction,” excludes not other good deeds from this definition, but is put for the whole office of charity.

1. The first branch is Charity ; the love of GOD and man.

I will not curiously set the bounds of this virtue. It will be enough to intimate, that this exercise of it is not confined to the relief of the body only ; as he is not only fatherless that wants his natural parent, but much more he that has not GOD for his father, through the new birth ; nor she alone a widow, that has lost her natural husband : but every soul is a widow, that is estranged and divorced from her GOD, whose sins have made a separation betwixt her and her Maker. “ Thy Maker is thy husband.” (*Isai.* liv. 5.) He is so indeed to those that are not faithless, and play the harlot ; for of such, saith the LORD, “ She is not my wife, neither am I her husband.” (*Hosea* ii. 2.) He therefore that can reconcile a soul unto GOD, doth not only relieve the fatherless and widow, but procures a husband and father for them, and wholly rids them out of their distressful estate. These outward transient actions, tending to the spiritual or temporal good of our neighbours, are fit testimonies of our sincere religion before men ; but for every man’s private satisfaction, concerning himself, there are divers inward and immanent motions of the soul, which will abundantly help on this confirmation. I will reckon them up out of the mouth of the Apostle : “ Charity suffereth long, and is kind ; charity envieth not ; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave

itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth : beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." (1 *Cor.* xiii. 4—7.)

2. I pass on now to the second branch, Purity ; "to keep himself unspotted from the world."

*Ασπιλον* : The word signifies properly, such kind of spots as are in clothes by spilling some liquid or oily thing on them : a hard task certainly to be religious at this height. Is it to be thought possible that we should wear this garment of mortality every day, nay, every hour and moment, for thirty, forty, fifty, sixty years together, and spoil it by no mischance or miscarriage, either of careless youth, violent manhood, or palsied old age ? To pass through the hurry and tumult of this world, and never be crowded into the dirt, nor bespattered by them that pass by us ? But this is not the meaning of the Apostle, that no man is religious but he that is absolutely spotless : but he sets before us an idea of true religion ; that men having their eyes upon it, may know how much, or rather how little of religion they have attained to ; by how much nearer conformable to this pattern, by so much more religious ; by how much further off, by so much the less religious. He that is not so much as within sight of it, has not seen the least glimpse of godliness, but may be, without any wrong to him, writ down, Atheist. Let every man herein examine himself, and ask his own conscience, how unspotted he has kept himself from the world.

And here as hard a difficulty represents itself, if not harder than before. "To keep himself unspotted from the world ?" Is it not pure irreligiousness to think so ? Impossible to be so ! Who can keep himself pure ? I answer, It is no more than to be kept unspotted from the world.

Here, therefore, steps in the power of CHRIST, that strong arm of GOD for our salvation, the stay and trust of all nations, and the hope of the earth. "For the law of the spirit of life in CHRIST JESUS, hath made me free from

the law of sin and death : For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, GOD sending his own SON in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, that walk not after the flesh but after the SPIRIT." (*Rom. viii. 2—4.*) We walk in the power of that " Spirit of life in CHRIST ; " as our body moves by virtue of our natural spirit. But whether this keeping ourselves pure, be so from GOD, that it is not in any-wise from us, I leave to them to dispute, that are more at leisure : That it must be in us, if there be any religion in us, is all that the text affords me, and it is enough for the trial of our religion.

Pure religion is to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

What is meant by the world, ST. JOHN doth fully unfold. " All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the FATHER, but of the world." Of these then, we must keep ourselves unspotted, if we will be holy as our heavenly FATHER is holy. This is the world that we must keep ourselves unstained of : but for the natural world, all things are sacred and good.

It is sensuality that soils the soul, and fills the mind full of impure thoughts, unworthy desires ; that transforms the human nature, which is capable of the image of GOD, into a loathsome beast. It is covetousness that contracts the large spirit of man, and makes it shrivel up and wrinkle, for want of that which can alone fill it, those unspeakable treasures of heaven. How deformed is that mind, where are nothing but bills and bonds, mouldy money, moth-eaten household stuff, and such like trash ; rusty locks and keys, iron chests, and strong hollow vaults behung with cobwebs ! This is the covetous man's soul, if we could but see within him ; nothing near so beautiful as the foulest dunghill-puddle, where, if you cast your eye, you may haply meet with the reflection of the stars, or the bright circle of the sun, or the white moving clouds, or the pleasant blue-coloured sky. But such things as

an ingenuous man would scarce have the patience to look on, are not only the continual objects of the worldling's sight, but the perpetual life and energy of his mis-shapen spirit. And here, though the proud man may please himself in conceiting, that his inward man is garnished with better bravery, and is a more comely creature, his fancy glittering with the representation of crowns and sceptres, scarlet robes, or holy mitres: yet if we look upon the beast that bears this glaring luggage, his own dear soul, what is the very life and heart of it but pride and envy; the two essentials that constitute the ugliest of all creatures, the deformed fiends of hell? And besides this innate ill-favouredness, his garments drop and reek with the warm tears of the afflicted and oppressed, and are foul and greasy with the sweat of the poor. This is the attire both of the ambitious and covetous man. And certainly, there is very little religion in him that doth not heartily abhor so abominable a monster.

Aye, but is there indeed much religion in him that doth? I confess, a man may be temperate, (for the Devil, as we ordinarily conceive, is not liable to the sins of the flesh,) and yet fall short of true religion. His constitution, or some other strong, but natural or secular design making him so. Covetousness is also often but a complexion, and liberality may be no better in some men.

Some men are also born with a more low and quiet disposition, which is not the virtue of humility, but the lowness and stillness of their natural spirit. But "to be unspotted of the world," is also to be free from the attraction of our own private nature, which is a piece of this dark deceivable world, and to have our whole man acted and regulated by the SPIRIT of GOD. Dull phlegm is no Christian patience; nor all fire, true zeal; especially if it be fed by the fat of the earth. But that is true zeal that flows out in affliction, and glories in the cross and tribulation. He is not chaste that never partook of the bed of defilement, nor temperate that neither eats nor drinks to excess; but he that enjoys the pleasure of the creature,

only in reference to the Creator, tasting the sweetness of his **GOD**, even in his meat and drink, lifting up his soul to the meat that perisheth not, but endures to eternal life. He is untouched of covetousness, that desires nothing for himself, but is a faithful steward of the manifold blessings of **GOD**. He is unstained of the pride of life, who is so dead to himself, that he arrogates no good thing to himself; but doth, from the very ground of his soul, speak that of the Prophet: "Thou, O **LORD**, hast wrought all our works in us." This is, as I said before, the right idea of true religion: by how much more near we come to this, by so much more near we are to religion; and the farther removed hence, the farther off from true religion. If any man doubt of it, I appeal to His judgment that cannot err, even to **GOD** the **FATHER**; and that is included in my last particular, *viz.*,—

IV. That to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted of the world; this is pure and undefiled religion, even in the sight of **GOD** the **FATHER**. I will despatch this point in a word or two.

The sum, as you may remember, of this description of religion, was comprised in these two words, charity and purity. Both these are so near the nature of **GOD**, that he is engaged (as I may so say) to give sentence for them: "**GOD** is love; and he that abideth in love, abideth in **GOD**," saith **ST. JOHN**. Can any thing, then, be more acceptable to **GOD** than love? "To do good and communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices **GOD** is well pleased," saith the Author to the Hebrews. And our blessed **SAVIOUR**, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you; that you may be the children of your **FATHER** which is in heaven: For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. Be ye therefore perfect, as your **FATHER** which is in heaven is perfect." (*Matt. v. 44, 45, 48.*) So then there is no doubt of

God's sentencing that religion for the best, whose nature consists in that which himself loves, and is the image of himself, *viz.*, love or charity. And we have his command for the other part thereof, backed with his own example, *viz.*, "Be ye holy, (saith he,) for I am holy."

But what is this holiness, or purity of God? Is it not this? That whereas he is present in all things, he is not immersed or polluted of any thing? So must our souls be. We are of necessity, here in this orb of death and corruption, actors in the administration of the affairs of this lower world. Let not our hearts sink into that, which our eye must needs attend, if we be not idle and useless. Every man has a part or province committed to him by God: let us administer our part as God doth the whole; not by immersion, or spilling our souls or affections upon the visible creature; but collectedly into God, as God is collected into himself. Let not our souls cleave unto the dust, nor be spilled upon the ground, as the Prophet DAVID sometimes complains; but be as the rays of the sun, which, though they reach to the earth, sink not in the earth; but being fast fixed in their fountain, the sun, always move whither he carries them. Let us also acknowledge our own original, which is from above, and move with God and the Lamb, wheresoever they go. Let us be so pure as not to drown ourselves in the muddy stream of this transient world: let us be so charitable as to wade in it, that others be not drowned. Let our love to men be such, that we make not ourselves unprofitable members of the world. Let our love to God be such, that we keep ourselves pure and unspotted from the love of the world. Let our whole conversation be such, that all men may see, (that have eyes to discern,) both whence and whose we are; that we serve not the will of man, nor are vassals to our own vain desires, but are the free servants of CHRIST, and true worshippers of the living God.

O LORD our GOD, thou which alone art able to speak to the hearts and consciences of men, descend, we beseech thee, powerfully into us by thy HOLY SPIRIT: guide and

teach us in thy ways. Open our eyes, that we may see the wonders of thy law. Set up thy truth in us, and the life of thy SON, above all contentious opinions and conceits of men. Take away all pride, and prejudice, and wrathfulness, and hypocrisy; and grant that the whole Christian world may agree in meekness, and that sweet candour and simplicity that is in CHRIST JESUS. Show unto us, and convince us, of that acceptable service thou requirest at our hands. Let bitterness and heart-burning, reviling and all deceit, and falseness, cease from amongst us; and let the sceptre of thy SON bear rule over us in peace, and truth, and righteousness. Enrich us with those precious graces of love and purity; and let the effectual power of thy SPIRIT be so felt amongst us, that the least of thy Church may be as DAVID, and the house of DAVID as the angel of the LORD before thee.





EXTRACTS

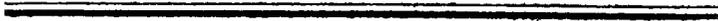
FROM

THE WORKS

OF

STEPHEN CHARNOCK, B. D.,

SOMETIME FELLOW OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD.





# DISCOURSE I.

---

OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

---

JOHN xvii. 3.

*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom thou hast sent.*

THIS chapter contains CHRIST'S last prayer with his disciples, after his farewell sermon, which began after JUDAS'S departure, (*John* xiii. 31,) and ends at the end of the 16th chapter. The design of his sermon, and that of his prayer, was one and the same. His discourse to them was, that they "might have peace in him." (*John* xvi. 33.) That they might acquiesce in him for peace with GOD, that peace of conscience was only to be possessed by the knowledge and love of CHRIST. His prayer for them in their hearing, was, that they might have a firm and full joy; that they might have an antidote against all the fears and troubles they should meet with in the world, and a strong foundation for their own supplications to GOD: it is a copy left upon the earth, of what he doth intercede for as an Advocate in heaven. By an inspection into it, we may know what CHRIST is doing above; for it was that his people might have a full joy, a strong cordial in all afflictions and temptations.

If any part of Scripture be to be magnified above another, this seems to claim the pre-eminence, it being the breathing out of CHRIST'S heart before his departure, for the comfort of his disciples, and the succeeding Church to the end of the world; a standing monument of his whole mediatory design and his unalterable love.

(*Vers* 1.) "These words spake JESUS, and lifted up his

eyes to heaven, and said, FATHER, the hour is come; glorify thy SON, that thy SON may also glorify thee." CHRIST first acted with man in the name of GOD, by teaching; he now acts with GOD in the name of man, by praying. It is a miraculous prayer in the person of CHRIST, who is essentially one with the FATHER, to whom he prays; personally one with the Son of Man, who prays here to the FATHER.

"FATHER." Not our FATHER, as he had taught us to pray, but FATHER, to show that the paternity of the FATHER to him was in another manner than that to his people. He was the natural SON of GOD; believers, adopted ones.

"Thy SON." In a way of eminency and peculiarity above others; thy SON, by eternal generation; thy SON, in his humanity by the grace of personal union.

"The hour is come." The hour of my passion, the hour of thy satisfaction, the hour of thy expectation, the hour of my victory and thy glory. I am coming to the last upshot of my humiliation, I have managed an obedience to thee hitherto with all care and diligence, I am now come to perfect it by my death; I will not decline the last act of it; decline not thou, O FATHER, the glorifying of men, while I stand as the butt of all thy wrath for the sins of men.

"Glorify thy SON." Glorify him in his death, by accepting it as the death of thy SON for the sins of the world; glorify him in his death, by manifesting at that time that I am thy SON. GOD did so by miraculous testimonies of his innocency in the time of his passion, by rending of the temple's vail, obscurity of the sun, quaking of the earth, and the cleaving of the rocks, which made the centurion that guarded him pronounce him to be "truly the SON of GOD." (*Matt. xxvii. 54.*)

Glorify him in a resurrection; glorify thy SON in his Deity, by a manifestation of it; glorify thy SON in his humanity, by conferring new endowments of honour and immortality upon it. He prays here for a manifestation of

the glory of his Deity, which had been obscured; for an addition of glory to his humanity, which had not been yet enjoyed, by a resurrection and exaltation of it to the right hand of the FATHER. He prays for a manifestation of his Deity: "Glorify thy SON. He was the SON of GOD by eternal generation; it is the glory of his Deity therefore which is here desired by him; not the essential glory of the Deity, for that could not be interrupted; not an addition to it, for being infinite, he was not capable of it; but a manifestation of it; not simply in itself, but in his humanity, which had been veiled by the flesh, ever since he emptied himself into it. He prays to be glorified in that state wherein he prays, which was a state of union with the human nature. As the FATHER was to be glorified by CHRIST, so was CHRIST to be glorified by the FATHER. Now the FATHER could not be glorified by the SON in a way of addition, but manifestation, causing the glory of GOD to break upon the world, which had so long been obscured by an universal idolatry. He glorified the FATHER by a manifestation of his name; and in like manner is glorified by the FATHER in the manifestation of his Deity.

His petition for this glory he urgeth by two arguments:

1. One in *ver. 1*: "That the SON also may glorify thee." The glory of the FATHER was concerned in it, whose justice, wisdom, love, and all the attributes so signally manifested in redemption, had lain under as great a disguise without the glory of CHRIST, as the Deity of the SON did under the veil of his flesh.

2. Another, taken from the happiness and salvation of believers: "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." (*Ver. 2.*) Unless the humanity had been glorified by a resurrection, there would have been no assurance that the debt had been satisfied, and no sure ground of faith; unless he had been exalted to the right hand of GOD as an Advocate, there had been no security for our debts.

We now come to the text: "This is eternal life," &c.

This is a transition from his prayer, declaring what eternal life was. Some understand it of the intuitive knowledge of GOD in heaven; but it rather seems to be meant of the knowledge of GOD here in this state of pilgrimage.

The knowledge of GOD is not formally eternal life, but it is the cause of it, and the antecedent means to it; because if men had the true knowledge of CHRIST impressed upon them, it could not be but they must believe in him, and consequently have both a right to eternal life, and the foretaste of it.

This knowledge of GOD is not only a knowledge of GOD and CHRIST in the theory, but such a knowledge as is joined with ardent love to him, and cordial trust in him; as, "Then shall I know, even as also I am known;" (1 Cor. xiii. 12;) *i. e.*, I shall love and rejoice, as I am beloved and delighted in by GOD. It is not only a knowledge of GOD in his will, but a knowledge of GOD in his nature; both must go together: we must know him in his nature; we must be obedient to his will. The Devil hath a greater knowledge of GOD's being than any man upon earth; but since he is a rebel to his will, he is not happy by his knowledge. It must be such a knowledge as descends from the head to the heart, as is light in the mind, and heat in the affections; such a knowledge of GOD as includes faith in him.

Two things constitute this knowledge.

1. We must know GOD, the true GOD, as the Gospel discovers him, in opposition to all false gods; that he is spiritual, powerful, merciful, faithful.

2. We must know GOD as the Father of CHRIST; we must know him in that relation to CHRIST, without which knowledge we can have no right conceptions of the economy of redemption, because all proceeds from the FATHER through the SON.

"Thee, the only true GOD." This particle "only" is put to exclude false gods. It excludes none that are of

the same essence, but all that are not; the SON is not excluded from being GOD; as *Deut.* xxxii. 12: "So the LORD alone did lead them." JEHOVAH: The SON is not excluded by that name JEHOVAH, for CHRIST led them, and in their murmuring they are said to tempt CHRIST. (*1 Cor.* x. 9.) It was CHRIST, who is the Angel of the LORD, that conducted them. (*Exod.* xxiii. 20; xxxii. 34; *Isai.* lxiii. 9.) The word "only" doth not exclude the SON, for then, when it is joined with the SON, it should exclude the FATHER from being GOD. But it is joined with the SON: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am GOD, and there is none else; I have sworn by myself, that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear." (*Isai.* xlv. 22.) That this is understood of CHRIST by the best interpreter is evident from *Rom.* xiv. 10, 11; where, speaking of the standing of all before the judgment seat of CHRIST, he proves it by this place: "For as it is written, As I live, saith the LORD, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to GOD." In *Isaiah* it is spoken in opposition to idols, as appears by the 20th verse; and according to the Apostle's understanding, it was CHRIST that spake there, asserting three times there was no GOD besides him. (*Ver.* 11, 12.) Shall the FATHER, therefore, be excluded from the Deity, because CHRIST saith so positively there is no GOD besides him? There is no place to which that in the *Romans* can refer, but to that in *Isaiah*.

The FATHER is called likewise, the "true GOD," in opposition to idols; for when CHRIST saith all power was given to him, that he might give eternal life to as many as were given to him, those that were given to him were among the Gentiles as well as the Jews; he here respects them both. The Gentiles worshipped many gods, the Jews worshipped one GOD, but rejected CHRIST as Mediator. Now the knowledge of both is necessary to salvation. In the first clause he respects the multiplicity of heathen gods, in the other the Jewish contempt of the Mediator. So, then, the expression excludes only the

heathen idols. In 1 *Thess.* i. 9: "How you turned to GOD from idols, to serve the living and true GOD." GOD is called the true GOD in opposition to idols.

From these words I shall endeavour to show,—

I. That the knowledge of GOD, and CHRIST the Mediator, is the necessary means to eternal life and happiness.

II. That the true and saving knowledge of GOD is only in and by CHRIST.

For the first: The knowledge of GOD, and CHRIST the Mediator, is the necessary means of eternal life and happiness. It is the knowledge of GOD as discovered, not in the creatures, but in the Scripture; a knowledge of GOD through faith in CHRIST, which is able to make us wise unto salvation. The tree of knowledge in Paradise became our death, and the tree of knowledge in the Gospel becomes our life. The knowledge of GOD and CHRIST doth not only free us from a dark and obscure walk, but is "the light of life." (*John* viii. 12.) The true knowledge of GOD and CHRIST is an effectual and infallible means of salvation.

This knowledge is a certain, full, and persuasive assent to the unity of GOD, his nature, his word; to the mediation of CHRIST, and GOD's communications through him, grounded upon a divine light, as plain and evident to the mind as any natural light is. Touching which I shall show,—

1. In general, What kind of knowledge this is. 2. That this is necessary. 3. In what respect it is necessary. 4. What are the properties of this knowledge, whereby it is distinguished from other knowledge, which is not saving.

1. What kind of knowledge in general this is.

(1.) There is a speculative knowledge. A study and knowledge of GOD upon the same account that men study and desire to know other things that are excellent and delightful; as both the contemplation of GOD in creation, and the contemplation of GOD in redemption, afford notions very gustful to a delicate understanding. Thus a

man speculatively knows **GOD** and **CHRIST**, when he is well skilled in the revelation of **GOD**, the history of **CHRIST**, the analogy between the types and predictions of **CHRIST** in the Old Testament, and the accomplishment of them in the New, in the person of **CHRIST**. A knowledge of **GOD** by creation, many of the wiser sort of Heathens had, who have discoursed excellently of the nature of **GOD**. (*Rom. i. 21.*) They are said to know **GOD**. A knowledge of **GOD** by revelation, the Jews had in the Old Testament, who yet rejected the **SON** of **GOD**; a knowledge of **CHRIST** many learned men professing Christianity have, who know **CHRIST** in the bark of the letter, not in the sap of the **SPIRIT**; as the Jews knew him under the veil of types, but were ignorant of his person when he came among them. This is such a knowledge as men have of a beautiful picture, or a comely person with whom they have no acquaintance; or as an astronomer knows the stars, without receiving any more special influence from them than other men, or the inanimate creatures.

(2.) There is a practical knowledge of **GOD** and **CHRIST**, which is not only an acquaintance with **GOD**, but a laying up his words in our hearts; (*Job xxii. 21, 22;*) which is not only a floating knowledge in the head, but a knowledge sinking to the heart; not a knowledge in the brain, but efficacious to make an union with him: "He hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true," (*1 John v. 20,*) where union follows upon knowledge. The speculations of **GOD** may fill the head, and the heart be empty of a sense of him, and the life barren of an imitation of **GOD**. This doth not deserve the name of knowledge, but in the Apostle's account is truly ignorance: "Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (*1 John ii. 3, 4.*) Such answer not the end of knowledge; and it can no more rationally be called a knowledge of **GOD**,

since it hath no life and soul in it, than a dead carcass can be called a man. Such a knowledge that hath no life in it, cannot be the means to eternal life; what hath not life cannot convey life. The Devil's knowledge is a dead knowledge; but the Knowledge of GOD in an angel, joined with obedience to GOD in his practice, is his eternal life. This is wisdom entering into the soul, "truth in the hidden parts," (*Psa.* li. 6,) the knowledge of the object, and an embracing the end of that knowledge. For,—

[1.] This is an enlivening knowledge. A spiritual knowledge is always attended with spiritual life; a new man, and such a knowledge as is after the image of GOD, go together: "Having put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him." (*Col.* iii. 10.) As the natural image of GOD consisted in understanding and will, so the spiritual image of GOD, by grace, consists in rectifying those faculties; the understanding with a spiritual knowledge, and the will with a spiritual bias. The faculties we have from GOD, as Creator, by nature; the operation of those faculties, about their spiritual objects, we have by grace. As the Apostle distinguisheth the form of godliness from the power, (*2 Tim.* iii. 5,) so he doth a form of knowledge from the life of it; (*Rom.* ii. 20;) which is a knowledge in the letter, not in the spirit: (*ver.* 29:) the one is a picture wherein every limb is painted, the other is quickened and animated with a divine life. Speculative knowledge is as the light of torches, guiding, not heating; this as the sun, which both directs and warms; a fire felt, as well as seen; truth known, and truth used as a compass to sail by. When GOD is known and embraced as the chief good and ultimate end; CHRIST known and embraced as the way to be at peace with GOD, and an honourer of him; such a knowledge is not only like animal spirits in the brain, but vital spirits in the heart, enabling for action; not like a cloud hanging in the air, but distilling in fruitful showers, for the assistance of the earth.

[2.] A likening knowledge. When we know **CHRIST** crucified, in the conquest of our sins by his death; **CHRIST** glorified, in the elevation of our souls by his ascension. To know a living **GOD** with a dead heart, is at best but a carnal knowledge, a dead knowledge, unsuitable to a living object. To know **CHRIST** crucified, and have no efficacy of his death; to know **CHRIST** risen, and lie closed up in the grave of sin; to know **CHRIST** is ascended, and have creeping affections upon the earth, this is a notion of **CHRIST**, not a knowledge of him. That is the teaching of **GOD**, when the truth is learned "as it is in **JESUS**;" (*Eph. iv. 21*;) powerfully directive, conforming the soul, as it did the human nature of **CHRIST**, to the will and mind of **GOD**; when the understanding is not forced to comply with the corrupt appetite of the will, but the will conformed to the true notions of an enlightened understanding. Such a knowledge ravisheth the mind, quickens the prayers, seasons the converse, and fortifies against temptations; such a knowledge wraps up the soul in admiration, spirits the will to operation, allures it to a close union with the truth discovered, until it be like a leaven working in the will, and shaping the whole man according to its own mould. The fixing our eye on **GOD** by a spiritual knowledge, derives a tincture from him, dying our souls into its own likeness; if the life doth not differ from that of an infidel, the knowledge, though as high as an angel's, is no more saving than that of a devil.

[3.] There is an experimental knowledge of **GOD**. Speculative knowledge is a sound of words and thoughts, experimental a sense of them: and **GOD** hath not left the soul without a spiritual relish, any more than he hath left the body without a tasting' palate. It is a "witness of truth in us." (*1 John v. 10*.) A spiritual knowledge of **CHRIST** is not only a relish of his precepts, but a draught of **CHRIST** in the soul, a receiving of the spiritual emanations of **GOD** and **CHRIST** upon the heart; it is to know **GOD** in the power of his grace, and **CHRIST** in the virtue of his life; (*Phil. iii. 10*;) **GOD** in the streams of his love,

and CHRIST in the sweetness of his blood; when we see him upon the cross, and taste him in the soul, which is not only a knowledge by the understanding, but a knowledge by a spiritual sense. (*Phil. i. 9.*)

2. This knowledge of GOD is necessary. Religion and true grace is called wisdom in the *Proverbs*. Wisdom is the knowledge of the highest things; no wisdom without the knowledge of truth, therefore no wisdom without the knowledge of GOD, the prime truth, the chief good, whence all truth and goodness in other things flow. This is the portal; no happiness can be without truth and goodness; all religion consists of them, all felicity is composed of them; truth to be known, goodness to be embraced by the creature, else no communication of happiness to it. Knowledge and love fit us for acquaintance with, and enjoyment of GOD. We actually embrace him by love, after we perceive him fit for our embraces by knowledge. Knowledge imprints the similitude and idea of the object upon the understanding; love draws out the soul to close with the object so understood. By knowledge we see what is enjoyable, and worthy our affection and fruition; by love we enjoy what we see.

(1.) This was the subject matter of the ancient Gospel promises. This GOD promised in the evangelical dispensation, when he would manifest himself in the riches of his glory, and treasures of his goodness to his creatures; "Thou shalt know that I am the LORD;" (*Isai. xlix. 23.*) and the chief happiness of the Church in the confluence of the Gentiles to her, as the foundation of all religion, is his manifestation to them, and their clear view of that manifestation: "And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day." (*Isai. xix. 21.*) It is the peculiar of the Gospel: "Then shall we know the LORD;" (*Hos. vi. 3.*) when the knowledge of GOD shall be spread over the world by the great Prophet, in the teachings of his SPIRIT, then should men have an ardent zeal to increase in the knowledge of GOD. And in this knowledge our spiritual life consists: "We

shall live in his sight. How?—By the knowledge of the **LORD**. By the knowledge of **GOD** in this life, men have foretastes of the life to come. It is by the knowledge of **GOD** in **CHRIST**, that we see the sword of justice sheathed, which guarded heaven against us; the bowels of mercy enlarged to open heaven for us. It discovers **GOD** calmed and appeased, gives us delightful views of him, and a secure and complete happiness.

(2.) There is no way of conveying happiness that can be conceived without this. Our ignorance must be removed, whereby we may seek him. **GOD** hath ordered knowledge to be the first step to salvation, so that none are saved that come not in by the way of the knowledge of **GOD** revealed in the Gospel: “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” (1 *Tim.* ii. 4.) The Gospel being nothing else but a manifestation of **GOD** in **CHRIST**, a knowledge of this precedes the application of salvation. As the sun doth not make his heat to be known, but by his beams; so **GOD** doth not save according to his ordinary dispensation, but by the knowledge of himself; though the discovery of himself, in divers ages, hath been various and by degrees. As the light at the dawn is more obscure than that which is near the approach of the sun to the horizon; so there was a more obscure knowledge of **GOD**, and the **REDEEMER**, at the time of the first promise. **ADAM** might not know well what to think of **GOD**, when he saw himself expelled Paradise, just after a gracious promise of a Deliverer. It was somewhat brighter at the giving the Law, when **GOD** would give man some dark shadows and pictures of **CHRIST**, and when himself would be known by his name **JEHOVAH**, and the conduct of his angel. It was clearer in the times of the Prophets, when the chariot of the Sun of Righteousness was approaching to the world, and the light broke out before him; but a more glorious discovery when this Sun did arise and appear in the earth; yet from first to last, every dispensation was made up of some discovery of **GOD**, the manifestation of his name, the

declarations and representations of the MESSIAH. The knowledge of GOD and the REDEEMER being the design of GOD in every age of the world, is no less necessary now than it was then ; and indeed the knowledge of no other thing can confer a blessedness upon us. Whatsoever makes another happy, must be greater and better than that which is made happy ; but since nothing in the world is better than the soul of man, all the knowledge of inferior things cannot constitute him blessed. The knowledge of GOD and CHRIST can only fill the insatiable mind, satisfy the vast desires, and settle the staggering soul.

(3.) The happiness of heaven, which is the ultimate and complete happiness of the soul, consists in a knowledge of GOD. The sight of GOD is made by our SAVIOUR the reward of purity of heart : “ The pure in heart shall see GOD ; ” (*Matt. v. 8* ; ) and to see him as he is, is the glory of the other world, (*1 John iii. 2, 3* ,) when all the rational faculties shall be satisfied with light, and the desires replenished with love. The privation of this knowledge is hell : the punishment consists in a banishment “ from the presence of the LORD.” (*2 Thess. i. 9* .) And if felicity in the highest region, consists in a sight and knowledge of GOD, the happiness of the soul must consist in the same, according to the imperfect degrees. If a perfect happiness cannot be without a perfect knowledge, imperfect cannot be without a partial knowledge. When we are acquainted with him, we are not only at peace, but can “ delight ourselves in the ALMIGHTY, and lift up our faces unto GOD.” (*Job xxii. 26* .) Knowledge of GOD here, is the dawn of heaven ; knowledge hereafter, the meridian of it.

3. In what respects is this knowledge of GOD necessary ? We owe duty to GOD as we are creatures ; we are unable to perform it, as we are guilty offenders ; we must know GOD to know our duty ; we must know CHRIST to know the way of performing it : we must know GOD, therefore, in the perfections of his nature, and CHRIST in the sufficiency of his mediation. We must know GOD in his ravishing goodness, his affrighting justice, his condescend-

ing mercy, his adorable wisdom, his unshaken veracity; we must know him as offended by sin, as pacified by **CHRIST**: without the one we shall not be humbled; without the other we shall not approach to him: we must know him in his precepts, else how can we obey him? in his promises, else how can we trust him? We must know **CHRIST** in his offices, as an atoning Priest, as an instructing Prophet, a protecting and governing King. We must know him in his transaction with his **FATHER**, descent to the world, his return to heaven; in his humiliation on earth, exaltation in heaven; we must know him upon the cross, and upon the throne, and the ends of both his states. "Know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings." (*Phil.* iii. 10.) How else can we be conformed to his death, or have confidence in his life? We must know him in his nature, without which we cannot have a knowledge either of the truth or efficacy of his satisfaction: the truth of it depended upon the reality of his humanity, the efficacy upon his divinity. Without this knowledge how can we believe in him? how can we love him? how can we perform those acts which are necessary to our salvation? This is a knowledge above the knowledge of nature; that is too muddy to be a spring of any spiritual action, raised love, or hearty reliance. It is not a knowledge of **GOD** by rational deductions, but spiritual illuminations. The knowledge of **GOD** in the creatures is as the dawn; the knowledge of **GOD** in the Scripture, is as the day-spring. But what is either dawn or day-spring to a blind eye? The day-spring may be in the world, yet not in our hearts: we cannot work without light; and though there be the greatest light, we cannot work without sight.

That which is precedent to eternal life, cannot be without the knowledge of **GOD**.

(1.) Without it there can be no motion towards **GOD**, or for **GOD**. Without a natural knowledge of **GOD**, we can never think of him, or have any natural notions to him; without a spiritual knowledge, we cannot perform

any spiritual action. As a beast cannot act rationally, unless he had the reason of a man; so a man cannot act spiritually, unless he hath the understanding of a Christian; an understanding given, whereby to "know him that is true," who ought to be the proper centre of all our actions. (1 *John* v. 20.) The whole body is dark, if the eye be so; (*Matt.* vi. 22, 23;) the whole body of a man's acts are acts of darkness, if the mind be blind. While the eye of the soul remains muddy, all our perceptions will be tingured with that corruption: what the eye is to the body, that is the understanding to the soul. The truth was in **JESUS**: it must be in us as it was in him; not as a loose notion, which would have engendered staggering motions in the service of **GOD**, and work of his mediation; but as a rooted habit, a law in his heart, established as firm in his heart as it was in the sanction. Since therefore all our actions towards **GOD** are to be both a reasonable and a spiritual service, there must be a reasonable and a spiritual knowledge, as the foundation, to raise up action as the building.

[1.] There can be no worship of **GOD** without it. Since **GOD** made us for his own glory, that we might do those things whereby he might be honoured, we must know the excellency of his nature, and what is suitable to him: it is impossible to glorify him whose honour and greatness we are wholly ignorant of. **DAVID** was **GOD**'s servant, had a desire to serve him, and therefore desires **GOD** to give him understanding, that he might know his testimonies. Worship is the fruit of knowledge. **GOD** promises to be known of the Egyptians in the time of the Gospel, and then they should do sacrifice and oblation. (*Isai.* xix. 21.) The Egyptians knew there was a **GOD**, a supreme **GOD**, but they never worshipped him until they came to know him in the Gospel-revelation. "In that day" he would be known to them. In what day? In the day when they should speak the language of Canaan; (*ver.* 18;) in the day when he should send them a **SAVIOUR**. (*Ver.* 20.) There is no worship acceptable to **GOD** without the

knowledge of CHRIST, and access by him. DANIEL opened his window, and prayed towards the temple,—a type of CHRIST. He that comes to GOD, must not only know that he is, but he must know that he is a rewarder; (*Heb. xi. 6*;) not by a natural knowledge, (for so the Heathens both knew the being of GOD, and the bounty of GOD,) but a distinct knowledge of GOD, as a Rewarder and Acceptor in CHRIST: for that the Apostle means, when, in describing this way of worship, and giving examples of it, he gives instances of the faith of the worshippers, and their respecting GOD in CHRIST.

[2.] There can be no obedience to GOD, without the knowledge of him. The will of GOD is the rule of obedience, and CHRIST is the pattern of obedience. Obedience to GOD is an imitation of GOD in righteousness and holiness: we must therefore know the perfections of GOD, which we are to imitate, as well as the law of GOD, according to which we are to regulate our actions. Obedience therefore is described to be nothing else but knowledge digested into will, affections, and practice. Defect in knowledge, will cause error in practice. Alienation from GOD's life, *i. e.*, from an imitation of his life, as well as animation by a living principle contrary to him, is rooted in the "blindness of the heart;" (*Eph. iv. 18*;) and the reason men take steps from one sin to another, and are fruitful in iniquity, is, because they "know not the LORD." (*Jer. ix. 3*.) When men are ignorant of the true GOD, they will not want PHARAOH's apology for their sin: "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?" (*Exod. v. 2*.)

All obedience ariseth from knowledge. As error in knowledge was the first deformity of man, and the cause of all the rest, so the knowledge of GOD is the first line the SPIRIT draws upon the soul; whence, as from the first matter, all those beautiful graces that appear in every region of the soul are formed. Every action of obedience, as it must be quickened with grace, so it must be informed

with knowledge. Holiness must be a holiness of truth, springing up as a branch from truth as a root. (*Eph. iv. 24.*)

“Know thou the GOD of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart,” is DAVID’S directory to SOLOMON. (1 *Chron. xxviii. 9.*) No service without knowledge, no sincere service without a spiritual knowledge of GOD in covenant. As ignorance of GOD is the cause of sin, so the knowledge and sense of him is the best antidote against it. If we know him in the glory of his grace, in the amiableness of his nature, what a delight shall we have in our approaches to him, and our actions for him? The more clearly he is understood, the more he is beloved; and the more he is beloved, the more readily he is obeyed. “The angels that behold his face, run cheerfully to perform his errands:” (*Psa. ciii. 20.*) and no doubt but the perfect illumination of the glorified soul, is one cause of the steadiness of their wills. ST. PAUL’S questions were orderly, when he was charged by CHRIST, first, “Who art thou?” Then, “What wilt thou have me to do?” Let me know who I am to obey.

(2.) No grace can be without the knowledge of GOD. Some knowledge of GOD may be without grace; the devils are as much filled with one, as they are empty of the other. But it is not conceivable how grace can be without knowledge. The knowledge of GOD in the text, may be called eternal life, because all graces which are the seed of eternal life grow up from that as a root. In the change of the soul, there is an act of vision before an act of transfiguration, the removing the veil before the turning the heart. The eye is opened, light darts upon the understanding, and thence beams upon the will. The glory of GOD is beheld, before the frame of the heart is changed. The whole work of grace is called light, as the whole state of nature is called darkness: as the understanding is the leading faculty, so knowledge is the directing principle that leads, and the will follows: the enlightening of the one, makes men quickly capable of the quickening of the other.

The new creation, as well as the old, begins with, "Let there be light;" whence all the creatures were to derive their beauty. The knowledge of **GOD** and **CHRIST** is the chief ingredient which makes the composition of the inner man. As without light there could not be a visible world, so without this there cannot be a spiritual. All those things which "pertain to godliness," whereof grace is not the meanest, "are given through the knowledge of him. (*2 Pet. i. 2, 3.*) Without the knowledge of **GOD**'s justice, we shall not fear him; without knowledge of his ability and fidelity we shall not trust him. Without knowledge of his goodness, we shall not seek him; and without a knowledge of his majesty, we shall not humble ourselves before him. So that without the knowledge of **GOD** there will be no grace in the principle or habit.

To instance in particular graces.

[1.] Faith cannot be without the knowledge of **GOD** and **CHRIST**. Knowledge is antecedent to faith in order of nature: "I know whom I have believed;" (*2 Tim. i. 12;*) "That you may know and believe that I am he." (*Isai. xliii. 10.*) Who can read that doth not know his letters? Who can believe that understands nothing of the perfections of **GOD**, or offices of **CHRIST**? "He that comes to **GOD**, must know that he is." The knowledge of the bare existence of **GOD**, will not bring the creature to him; but the knowledge that he is a rewarder will; because this hath a spirit of life in it, to quicken the affections, and elevate the heart, which was before dead to any such motion. That knowledge which acquaints a man with no good in the object known, will never excite any motion to it. No man can come to **GOD**, who is infinitely above him, unless he knows him to be infinitely good, and ready to receive him. There is therefore a necessity of the knowledge of **GOD**, as a **GOD** of tender bowels, and therefore a necessity of the knowledge of **CHRIST**, in whom only he discovers himself to be a gracious Father. The spiritual knowledge of him in **CHRIST**, is an emission of virtue from the loadstone, that draws the iron to cleave to it. We

must know his goodness the fountain, and his faithfulness the executor of promises, and his power that enables him to be as great and good as his word. We never reasonably trust a man that we know not fit to be trusted; we cannot trust a GOD whom we know not to be the highest goodness. Men by reason know that there is a GOD, but it is so dim in the discovery of his perfections, that it sees not light enough to raise it up to any act of dependance on him. The discovery of GOD in CHRIST in the heart, sets the whole man a crying out, Soul, return to thy rest.

[2.] There is no desire for GOD without it. The Israelites' stomachs were never sharpened for Canaan, until they tasted the grapes of the country. The apprehension of GOD as true, makes us adore him; the apprehension of GOD as good, makes us desire him. The more clearly we know his perfections, the more fervently we shall desire both to enjoy him and imitate him. How soon will such knowledge bud in desires, and blossom and flower in good affections? "If thou hadst known, thou wouldest have asked." (*John* iv. 10.) If thou hadst a clear knowledge, thou wouldest have had an eager affection. If we know not how full a spring GOD is, and ready to emit his streams, how can we thirst for his boundless communications to us? Where there hath been a relish, there will be an appetite: (*1 Pet.* ii. 3:) desire of the word, riseth from a taste that the LORD is gracious. This desire after GOD springs not from a bare speculation, but a strong impression; a spiritual taste: for a bare speculation hath no more strength to make a motion in the will, than the poetical descriptions of far countries can persuade a potent Prince to take a long voyage for the conquest. Without such a knowledge of GOD, men will rather shake off all thoughts of him, all wishes for him, and no more desire the fruition of him, than a mole desires to see the light of the sun.

[3.] There is no love to GOD without knowledge of him. Though a thing be made up of delights, and hath an amiableness, interwoven in every part, yet if it be not known, it cannot be affected. We cannot love GOD with all our

hearts, until we first love him with all our minds. Love always supposeth the knowledge of the beloved object. No man can be beloved by another, until something be seen in him as lovely; either the wisdom of his head, the sweetness of his nature, the beauty of his person, or the obligingness of his carriage. How can we have any elevated affection to **GOD**, unless we understand the amiable-ness of his nature, the infiniteness of his perfections, and the expression of them for the good of mankind? How can it be expected any can have affection to **CHRIST**, who understands nothing of those treasures of knowledge, grace, and wisdom wherewith he is replenished; who knows nothing spiritually and feelingly of the design of his coming, his low condescension, yearning compassion, his full goodness, and his sincere affection? Without it, we shall value **GOD** and **CHRIST** no more than a swine doth a pearl. The mind must be spiritually illuminated to see **GOD** in an evangelical lustre; it must be filled with affecting notions of **GOD**, before the heart can have a valuation of him. The Apostle indeed saith, "Whom having not seen you love;" (1 *Pet.* i. 8;) but he doth not say, whom having not known you love. There is a knowledge of invisible things by faith, which takes possession of the heart by the ear, and attracts the affections. Ignorance of **GOD** must be removed before an affection to him will take place; since it is not only a cause but a part of our enmity to him. We may have the knowledge of a scholar, without the love of a Christian; but we cannot have a christian love without a christian knowledge, and savoury apprehension of **GOD** and **CHRIST**.

[4.] No comfort can be without the knowledge of **GOD** and **CHRIST**. Peace as well as grace is multiplied by this. (2 *Pet.* i. 2.) Acquaintance with **GOD** is the channel through which the blessings of peace flow into our souls. (*Job* xxii. 21, 22, &c.) All joy in or from **GOD**, pre-supposeth a knowledge of him; for spiritual joy is seated in the mind. All the pleasure that rational creatures have, is by

an act of their understanding. The light of knowledge begets the light of joy and peace in the heart ; as the light in the body of the sun begets the light and shine in the air. The assurance of understanding, doth arise from the “acknowledgment of the mystery of **GOD** the **FATHER**, and of **CHRIST** :” (*Col. ii. 2* :) because the knowledge of those, is a means to beget assurance. In the light of **GOD**, we enjoy the light of comfort : “In thy light we shall see light.” (*Psa. xxxvi. 9*.)

As the operations of the will depend upon the clearness of the understanding, so the comforts of the soul depend upon the clearness of the understanding, contemplating the object. The best good, though never so near us, cannot be comfortable to us while we are under the darkness of ignorance : nor can there be any comfort without the knowledge of **CHRIST**. There was in **ADAM**, no necessity of the knowledge of **CHRIST**, because there was no necessity of his knowledge of a Mediator in his innocent estate. He knew **GOD** in his nature, and in his personal relations, and his works of creation : but what a misery are we in, without the knowledge of **CHRIST**, as well as **GOD** ! What pleasure can we have in the apprehensions of an offended **GOD**, unless we know him in the methods of his reconciliation ; which cannot be understood but by the knowledge of **CHRIST**, because no atonement is made by any but him ? The more any knows of **GOD** without **CHRIST**, the more he knows of a deplorable contrariety to him. What spark of joy can he have, unless he can see a way of bringing **GOD** down to him, or of his ascent to **GOD** ; unless **GOD** would strip himself of his nature to converse with him, or he be unclothed of his corruption to be fit to converse with **GOD** ? He sees terror, as well as sweetness ; wrath, as well as grace. The knowledge of **CHRIST**, as receiving the darts of **GOD**'s wrath upon himself, to reflect upon the soul the beams of his grace, must step in, before the thoughts of **GOD** can be comfortable any more to us than the devils.

4. What are the properties of this knowledge of **GOD** and **CHRIST**, whereby it is distinguished from that knowledge which is not saving.

The world pretends to know **GOD**; but **CHRIST** flatly denies it, and appeals to his **FATHER** for the truth of it in his last prayer: "The world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me." (*John xvii. 25.*) That part of the world that **CHRIST** had preached to, and declared the message from his **FATHER**, knew not **GOD**; they heard the report of him, they could not but know the doctrine delivered, but they rejected it, and therefore had no knowledge of **GOD**. He that hath a true sense of **GOD**, cannot but love him, trust in him, humble himself before him, hope in him, resign up himself to him, and bless and praise him for his manifestation.

The difference therefore of this knowledge from any other, is, 1. In regard of the effects. 2. In regard of the manner of knowing.

1. In regard of the effects.

(1.) It is a transforming knowledge. Such a knowledge as doth necessarily include a conformity to the object. There is an external manifestation of **GOD** in the Gospel to the ear; an internal manifestation in the heart: the one is called a report, the other a revelation. (*Isai. liii. 1.*) This "mystery is made manifest to his saints, to whom **GOD** would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is **CHRIST** in you the hope of glory:" when **CHRIST** is made known in them the hope of glory, as well as to them; when the knowledge of **GOD** in his grace, and the history of **CHRIST** in his nature, offices, and passion, is turned into an image and stamp, working the heart into its own form. In the saving knowledge, the notions of **GOD** in his Gospel-discovery, and of **CHRIST** in his mediation, are manifest in the heart; insinuating themselves secretly into the inward parts of the soul, and moulding the heart into the form of the evangelical doctrine. Such a revelation of **GOD** and **CHRIST**

in a man, as changeth the whole frame and model of counsels and counsellors, which before were followed: when "CHRIST was revealed" in him, he "conferred not with flesh and blood." (*Gal. i. 16.*) The historical knowledge of CHRIST, is a knowledge of CHRIST in the purity and misery of his flesh; the other is a knowledge of CHRIST in the renewing of his SPIRIT. The one is a knowledge of the truth as it is in the doctrine; the other, a knowledge of the truth "as it is in JESUS;" a transcribing the copy in the heart. The knowledge of this, is like a man's knowledge of a virtuous person, whose amiable endowments and carriage he admires, and from an admiration proceeds to imitation, and framing himself according to that pattern. When knowledge creates love, love delights to draw the picture of the beloved person.

(2.) It is an affective knowledge. All saving knowledge is full of sense. The beams of truth in the mind, beget a kindly heat in the will. The understanding forms motives of fear and love of GOD, and offers them to the will to be pursued: the soul desires to know him more, that it may love him. All men have some knowledge of GOD, but it is not a divine knowledge; it is without the affections of love to him, and delight in him. This saving knowledge is a knowledge of reality in GOD and CHRIST; another may have clearer notions, know truths in their connexions, but a Christian knows with a more excellent knowledge, because more affective, with a heat as well as light: what shines upon the head, kindles love in the heart. Others have the same object of knowledge, but it appears not in that amiableness to them; there is a difference between a rational and spiritual knowledge, as there is between the SPIRIT, the author of the one, and reason, the spring of the other. Natural knowledge lies sleeping in the head, without moving the affections; spiritual light cannot be without spiritual heat: "Their eyes were opened, and their hearts burned:" (*Luke xxiv. 31, 32:*) the one hath light like that of a torch; the other has influence as well as light, like that of the sun. It is the property of light, not

only to enlighten, but to heat. Some therefore make fire to be nothing else but condensed light, and light to be rarified fire. The true light of **God** is always accompanied with a flame of love, which clasps about the object. The divine philosopher could say, that souls, first by a view, and then a love of the divine beauty, recover their wings, and fly up to their heavenly country. Have we therefore not only a shine in our heads, but a warmth in our hearts? Not only a beam in our minds, but a spark in our affections? It is then a saving knowledge of **God**. Both must go together: knowledge without affections is stupid, and affections without knowledge are childish. The diviner the light in the mind, the warmer will love be in the soul. The clearer and stronger the beams upon the wall, the stronger the reflection. In knowledge we are passive in the reception of the divine beams: by affection we are active, and give ourselves to **God**.

Try then your knowledge of **God** by your affections to him. What strong desires are there for the enjoyment of **God** and **CHRIST**, what delight in approaches to him, what propensities of the heart in spiritual duties! Do they spring from affection, or move by the fears of conscience? Doth the knowledge of **CHRIST** in his mediation, natures, offices, as the only remedy for our lost souls, kindle desires, holy affections, inexpressible heart-breakings for him? Is there a love to **God** rising out of a sense of his love to lost man? **God** cannot be known an infinite, and unbounded, and outflowing goodness, without a flight of our affections to him.

It is as impossible that a good spiritually known should not be beloved, as that any good should be beloved that is not known. Every common witness of **God** in the works of creation, "fills the heart with gladness;" (*Acts* xiv. 16, 17;) much more, every spiritual witness of **God** in the work of redemption apprehended by the soul. If created excellency insinuates itself into our affections, the super-eminent beauty of **God** must much more, when he is seen and known. The spiritual light which comes from

**God, is for God.** In other knowledge, self-love poiseth the heart; but a saving knowledge conducts the heart to an admiration of **God** and affection to him. In heaven a clear vision renders the beholder full of the most glowing affections: the angels' always behold the face of **God**. (*Matt.* xviii. 10.) Always, as not counting any thing else worthy of a glance, but in obedience to his order. Nothing can be called a saving knowledge of **God**, which doth not rank all our affections in order to the object of it.

(3.) It is an active and expressive knowledge. It expresseth in the life what is in the head and heart: a change in the heart engenders affection, and affection will break out in action. He cannot be said to know **God** to be holy, and the Gospel to be a doctrine according to the rules of godliness, who hath not a practice according to godliness. To be sensual is to have "nothing of the **SPiRiT**." (*Jude* 19.) He hath nothing of the light of the **SPiRiT** who is under the conduct of a corrupted sense. And the Apostle intimates it plainly, that unless men "awake to righteousness," and avoid sin, they "have not the knowledge of **God**." (*1 Cor.* xv. 34.) A bed-rid knowledge it is without affection proper for it, rather the torment than ornament of the soul. All knowledge without an imitation of **God**, is but a stupid, sleepy notion: we have then "a full assurance of knowledge," when we are "followers of **God**." (*1 Thess.* i. 5, 6.) The first principle which is taught by the manifestation of **God**, is, "to deny ungodliness." (*Tit.* ii. 12, 13.) As **God's** knowing us, is not a simple view, but a provident care, so our knowledge of **God** is not a simple speculation, but a divine operation of the soul, as well as in the soul.

If "he that commits sin, hath not known **God**;" (*1 John* iii. 6;) then he that hath known **God**, doth not commit sin. He arms himself against all; commenceth an irreconcilable war against the lighter troops as well as the main body. He that knows **CHRIST**, knows that he is worthy of all his service, since he, and none but he, was crucified for him. He that knows **God**, knows the necessity of

enjoying him, and will therefore be guided in those ways which tend to the enjoyment of him. If a man knows a medicine to be excellent for the cure of such a disease as he labours under, and is sensible of the necessity of it, he will certainly apply it. As **CHRIST** discovered the knowledge of **GOD** in the world, to dissolve the works of the **Devil** in the world; so when the knowledge of **CHRIST** shines in the heart, it dissolves the works of darkness.

When **NOAH** knew **GOD** in his threatening justice, he obeyed **GOD** in the building of an ark. When **ABRAHAM** knew **GOD** in the mercy and truth of his promise, he obeyed **GOD** in offering his son **ISAAC**: the one's knowledge wrought against the reproaches of an unbelieving world, and the other's against the tide of natural affection. So powerful is this divine knowledge, where it seizeth upon the heart, to bring forth the fruits of fear and holiness. Let none of us therefore flatter ourselves, that we have a saving knowledge of **GOD** without imitation of him; that we understand **CHRIST** to be a sufficient Saviour, without relying on him. It is a knowledge in the form, and an ignorance in the power. Without an evangelical obedience, a professing Christian knows no more savingly than a moral Heathen.

(4.) It is a humbling, self-abasing knowledge.

[1.] It humbleth us before **GOD**. To know **GOD** without knowing ourselves, is a fruitless speculation. The knowledge of ourselves and our own misery, without the knowledge of **GOD** and his mercy, is a miserable vexation. The end of it is, to pay **GOD** a glory due to him from his creature. Pride debaseth the Deity, and snatcheth the crown of glory from **GOD** to set it upon the creature's head; but this saving knowledge sinks man to the dust without sinking him to hell; lays him flat on the earth, thereby to raise him to heaven. True knowledge, and a melting heart, are inseparable companions: **CHRIST** joins hardness and ignorance together. (*Mark* viii. 17.) It is the nature of other knowledge to puff up, (*1 Cor.* viii. 1,) of this to pull down. The plumes of a proud spirit fall at

the appearance of **GOD**. He regards himself as a worm, when he understands the excellency of his Creator. Without it, it is but a knowledge in conceit, not in reality; he knows nothing of **GOD**, though he thinks he doth. (1 *Cor.* viii. 2.) **MANASSEH** had some knowledge of **GOD**, no question, by the religious education of his father **HEZEKIAH**; but it went not for current coin in heaven, until he was in a humbled frame. "Then **MANASSEH** knew that the **LORD** he was **GOD**." (2 *Chron.* xxxiii. 12, 13.) It is not a knowledge of **GOD**, until it make man shrink into a sense of his own baseness and nothingness. A bare dogmatical knowledge of **GOD**, advanceth man, without a proportionable advancement of **GOD**. It is of the same nature with other knowledge: that which comes from our own reason, brings forth the fruits of old **ADAM**; that which is dropped in by the **SPIRIT**, brings forth the fruits of the **SPIRIT**, renders a man sensibly obliged not to his own wit, but **GOD**'s grace. Other knowledge discovers other things, but not a man's self; but the knowledge of **GOD** is such a light, whereby a man beholds himself, as well as the way wherein he is to walk.

It is such a knowledge as scatters the mist that is upon the heart, and thereby discovers its filth. The first beam shot into the heart by the **SPIRIT**, darts to the very centre, and discovers the nest of filth and poison. As the beam is shot from **GOD**, it reveals his beauty; as shedding its light upon the soul, it reveals its deformity. As the beam from the sun that conquers the darkness of the night, discovers the glory of the sun, and the filth of a dunghill at the same time; the sensible discovery of the holiness of **GOD**, and the sufferings of **CHRIST** in the very act, opens the sinfulness of sin; the majesty of **GOD** shows him his vileness, the purity of **GOD** his filthiness, the justice of **GOD** his demerit, and the power of **GOD** his impotence.

When the soul hears **GOD** in the law, it trembles at the thunder: when it sees **CHRIST** bowing upon the cross, it cannot but bow down under a sense of that iniquity which caused it. To know **CHRIST** savingly in the first glance, is to know ourselves to be children of wrath, under the

curse of the law, and liable to the justice of God. To know CHRIST as Mediator, implies our distance from God; to know him as Reconciler, our enmity; to know him as Redeemer, our slavery; to know him as a Prophet, our ignorance; as a Priest, our guilt and weakness; as an Advocate, our inability to manage our own cause. Every notion of CHRIST, is a light that opens our eyes to advance faith in God, and humility in ourselves.

All the glory of the stars, as well as the darkness of the night, disappears at the rising of the sun: at the shedding of this beam upon the heart, the natural glory of a man's own righteousness is obscured, as well as his guilt and loathsomeness manifested. How is a soul, at the first breaking out of this light upon him, humbled at the consideration of his unworthy thoughts of God, unsuitable to the notions he is now possessed with! How doth he distaste his own temper, to be so little affected with a God, so transcendently worthy of his highest love! O my soul, why wert thou so base, so vile in thy apprehensions and pursuits, as to cast thyself down to adore such despicable objects of sin and vanity?

[2.] As this knowledge of God makes us more humble before God, so it makes us more humble and meek to men. This was promised as a fruit of the knowledge of God in the Gospel. It was this that should turn ravenous wolves into gentle lambs, and render their natures as meek as before they were cruel. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the cow and the bear shall feed together, their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord." (*Isai. xi. 6—9.*) It is such a knowledge as quells the pride of man, and the injustice and oppressions engendered by that fruitful principle. The knowledge of CHRIST in the Gospel, pulls up such base affections by the roots, which would else grow in an ignorant untilled heart, as weeds in an unmanured field. If men therefore are ready to fall foul upon one another upon every occasion, they have not the knowledge of God.

(5.) It is a weaning knowledge. It weans a man's heart from all things below. Clear manifestations of GOD elevate the soul to GOD, when ignorance of him depresseth the heart to one creature or other. The excellency of GOD dims the beauty of the creature, and the true knowledge of this excellency sets the creature below GOD in the heart. It leaves no room for any thing else, as the eye that hath gazed upon the sun admits not presently any other image into it. This divine knowledge disparageth the value of any thing else; it represents sin vile, and the world empty. It is such an inestimable treasure that is not to be put in the balance with any thing else. All other things which men esteem, are but thin and airy notions to this knowledge; every thing that hath a tincture of flesh and blood, human principles, fleshly counsels, expire, when this wisdom shines in upon the soul. As when the sun appears in the heavens, it doth not only discover itself, but discloseth all things on the earth; so when GOD manifests himself to the soul, he doth not only give the knowledge of himself, but shows to us the nature of other things, that they bear no proportion to the excellency of GOD and CHRIST, and bestows such a judgment and understanding upon us, that we look upon things under other considerations than before we did; as men have other apprehensions of things in the light, than they had in the darkness of the night. He doth not know GOD, that doth not apprehend him to be more excellent than the withering flowers of any creature whatsoever. As he doth not love CHRIST that loves him not above all creatures, and he doth not worship GOD, who worships the creature equal with him; so he doth not know GOD, that knows him not to be excellent above all creatures, and esteems him accordingly.

(6.) It is a progressive knowledge, still aiming at more knowledge, and more improvements of it. Though the knowledge of GOD be at first infused into us by the inspiration of the SPIRIT; yet neither that in the head, nor grace in the heart, have their full strength at their first

birth, but attain their stature gradually. We go up a mountain step by step. CHRIST doth not perform all the parts of his prophetic office at once, there is a further declaration of the name of GOD to succeed the first. "I have declared thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them." (*John xvii. 26.*) And the ravishments by the virtue and influences of his second, shall exceed those of the first revelation; for those further declarations are accompanied with greater manifestations of affection, and fuller communications of divine love. Some things are too bright for the soul at the first opening of its weak eyes. Men at their first conversion have but glimpses of things, as the man who saw "men as trees walking," (*Mark viii. 24.*) until CHRIST put his hand upon his eyes, and made him see objects before him more distinctly. As the stone from our hearts, so the scales from our eyes fall off by degrees. No man is so wise, but he may be wiser.

2. As there is a difference in the effects of this knowledge, so also in the manner of it.

(1.) Saving knowledge is distinct. Though grace be not perfect, yet there is a habit of grace, and all the parts of grace in the soul of a renewed man; so, though this knowledge be not perfect, yet there is a distinct view of GOD and CHRIST in all the necessary parts of knowledge. Another may know the attributes of GOD, but he sees not the glory of them shining into the heart, "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST." (*2 Cor. iv. 6.*) It is a distinct view of GOD's perfections, in their affecting glory; of his wisdom, in contriving redemption; his justice, in punishing our Surety; his mercy, in bestowing pardon in his Beloved One; and the beauty of his holiness in all: and of those a believer hath a distinct apprehension in his mind, and a gracious and distinct impression of them on his heart; he knows the nature of CHRIST, his offices, the fruits of his death, and the comforts of his resurrection, the cordials of his intercession, so orderly, as to make use of them in his

several exigencies, and have recourse to each of them by faith, in his distinct pressures. It is a shining into the heart, as the sun upon the world at the creation, whereby ADAM had a distinct view of the creatures then formed; and in this new creation, this divine light breaks into the soul, repairs the faculty whereby there may be a plain spiritual view of the glory of GOD, as figured in the appearance of CHRIST. It is a manifestation of GOD's name. (*John xvii. 6.*) GOD was more distinctly known by his name JEHOVAH among the Israelites, than he had been in the world before, *i. e.*, in the manifestations of his truth and power in performing the promise of deliverance to them; so he is known in CHRIST in fuller expressions, and more letters of his name, than he was to the Israelites. The other knowledge is as the sight of a man in his picture; this, as the knowledge of a man in his person, whereby his lively disposition and excellencies are discerned. It is a knowledge by inward manifestation and irradiation of the soul.

The times of ignorance are called night and darkness in Scripture; the time of divine discovery is called day and light; and believers, "light in the LORD:" there is a plain appearance of the object in its excellency manifest to them, whereby they discern things that differ; the difference between CHRIST and the world, grace and sin. It differs from the knowledge of others, as the sight of a ship by an unskilful eye from that of the shipwright or pilot, who understands all the parts of the workman's skill. It is such a knowledge as the Apostles had after the HOLY GHOST came upon them, and had dispelled their darkness, scattered their shadows, and refined their minds, and made them see the counsel of GOD in the sufferings of CHRIST, and behold the bottom of it with a divine light; whereas before, their knowledge was confused and feeble, they scarce knew before he was to die; after his death, they understood his sufferings, but nothing of the true reason and design of them, until the SPIRIT descended upon them. And therefore CHRIST tells them in the time of his life,

that though he had been "so long with them, they did not know him." (*John* xiv. 9.) Unless the knowledge of **GOD** and **CHRIST** be thus distinct, it may stuff the head, but not improve the soul.

(2.) It is a certain knowledge. Not an imagination, but a real thing; as if the soul had a perfect demonstration. It is surer than the knowledge of the first principles in man; surer than the perceptions of sense, or conclusions of reason. The knowledge of things we have by experience, depends upon the deceivable sense, which often needs the correction of reason; the knowledge we have by reason is uncertain, because the mind of man is often prepossessed with crooked notions, which cannot be the rule to measure straight truths by. Reason is full of uncertainty, and the more we know by natural reason, the more we doubt; but this knowledge is more divine than any demonstration, because it is not founded upon human reason, but divine and infallible revelation, which can neither deceive nor be deceived. It is by an inward sense and taste, which renders a man more certainly intelligent of what he feels, than all the men in the world can be by a rational discourse without a sense. Truth is inlaid in the heart; there is a plerophory and "full assurance of knowledge." (*Col.* ii. 2.) Other knowledge doth fluctuate, and a man rather suspects that he sees, than sees clearly; which is rather an opinion of **GOD** and **CHRIST** than knowledge: such as the Philosophers had of natural things, which they could not assure themselves whether it was clear science or opinion. But saving knowledge is a solid and certain apprehension of the object known. Hence it is called, "a sight of the glory of **GOD** with open face;" (*2 Cor.* iii. 18;) an intellectual spiritual sight, the "evidence of things not seen:" (*Heb.* xi. 1:) ἔλεγχος. Such a conviction as brings a fulness of light with it, to clear the thing, and make the heart fall down under the power of it, and nonplusseth all disputes against it. As the **SPIRIT** so strongly convinceth of sin, as to arrest all objections, banish them out of the sinner; so he strongly

convinceth of the truth of **GOD** and **CHRIST**, and chaseth away all the carnal reasonings, as the light of the rising sun doth darkness before it. It is such an evidence as brings substance along with it: "The substance of things hoped for." It evidenceth **GOD** and **CHRIST**, and the things of **GOD** and **CHRIST** to be substantial, solid things, and not imaginary notions and doubtful opinions. This was promised in the times of the Gospel: "My people shall know my name; they shall know in that day, that I am he that doth speak, behold it is I." (*Isai. lii. 6.*) The repetition of a thing in the Hebrew dialect, shows the certainty of the thing spoken. They knew **GOD** by the Prophets; they should more surely know him in the times of the Gospel, in the greatness of the deliverance he would work for them. It is clearer than the prophetic visions; for it is a sight that is produced by the "dawning of the day, and the rising of the day-star in the heart:" (*2 Pet. i. 19.*) which is meant of a knowledge of **CHRIST** in this world; for in heaven the knowledge shall be by the light of the sun. It is a knowledge here which is the forerunner of a full knowledge in heaven, as the day-star is of the rising sun. And **CHRIST** himself affirms to **GOD** this certainty of knowledge: "They have surely known that I came out from thee." (*John xvii. 8.*)

It is wrought by the enlivening virtue of the **HOLY GHOST**, and therefore must be most certain. The knowledge of **GOD**, as well as faith, is the gift of **GOD**, wrought in the soul by inspiration. The debauchery of our reason was not from **GOD** originally, but from the lasting invasion of sin, and permitted by **GOD** as a Judge to continue for our punishment. This teaching is by "the **SPIRIT** of Truth," (*John xiv. 17; 1 John ii. 27.*) who inwardly presents the excellency of **GOD** and **CHRIST** to the understanding, as the word doth to the ear; and that not like a flash of lightning, that gives a vanishing light, and after leaves us in a worse darkness than it found us; but he abides as a **SPIRIT** of truth in all the darkness of this world; for "he dwells with you, and shall be in you."

The instruction will be certain, until the SPIRIT prove an uncertain teacher. It is his demonstration, and therefore powerful; (1 Cor. ii. 4;) and surer than any demonstration by reason, by how much the SPIRIT, the teacher of it, is above all the reason in the world. It is "the SPIRIT that searcheth the deep things of GOD;" (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10;) mysteries above the view of corrupted reason, and hid in the secret place of the Most High, which are therefore most precious, and of the greatest reality. Since therefore this knowledge is a fruit of divine teaching, and from an infinitely wise and infallible teacher, the soul of a believer is more assured of the reality of it, than it is of its own life and being. He knows by sense and reason that he lives, but the knowledge he hath of GOD and CHRIST, is by the SPIRIT, a principle infinitely superior to both the other.

(3.) It is a firm knowledge. Some have a floating knowledge of GOD; truth in their mind doth dance as the image of the sun in a pail, according to the motion of the water. Truth and error are like a pair of scales, sometimes up and sometimes down. But as true faith, so saving knowledge, is steadfast, like a needle sticking to the loadstone without wavering. It is but a shadow of knowledge which halts between two opinions. The knowledge of CHRIST, being admitted upon the highest account, frames the soul into an acquiescence in it; it is "an unction from the HOLY ONE," (1 John ii. 20,) which, as it opens, so it fortifies the understanding. That knowledge of GOD which is taught by GOD is an establishing knowledge; not a volatile, airy thing, such as children have, which are "carried away with every wind of doctrine;" (Eph. iv. 14;) tossed to and fro between one passion and another, rather than between one reason and another; but a settling ballast, such as the Martyrs had who were slain for the word of GOD, the divine Λόγος, and the testimony they bore to His person and offices, which they held, and held as an undoubted truth. (Rev. vi. 9.) They held the transcript of GOD and CHRIST imprinted on their

hearts firm, as a marble doth the letters engraven on it; the other sort of knowledge is fading, as easily blotted out as letters upon sand.

(4.) This saving knowledge of **GOD** and **CHRIST** is, in all the affections which attend it in the soul, inexpressible. The affections rising from it are inexpressible by the soul that feels it; all words are below the sense, as a spark is below the brightness of a flame. In common things we find often a secret power excite a liking or dislike in our mind, which we cannot fully discover to others, either in the greatness of the pleasure or abhorrency which is in ourselves. The natural affections we have to some things admit of no expression, much less the spiritual affections. A friend that you know and love dearly, whose virtues you admire, you can never discover so exquisitely in his endowments, as that another should admire and love him with an affection equal to what you bear him. Who can imagine the depth of **DAVID**'s sense in his contemplations of **GOD** under those spiritual strains he clothes himself with in his Psalms, unless he felt the same inward transports as **DAVID** did? Who can understand the exquisite satisfaction our **SAVIOUR** had in his thoughts of his **FATHER**, in his addresses to him, and obedience to his will, unless he could be equal to him in all those? It is the same thing in spiritual as in natural knowledge. No man can understand the delight a scholar takes in his inquiries into some curious learning, but he that hath had a taste of the same pleasure himself, no more than a man can understand the heat of fire that never felt it.

Learn hence the excellency of a true Christian. The best Christian is the best scholar; he hath a knowledge in the issue equal to that of angels, superior to that of devils, more effectual than that of the greatest philosopher: "A man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. The **SPIRIT** of the holy **GOD** is in him, and light, and excellent wisdom." (*Prov. xvii. 27.*) It is a light flowing from the fountain of light, a fruit of divine teaching, and divine touch; a "true light," more valuable than all the trifling,

sceptical knowledge in the world. The meanest believer knows, if not *more*, yet *better*, than the brightest star that fell from heaven : what others see by candle-light, he sees by the light of the sun ; what is hidden to others, is open to him ; what others have a natural understanding of, he hath a spiritual. (*Col. i. 9.*) The Publicans who heard the excellent discourses of CHRIST concerning the nature of the FATHER, and the design of his coming into the world, were more excellent than the Pharisees who knew the same divine revelation, but had no affection stirred in them but that of anger against the Publisher. The spiritually-knowing Christian can discern GOD in his word, better than others can in all his creatures. He practiseth what he knows. The excellency of a drug lies not so much in its quality, as in the operation of that quality. We measure the excellency of things, not by the outward appearance, but the nobleness and usefulness of their effects. The meanness of a Christian doth not so much disparage him, as the excellency of divine knowledge ennobles him ; he hath a soul truly God-like, that knows GOD with a conformity to him. The sun shining upon a body, and the body reflecting the beams of the sun, render it lovely, though low in itself. The knowledge of a Christian is by inward and close revelation, attended with strong and high reflections. Others know the matter of the Gospel ; a Christian knows the mystery of the Gospel. The strongest natural knowledge is not proportionable to divine things, and therefore renders not the soul as excellent as the spiritual knowledge of GOD ; the one fits men for converse with man ; the other for communion with GOD in this and another world.

Try, then, whether you have this knowledge. Try it not so much by the notions you have of GOD and his truth, as by the operations of it, and the draught of the perfections of GOD in your own souls. The greatest heads have often had the worst hearts. CHRIST had not more desperate enemies in the whole world than the intelligent Pharisees, and the Jewish Doctors, who had the law at their

fingers' ends. See whether we have a transcript of **GOD** and **CHRIST** in our own souls. When we cast our eyes upon **GOD**, let us reflect upon ourselves, and see whether the tempers of our hearts answer the notions in our heads. Can any man say, I know **GOD** to be merciful, and I have an imitation of it; **GOD** is holy, and I have a draught of it; **GOD** is omniscient, and I have a deep sense of it in my actions; **GOD** hath a sovereign dominion, and I have an obedient frame; **GOD** is true in his word, and I have a sincerity answering to divine truth; a faith in his promises, a fear of his threatenings; there are some lineaments in my heart, answering in some measure to the perfections of my Creator? And can any man consider **CHRIST** as obedient to the will of **GOD**, and see a conformity in himself to that heavenly image? I know **CHRIST** felt the sting of death for sin, and I feel the power of that death breaking my sin, and sinful heart; **CHRIST** had a happy resurrection, and I feel the blessed fruit of it, in raising my soul to newness of life; this is the only true knowledge of **GOD** and **CHRIST** which sinks down in affection, and expresseth itself in imitation. Judge not of yourselves by bare apprehensions of some pleasing doctrine, as notions of the mercy of **GOD**, justification by **CHRIST**, freeness of grace. Speculation of such things may force men into a rapture by the strength of a sprightly imagination, without the inward living **SPIRIT** of him in the heart. This is such a knowledge as the crazy fancy of a madman may have of wealth and palaces, who hath neither a penny in his purse, nor a house for his head. The trial of ourselves is by a thirst for performing the will of **GOD**, a motion in his ways, sense of his graces, embraces of his grace and dictates, and spiritual affections to himself and his laws. There is as vast a difference between the knowledge of **GOD** in the letter, and that in the **SPIRIT**, as there is between the statue of an angel, and a real angel in heaven. Nor let us conclude by the delight we have in speculations; there is a secret joy in the contemplation of any truth of a lower size, much more in the speculation of the

highest, noblest, and firmest truth ; the notion may be delightful, when a conformity is unpleasant. Speculation is an employment of wit, but the spiritual knowledge is a conjunction of heart to GOD and CHRIST. We may value a meditation of him, when the conformity to him may be of as little esteem with us as the dirt we tread under our feet. The understanding and will are two distinct faculties,—have distinct operations ; the acting of the one doth not always infer the acting of the other ; we may delight to look upon that we would not feed on. Yet true knowledge is always attended with delight : “When wisdom enters into thy heart, knowledge is pleasant to thy soul,” (*Prov.* ii. 10,) and with more ardent desires to know. The soul that hath tasted of divine sweetness, longs for greater communications ; it is so far from assuaging, that it quickens the appetite. MOSES was master of the Egyptian learning, but set not up his rest in that ; he had more acquaintance with GOD than any man in the world, yet after he had been discoursing with GOD in the Mount, he is an earnest petitioner for more discoveries : “I beseech thee shew me thy glory.” (*Exod.* xxxiii. 18.) That is no true knowledge of GOD that surfeits and clogs the soul. Those heavy spirits that are scarce masters of a groan for it, never understood the excellency of it. Not to desire to know him is to contemn him ; and he that undervalues him, never had any understanding of him.

Prepare, wait, and long for heaven. We have but a glimpse here of the excellency of GOD and beauty of CHRIST. The light now shines in a dark place, it shall shine there without a spot of darkness ; that which is in part shall give place to that which is perfect ; the light of GOD shall dart immediately upon the soul, without reflection from a glass ; all shall meet in the “unity of the knowledge of the SON of GOD,” as well as in the unity of faith. (*Eph.* iv. 13.) The motions of the body shall not obstruct the operations of the soul ; there will be light without darkness, knowledge without ignorance, clearness without dimness ; no turbulent affections shall confound

the eye, nor distractions divert the soul. "We shall know as we are known." (1 Cor. xiii. 12.) Every gracious soul is perfectly known by GOD here, *i. e.*, accepted by him, but is not fully illuminated by him; but there will be as perfect an illumination from him, as there is an acceptation with him; the thick scales shall for ever fall off from the eye, and the dark veil from the heart, that it may behold without weakness. As the most excellent object shall be presented, so it shall be beheld in the most excellent manner. The spiritual eye shall be fortified, and the divine glory shall be unclouded, and the pleasure of seeing shall be as great as that of enjoying. The clearest knowledge here is inconceivably short of that above, as the sight of a sore eye is of that of an eagle. The chains of spiritual sloth shall be knocked off, the diversions of worldly objects shall have an eternal remove, ignorance within shall perish, and darkness without shall vanish. Here the soul sees what GOD is not; there it shall see him as he is. Surely those that thirst not for this state, that prepare not themselves for it, that long not for the passing away of those gloomy shades, and according to their measures prepare themselves by diligent inquiries, and affectionate motions, never yet had any taste of the most desirable object.

Therefore daily endeavour to increase in the knowledge of GOD. Our main work in the world is to increase in the knowledge of sin, that we may more vehemently detest it; and the knowledge of GOD, that we may more closely embrace him, and resign up ourselves to him. ST. PAUL, who was advanced to a higher step in this than any in the world, had taken up a settled resolution "to know nothing but CHRIST, and him crucified," as the most excellent knowledge he could busy himself in, (1 Cor. ii. 2,) and would neglect no means to grow up in the apprehensions of him of "whom he was apprehended." (Phil. iii. 12.) It is not said we must "follow on to know," for such a time; (Hos. vi. 3;) no time is fixed, and therefore it must be continually. We should quicken any divine spark in our souls. If the first beams of spiritual light give life,

the further increase more abundantly increaseth that life ; it being eternal life, we are nearest to life, when we rise highest in knowledge. If the mind be opened, it can no more take pleasure in a little knowledge, than the eye of the body can in a little light, by which it delights itself in any visible object : it can take no pleasure in a little, but as it is a presage of more approaching. He therefore that saith he knows as much of **GOD** and **CHRIST** as can be known, never understood the depth of his own natural ignorance, the immensity of **GOD**, the dimensions of the love of **CHRIST**, and the nature and unweariedness of the **SPIRIT**'s teaching. Should all men in the world engage in no other study but this of **GOD** and **CHRIST** to the world's end, they would confess that that which they know is inconceivably short of that which they are ignorant of ; it cannot be so great but it is still capable of a further increase, like a river that is not so big but it may swell higher and larger by the admission of lesser rivulets. There is a ripe age, a manly stature in understanding, which we must aim at : "Be not children in understanding." (1 *Cor.* xiv. 20.) The Apostle, who had the fullest insight into the nature of **GOD** and offices of **CHRIST**, puts himself into the number of them that "knew but in part." (1 *Cor.* xiii. 12.) And therefore, as we desire to be as angels in glory, we should endeavour to imitate the angels in their acute search into the mysteries of **CHRIST**, and "wisdom of **GOD** in him ;" they know much, yet "desire to know more." (1 *Pet.* i. 12.) The truth is, as **ADAM** offended in endeavouring to know more than he should, we offend in neglecting to know so much as we may. Our first parents would know too much, and their children too little, though there be "unsearchable riches of **CHRIST** to be searched into." (*Eph.* iii. 8.)

Consider, Is not our time spent unprofitably in every thing else, when we neglect this? All other wisdom is perishing ; this heavenly wisdom only endures for ever. Will the skill in trades remain with any man, and be an advantage to him in another world? Not but that there

must be time spent in learning and improving your callings for the good of yourselves, families, and the community; but not so much as to swallow up the time due to the other. There is a satisfaction in natural learning; but what advantage is that in another world, where worldly wisdom and learned subtleties shall take no place? There will be no use of them in eternity, whither we are travelling. It is the knowledge of GOD and CHRIST we shall there be examined about: we may have the greatest wisdom of the world, and be without this saving knowledge at the last day, and receive the punishment of devils, instead of the happiness of Christians. CHRIST never put up a thanksgiving for the learning of the Pharisee, or the wisdom of statesmen, but for "the revelation of himself to babes." The knowledge of a good man only is understanding. (*Prov.* ix. 10.) It is a dreadful place against the wise, as well as the mighty, men of the earth; "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty." (*1 Cor.* i. 26.) Prudence and power abstracted from divine knowledge, are contemptible in the eyes of GOD. Here and there one wise and mighty man is marked out for a happy eternity, but not many. All knowledge below this is but the knowledge of trifles. In other things we lose our time for the most part; by this we gain a happy eternity: other knowledge will not prevent the loss of ourselves; in this we find GOD and ourselves too. Let us not therefore sell our understandings for nought, as GOD complains they did his people. (*Isai.* lii. 3.) Other gettings are inconsiderable to "the gain of understanding." (*Prov.* iv. 7.) O that we could take as much pains to get this which is eternal life, as the heathens have taken for human science, which could not secure them from eternal death, and seek for it with as much industry and as high a value of it, as we would "for silver and hid treasures!"

## DISCOURSE II.

---

OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IN CHRIST.

---

JOHN xvii. 3.

*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom thou hast sent.*

THERE were two principal doctrines pitched on at the beginning of this discourse.

DOCTRINE I. The knowledge of GOD, and CHRIST the Mediator, is the necessary means to eternal life and happiness.

DOCTRINE II. The true and saving knowledge of GOD, is only in and by CHRIST.

Of the former I have spoken at large. I am now to consider the latter.

In the prosecution of this, we shall show, I. What kind of mediums there have been to know GOD, and how they come short of this. II. That the knowledge of GOD is attained only by the knowledge of CHRIST. III. The necessity of this medium. IV. What knowledge of GOD is discovered to us by CHRIST.

And I. What kind of mediums there have been to know GOD, and how they come short of this way of knowledge.

1. There is a natural knowledge of GOD.

(1.) By the creatures. The visible world, and every part of it, is a book, wherein we may read some syllables of GOD. The heathens saw GOD in heaven, earth, fire, water, plants, and animals; all creatures being lines drawn from that centre. Though man hath not the knowledge

which ADAM had, yet there being some scattered relics of this knowledge, he may, by looking near to the creatures, discern, by his dim sight, something of the attributes of GOD; every creature being a glass which reflects some beams of GOD upon his mind: for no man in his wits can conclude that the world was made by chance, but by some Being more wise than any being in the world can be, or than all the wisest men in the world put together. We know the courage, conduct, and power of a General, by the sight of his conquests; the skilfulness of an artificer, by the excellency of his work; and the eloquence of an orator, by reading his speech; though we never saw the faces of any of them. There are very few attributes, but the works of creation and providence discover in some measure to us; for “the invisible things of GOD from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.” (*Rom. i. 20.*) These two perfections are clearly seen; his infinite power, which discovers also his eternity; and his incomprehensible goodness, which is the most signal glory of the divinity. The beauty of the world acquaints us with the excellency of him that erected it, and the order of the world instructs us in the wisdom of him that composed it. This discovery hath been ever since the creation: “from the creation of the world;” from the time the world and the things therein were first created. He imprinted some letters of himself upon this frame of things, at the first rearing of it, wherein they have ever since been legible; you may see by the letter whose print it was, and what skill he had who made the impression.

(2.) By the nature of our souls. Had GOD made only man, and one small place for him to be in, without those ornaments of the world, he might have arrived to more knowledge of GOD by his own being, than by any thing in the world. The soul being a spirit, and the noblest of all beings upon the earth, approaching nearest the nature of GOD, the contemplation of that renders GOD more

intelligible to us than all material things ; as the sun is more visible through a thin cloud, than a thicker fog which obscures it. There is more of **GOD** to be found in the little central point of the soul, than in the large circumference of the world ; and a clearer impression of some great and inconceivable **Being** is upon our souls, than upon any creature under heaven ; and whosoever will retire within himself, cannot but perceive some characters of a supreme **Being** in his own nature. The soul was lighted by **GOD**, and created according to the image of **GOD** ; and is the exactest image of **GOD** under heaven. By considering the nature of our own souls, we may come to some knowledge of the original ; as we have clearer apprehensions of the sun by the image of it imprinted upon a glass, than we can have by any other creature ; though the image of the sun be much less glorious than the sun itself, whose image it is. The mind of man can pierce every thing : it can conceive of angels, descend into the bottom of the deep, ascend to the battlements of the heavens : command your mind to pass from one end of the world to the other, it will perform the order as soon as it is given. What is quicker than thought, which can skip from earth to heaven, from heaven to earth, in a moment ? Can there be a greater shadow of the omnipresence and immensity of **GOD** ? The soul hath a memory to register actions and things done many years ago ; it can bring out things new and old ; what higher resemblance of the omniscience of **GOD** ? It is not composed of the factious principles of elements ; it hath not the dregs of matter mixed with it ; in this it represents the spirituality of **GOD**. It is indefatigable in its motions ; it is never tired in governing the body : our bodies, that are coarse pieces of earth, flag and languish when the soul remains vigorous ; and this represents the indefatigableness of **GOD**'s providence. It can subsist without the body : it doth not in all its motions depend upon it ; it can reflect upon itself without it, view and please itself in its own perfections, abstracted from the body ; which shadows to us the self-

sufficiency of GOD. Thus, as a landscape or draught of a great house or kingdom represents all the parts of that land or house, yet in far less proportion than the house or territory is in itself, and when we see those models, we do not conceive the things represented to be no bigger than the pictures of them, but of a far greater proportion; so we may contemplate GOD in the model of our own souls; and since we know that we have understanding and will, we conclude that GOD hath understanding and will in a more transcendent manner, still enlarging to infiniteness in him what we observe of ourselves. Yet though we may have so much knowledge of GOD by the creatures, and by our souls, how little do we contemplate GOD! How far do we come short of this natural knowledge, and the improvement of it? How much shorter of the knowledge of GOD in CHRIST, which is infinitely more excellent and glorious? All the knowledge drawn from the creatures is insufficient to represent GOD. The knowledge of GOD by nature and creatures is necessary, as a foundation for higher apprehensions, and for turning to GOD; men without it would be as wholly brutish and incapable of instructions in Christianity, as an ox or a sheep; and though men deserved by sin to be deprived of this natural knowledge, yet GOD kept it up as a stock on which in time to engraft other principles in the discovery of CHRIST. All nature is incapable of discovering GOD in a full manner as he may be known. The world at best is but a shadow of GOD, and therefore cannot discover him in his magnificent and royal virtues, no more than a shadow can discover the outward beauty, the excellent mien, and the inward endowments of the person whose shadow it is. All that a shadow will inform me of is, whether it be the shadow of man or brute: it discovers something of GOD, not so much of him as to give the soul a full complacency; the fruit of it is but a thirst without a satisfaction.

1. Even innocent nature could never have been, in that state, acquainted with the perfections of GOD in such a manner as they are discovered in CHRIST.

(1.) Some perfections of God's nature could not have been known. Where had there been any place for the discovery of patience, without a provocation; or for punitive justice, without a transgression; or for pardoning mercy, without an offence? There had been no occasion for the exercise of any of them, and therefore we cannot conceive how there could be a manifestation of them, without objects convenient for them to be conversant about. Innocent man was the object of God's goodness; offending man only of his patience: innocence is the subject of love, injury of anger. All those glorious eminencies of God's nature had lain under a thick veil, impossible to be discerned by the eye of man. But those attributes were brought upon the stage, by the entrance of sin, which was permitted to enter for the manifestation of them in and through CHRIST. "The law entered that the offence might abound;" to make way for the abundance of grace. (*Rom. v. 15, 20.*) Some attributes of God could not have been discovered by any proceeding of his, at least in such a height and eminence, but in CHRIST; as the wonders of his grace, the loud sounding of his bowels and compassions, the purity of his holiness, and the dreadful-ness of his justice. His creating perfections might have been seen by ADAM and his posterity; his redeeming perfections are only displayed in his SON. The world as created was not capable of giving occasion for the manifestation of those attributes, but the world as fallen; the not being of the world gave occasion to God to manifest his glory as a Creator, but the lapsed state of the world gave occasion to God to manifest his glory as a Redeemer: for how could there be mercy shown, if man's misery did not need it? How could there be a vindictive justice, if man's transgression did not deserve it? How could there be a promise of restoration by the Seed of the woman, if man's degeneracy did not want it? God had not been known in one letter of his name, as it is set down, *Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7*, but in the Redeemer. Not one tittle of his name there described, had been known to the sons of men,

had they continued in innocency; nor after the fall, but in and by CHRIST the Mediator. It is in Him he discovers himself a "GOD merciful, gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness, forgiving iniquity, and by no means clearing the guilty," but exacting satisfaction to his offended justice for sin. As though GOD was infinitely happy in himself, yet this happiness could not have been discovered to any but himself, unless he had made creatures wherein to display his goodness; and no being could have known him but himself, if there had been no being besides himself: so without CHRIST, GOD had not been known in his redeeming perfections; because there had been no basis for the discovery of them: they had lain wrapped up in darkness from the creature; and as they were "a mystery hid from ages" till the discovery of CHRIST, so they had without him remained hid for ever from the notice of the world. And as those attributes had not been discovered, so the creature's duty in relation to them could not have been exercised. GOD had wanted the manifestative glory of his pardoning grace; and man had had no occasion to return a thankfulness to GOD for it. He could not have humbled himself under GOD's displeasure, had there not been an occasion to manifest his anger; nor could the infinite sufficiency of GOD for his creature have been known, nor prayers directed to him by his creatures for relief: nature could discover no more than what was imprinted on it by the GOD of nature: the world stood in no need of redemption by virtue of its creation, but by virtue of its transgression and pollution.

(2.) Some perfections of GOD's nature could not have been so clearly and fully known. The creation was but the first draught of GOD's perfections, and came much short of the full declaration: as the first limning of a picture doth of expressing the features and beauty of the original, till the second and third draught, when the last hand is put, and all the lines completed. Though there were manifestations of GOD's power, wisdom, and goodness in the creation, yet not in such splendour as the

occasion of bringing forth CHRIST into the world did administer for the illustrating of them. These attributes looked upon the world through a veil ; but were not seen in their full lustre till the coming of CHRIST drew the veil, and set them forth in their richest beauty. Here was infinite power in its strength going forth like a giant to run its race, GOD's power over himself manifested, wisdom in a knot of royal designs, and goodness opening its richest treasures. The holiness of GOD could not have been clearly known : while man did not know what sin was, he could never have strong conceptions of the mighty hatred of GOD against it. Man had some understanding of it by GOD's threatening, but he could not have such clear notices of it by his commination, as upon the entrance of sin by the execution, and that upon our SAVIOUR. Nor had the veracity of GOD been so evident. It would have been known but in the half, or on one side, in the making good his promise upon man's obedience, but never would have been understood experimentally in his threatening, unless sin had invaded the world, and so had given occasion to the manifestation of GOD's truth to his word of threatening. These virtues of GOD were in the creation like a lovely diamond under a piece of linen, which emits some sparklings, but is not discerned in its full lustre till the covering be removed. CHRIST drew the veil from them, and manifested them in their fullest glory.

(3.) Innocent nature could never arrive to a full knowledge of GOD's nature by the attributes discovered in creation without some further revelation of him. The whole creation was the work of GOD's hands, but no work can fully express the nature of the artificer. We may know by a watch, or clock, or a curious piece of tapestry, that the workman was skilful in his art, but by his work we cannot give a description of his person and disposition without other acquaintance with him. We can know nothing of GOD by the creatures, but as they stand in the relation to GOD, as effects to their cause ; and

when the cause doth much transcend the effect, the clearest understanding cannot by the knowledge of the effect arise to a full knowledge of the cause. **GOD** is infinitely above the fruits of his power in the world, therefore man in innocence could gain but little knowledge of him by a bare prospect of them. Nature discovers that there is a **GOD**, but not fully what that **GOD** is; nor doth the creation furnish man with a notion of **GOD** suitable to the excellency and immensity of his nature: as a blind man who hears a discourse of the light and heat of the sun, being brought under the beams of it striking hot upon his body, feels the warmth and knows there is such a thing as men call the sun, and is sensible of some effects of it, but hath not a full conception of the enlightening nature of the sun, nor knows what the body of the sun is, nor what kind of shape it appears in; and if he should declare his conception of it, it would be strangely different from the true nature of the sun, a monstrous mistaken description of it; nay, what man is there that sees the sun every day, that is able to say he fully knows the nature of it by his sight, or the constant influences which he feels from it? But the conception of **GOD** is infinitely more above innocent reason, than the conception of the sun can be above lapsed natural reason. Since therefore all the creatures cannot be a ground for man to frame a right conception of **GOD**, what **ADAM** had of this nature was more from revelation than contemplation of the works of **GOD**; and since **ADAM** was man, what knowledge he had of **GOD** above what the effect of his power in the world did discover, he had by revelation from **GOD**; since no man hath at any time seen or known **GOD**, (taking in the beginning of time as well as the succession of time,) but whatever intellectual vision any had of **GOD**, was by the declaration of the **SON** of **GOD**. (*John* i. 18.)

(4.) Corrupted nature is less able to know **GOD** by the creation as he ought to be known since the fall. Since no natural light was strong enough to discover the wonders of **GOD**, corrupt reason can attain but a faint knowledge.

The Providence of God after the entrance of sin, displayed some of his attributes which could not be manifested in an innocent state, *viz.*, his forbearance and his justice: God did witness his patience and goodness to men in giving them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, and filling their hearts with food and gladness while he suffered them to walk in their own ways. (*Acts* xiv. 16, 17.) And many of the Heathens were sensible of this goodness, in some measure, when they observed how much the wickedness of the world deserved the contrary; though most of them indeed despised the riches of it. (*Rom.* ii. 3, 4.) Now and then some warning pieces of judgments were shot off, whereby the world was startled, and made sensible of anger in God. He now and then shot his darts into the hearts of some, otherwise they would scarce have taken notice that there was a God that judgeth in the earth. But there was nothing in all their observation that could discover any thing of God in Christ, the union of two natures, the doctrine of the Trinity, which was necessary to the notion of redemption, because there was to be a person satisfying, and a person to whom the satisfaction was to be offered, and by whom it was to be received; one considered as the rector, the other as the mediator: this transaction was a "mystery hid in God from the beginning of the world;" (*Eph.* iii. 9;) and discovered to the Gentiles in the Apostles' time: "Now made manifest to the saints;" (*Col.* i. 26, 27;) not before; not a syllable of it communicated to nature: it had then been no more a mystery than any other thing that nature declares. There were indeed some confused notions among some of the Philosophers, from a converse with the Jews, into whose country some of them had travelled; or from the Jews which occasionally resided among them; and some were also acquainted with some parts of Scripture: nature cannot challenge any thing in this affair. But the strength of their natural light was more seen in a knowledge of the duty of man to man, than in the searching out God in the duties we owe to him; whence

there are many discourses extant of justice, temperance, prudence, and moral virtues; but very few of GOD and his nature. And though men had by tradition some notice of a Redeemer by the first promise; yet they were not able to conceive any thing of the nature of GOD thereby, but that he was patient and gracious: but because they could not conceive how this work should be effected, they could not discern those other attributes of holiness, wisdom, mercy, justice, in their bright beams, till the discovery of CHRIST in the flesh, and upon the cross. What knowledge men had by tradition, from the first promise, was quickly lost among the corruptions of the old world, and though revived in the legal ceremonies appointed to the Jews, yet they had no conceptions of the great intentions of them.

2. There was a knowledge of GOD by or under the law. Before the giving the law by MOSES, GOD instructed men by the apparitions of angels, visions to some Prophets, by the holiness of some of his eminent servants; under the law, by figures and representations, which the wisest of them did but darkly understand, and that by the assistance of some special revelation which was successively cleared by the Prophets, enlightened in several ages to that purpose. The moral law was a discovery of GOD chiefly in his sovereignty, holiness, and justice. He enacts laws, as a Sovereign; righteous laws against sin, as a Holy One; annexeth threatenings and promises, as a Judge. In regard of the majesty of GOD in the discovery, the people were afraid of death at the promulgation. "Let not God speak with us, lest we die." (*Exod. xx. 19.*) And MOSES, who was the most familiar person with GOD in the world, had not less fright at the discovery of it. "So terrible was the sight, that MOSES said, I exceedingly fear and quake." (*Heb. xii. 21.*) The knowledge of GOD in the law was too terrible for the minds of men, and surprised MOSES the friend of GOD, the interpreter of his will, with extreme horror. GOD here manifested his greatness and his justice, armed with instruments of

punishment for sin. There was not a mite of his mercy discovered by the law but to those "that keep his commandments;" *i. e.*, to those that were without any guilt and crime; upon which account the Apostle calls the law, the ministry of condemnation and of death; and a killing, not a healing letter; a sword to cut, not a balsam to close a wound. (2 Cor. iii. 7, 9.) Nothing of adoption, and justifying grace, is pronounced in it. There was also a daily prospect of the holiness and justice of GOD in the sacrifices exacted of man; in the groans, gaspings, and blood of beasts: they saw that sin was neither effected by GOD, nor would be suffered to remain unpunished; and their sight of those attributes in this ministration was greater than the world could have of them, by the now and then sprinklings of judgments, which being not often upon the worst of sinners, staggered the understandings, not only of the Heathens, but of some of the intelligent Israelites, in their conceptions of the nature of GOD and his Providence. But what was all this to the fuller discovery of the purity of his nature, and the terror of his wrath, in the execution of the curses of the law upon the Son of his bosom? All preceding times were times of darkness till the coming of CHRIST; they were but the shadows of the night in the figures of the law; but the morning light was in the rising of the Gospel. This was a sufficient revelation of GOD to direct them to CHRIST, who could only render GOD visible and intelligible to man; but how insufficient in regard of the corruption of man's nature, to imprint right notions of GOD? How often did the Jews wallow in idolatry, notwithstanding this revelation of GOD? Much less sufficient is the knowledge of GOD by nature.

This natural, legal, and evangelical knowledge by CHRIST, differ.

(1.) In regard of clearness.

[1.] Natural knowledge was dim. In the creation, GOD writ himself in hieroglyphics; in short characters: In CHRIST, in a plain and legible hand, which gave a substantial discovery of GOD. The power, majesty, and

wisdom of GOD, appeared in the heavens, the work of his fingers. (*Psa.* viii. 3.) In maintaining their influences, and conducting their motions. The foundations of the earth, the vastness and rollings of the sea, the habitations of light, the treasures of snow, floods of rain, the bottles of the clouds, order of the stars, provision for creatures on the earth, direct us to the knowledge of a great and glorious Being. For upon all those GOD reads a lecture of himself to JOB in the latter chapters. That there is a GOD, may be seen in the dust of the earth, as well as in the brightness of the heavens; but by those works, men saw little else but that there was a GOD. They could know but little of his nature, congruous to the state wherein they were. That glow-worm light could afford us at best but weak and languishing notions of GOD, and a relation to him fit for that miserable condition, wherein the fall of ADAM had involved us. And by reason of men's negligence, and not improving a number of those instructions concerning the nature of his virtues, which the creation furnished them with, and which they might have attained by a wise observation of that which GOD had revealed in his creation, preservation, and government of the world, they gave the bridle to their own imaginations, and knew as little of GOD by his works, as beasts know of the nature and reason of a man. The world therefore is called by some the Enigma of GOD; and indeed, the Heathens often erred in their interpretation of it, and could not unriddle GOD in the creatures, but worshipped the creature for the Creator.

[2.] Legal knowledge was also dim. Though the temple with all the ceremonies attending it was a clearer representation of the nature and will of GOD, than the whole frame of the world, yet obscurity was of the nature of the legal state; and the glory of GOD was wrapped up in a cloud of animal sacrifices; so that SOLOMON calls the house wherein GOD then dwelled, a thick darkness. (*1 Kings* viii. 12.) The law was given with smoke, as well as thunders; obscurity, as well as terror. (*Exod.* xx. 18.)

The Israelites were under a cloud, (1 *Cor.* x. 1,) and the mediator of the law had a veil upon his face, and the glory of GOD was so enveloped in clouds, that the Israelites could but dimly discern. There was more of shadows than substance; and the Apostle in the Hebrews gives it no better a title than that of a shadow; opposing it to CHRIST the substance: and the Gospel is said to be truth and grace, in opposition to the law, as if there were no truth and grace in that former dispensation. None, indeed, in comparison of the clearness of the revelation in the Gospel; though in itself it was a true representation of GOD, as a shadow may be called a true shadow. The law being composed of shadows could not discover GOD as the Gospel did, which was made up of substance. MOSES then did see his back parts, perhaps in the figure of a man; but in the Gospel, GOD shows himself in the face of CHRIST. (2 *Cor.* iv. 6.) That did discover the features of GOD more clearly than the works of nature; as the form and beauty of a man may be more discerned through grates and lattices, to which GOD's appearance in the law is likened, (*Cant.* ii. 9,) than when covered with a veil. Very few of them could have a view of the substance, for the multitude of shadows. If we, upon whom the glory of GOD hath shone in the Gospel, are not able to comment upon every one of those figures, much less could they who never saw the Antitype, and could not conceive the analogy between them.

[3.] The evangelical discovery of GOD by CHRIST is clearer. The brightness of the day dispelled the shadows of the night, and dispersed the clouds wherewith the sun was masked. As the fulness of the Godhead dwelt personally in CHRIST, so the fulness of the divine perfections sparkled in the actions and sufferings of CHRIST. The Deity shines out in a clear lustre, which was seen before only in the dusky clouds of creatures and ceremonies. In nature, we see GOD as it were like the sun in a picture; in the Law, as the sun in a cloud; in CHRIST, we see him in his beams: "He being the brightness of his

glory, and the exact image of his person." (*Heb. i. 3.*) As the rays of the sun, being the production of the sun, cause us by their lustre to see and understand more of the beauty and brightness of the sun; and the stamp upon the wax informs us what is upon the seal. We see what an infinite fountain of good GOD is, and what a dreadful thing sin is, which is a separation from him; as by the beams of the sun we understand the beauty of light, and the horror of darkness. Though it be not discerned in its glory through a mist of vapours, yet it may be known to be risen, and some effects of it are sensible to us; so it was in the creation and the law: but in CHRIST, those vapours are dissolved, the clouds dispersed, and GOD appears in the sweetness and beauty of his nature, as a refreshing light. The creatures tell us that there is a GOD; and CHRIST tells who and what that GOD is.

So that the clearness of this knowledge consists,—

1. In the clearness of the medium. The clearer the glass through which we look, the clearer discerning we have of the object we look upon. CHRIST is the clearest medium. As he is said to be a polished shaft in GOD's quiver, (*Isai. xlix. 2.*) to pierce the heart by his grace; so he may be said to be a polished glass in his hand to represent his majesty, and reflect the beams of GOD stronger upon us. The Gospel therefore, in the judgment of some, is meant by "the sea of glass;" (*Rev. xv. 2.*) in regard of the transparency of it, through which we see GOD, and his perfections. It was the same GOD, JEHOVAH, who was known by the Jews, and under the Gospel, but not in the same manner: they had the same faculties, but not the same light to discern the object. The act of vision, is the same by sun-light and star-light: we have the same eyes in the day and the night; but not having the same clearness of air, we have not that contentment in the exercise of our eyes. Things appear not so beautiful by candle-light as in the lustre of the day: hence CHRIST is called, a "Sun of Righteousness;" (*Mal. iv. 2.*) as manifesting the righteousness of GOD; diffusing light

and health by his wings or beams ; and chasing away by his splendour, the darkness of the world, and opening the glories of heaven to the sons of men : directing them to the knowledge of GOD, who before wandered in darkness. The coming of this light, and the “ rising of the glory of GOD upon us,” are knit together. “ Thy light is come, and the glory of GOD is risen upon thee : ” (*Isai. lx. 1 :*) the glory of all his attributes, which CHRIST is the medium to clear up to the minds of men. And, indeed, there is as great a difference between the knowledge of GOD by CHRIST, and the knowledge of GOD by the creatures and the law, as there is between the knowledge of a man by his footsteps, and the knowledge of him by his image. “ CHRIST is the image of the invisible GOD : ” (*Col. i. 15 :*) As a son is the image of his father, who is a better medium to know a father by, than his footsteps or his picture. Never any earthly son was so like his father, as CHRIST is like GOD the Father: he hath the same essence, the same attributes, the same operations.

2. In the nearness of the object. CHRIST brings GOD near to us : he is IMMANUEL, “ GOD with us,” GOD in our nature. The great comforting promises in the Old Testament were, that “ GOD should dwell among them.” (*Joel iii. 17 ; Mal. iii. 1.*) GOD was not far from every one of us in the creation. (*Acts xvii. 27.*) In regard of his being, in regard of his goodness, though he was far from us in regard of a satisfactory knowledge of his nature. As when a man is at a distance from us, in regard of any particular knowledge of him, yet he is near in regard of our knowledge of his existence, though we cannot perceive his shape and features, and what kind of man he is ; when he approacheth nearer, we see his dimensions and discern his age, yet obscurely ; but when he comes close to us, we see him plainly, and by converse with him, we come to know his temper. Now this man is one and the same man we saw at a distance, and we see near : he hath the same shape, the same features and disposition ; but he appears in a different manner, according to the greatness

of the distance. God was the same in all ages of the world, but after he departed to a greater distance from man, by reason of sin, and refrained converse with man, there were but small glimmerings of him in the creatures, and less to be discerned by the distempered eye of man. He came nearer in the law, but that representation was obscure, and fitted more to the carnal conceptions of men; whence the Apostle calls it the rudiments and elements of the world, consisting in sensible representations of him. (*Col. ii. 20; Gal. iv. 3.*) CHRIST succeeded, (in whom God came near to us, and conversed with us,) as a prospective glass, which makes that which is afar off to seem near at hand, and manifests it in its dimensions: by him we can look through the veil, and be informed of the transactions in heaven between the Father and the Son on our behalf.

3. Fulness of the discovery. What was known before, is better known: the knowledge is better for quality, greater for quantity. For by the light diffused by CHRIST in the world, since the ascension of the Redeemer, and the descent of the Comforter, the simplest believer comprehends more of the glorious nature of GOD in his understanding, than the most elevated believer in the time of the law, either by the figures of the law, or the features of the creatures could, with the assistance of the most learned Doctors of the one, or Philosophers in the other; which our SAVIOUR verifies in the commendation he gives of him that is least in the kingdom of GOD, *i. e.*, in the Gospel state, magnifying him above JOHN the Baptist, whom he confesseth at the same time superior to all that went before him; who indeed knew more than all the Prophets, yet was inferior to the meanest believer under the New Testament. "Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than JOHN the Baptist; notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (*Matt. xi. 11.*) He indeed saw CHRIST in the flesh, beheld his person, as the "Lamb of GOD, to take away the sins of the world;" knew him as the "only-begotten Son,

in the bosom of the FATHER; a sight and day which ABRAHAM and the Prophets desired to see, and could not obtain; yet he saw him not dying, rising, ascending, pouring out the rich gifts of his SPIRIT; all which did clear up the righteous, true, wise, gracious nature of GOD to the simple believer, after the accomplishment of them, more than the knowledge of his incarnation could to JOHN. He that is least and most ignorant in the kingdom of GOD, is greater, *i. e.*, more intelligent than JOHN; he hath a fuller prospect and a diviner light; he knows what JOHN knew, and he knows what JOHN was ignorant of: he hath seen and known the performance of those things, whereof JOHN only knew the beginning; and this full and plain knowledge CHRIST promised before his departure: "The time comes when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the FATHER." (*John xvi. 25.*) That this is meant of a declaration of the FATHER in this life, is evident by the following words: "At that day you shall ask in my name." (*Ver. 26.*) Earth is the place for wants and petitions; heaven, for visions and praises. The whole scope of the doctrine of CHRIST is, to reveal GOD in his most illustrious perfections to man, and in the relation of a gracious Father to him. CHRIST speaking in proverbs, is understood by one of the whole time of the Mosaic dispensation, wherein CHRIST was the Angel to lead them, and conversed with them in shadows and figures; but now in the Gospel would plainly declare the FATHER to them. Natural and legal knowledge is cleared by the Gospel; which is a comment to explain what was before but darkly understood, and a new revelation, to elevate the soul to a greater understanding: it fortifies the light of nature, and frames in us more pure and significant conceptions of GOD.

(2.) Natural, legal, and evangelical knowledge differ in certainty. Natural knowledge of GOD is but conjectural: no position was so firm, but some wits in the world found out arguments to contradict it: nor was there wisdom

enough in the world to untie all the knots that were made by others. The whole world of nature lay in darkness: "He hath called us out of darkness;" (1 *Pet.* ii. 9;) and the Devil that is the ruler of the world, is "the ruler of the darkness of it;" (*Eph.* vi. 12;) spreading his fogs upon the minds of men. The Heathens arrived to the knowledge of GOD by rational deductions; but the most eagle-eyed among them, who could peep into the secrets of nature, could not reduce their apprehensions to any fixedness. They had a vanity in their imaginations and conceptions of his nature; and as those our SAVIOUR speaks of, though they agreed in the unity of the MESSIAH, yet differed about the person: one saith, "Here is CHRIST;" another, "There is CHRIST;" so these, GOD is this, and GOD is that, according to their particular fancies. They acknowledged him an admirable Being, but rather darkened than unveiled him. Nothing was satisfactory to the understanding: many of them saw not the creating power of GOD. One fancies the world eternal; another conceives it to be compacted by a multitude of atoms, or small particles of dust, meeting together by chance, and kneading themselves into this frame we call the world. But the doctrine of faith discovers GOD in his power: "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of GOD." (*Heb.* xi. 3.) It acquaints us that the world was created by him; which indeed the reason of many informed them of, but not the manner of the creation, by his sole word or will, or by the second Person, the essential Word of GOD. This we know by CHRIST, which we could not know by nature. "He hath spoken to us by his SON; by whom he also made the worlds."

By the knowledge of CHRIST we have a certain account of the manner of GOD's operations. The light of CHRIST is as the light of the morning: it discovers things to us, with as much certainty as the morning light doth the nature of the objects we doubted of in the darkness of the night. As the sense of vision is the most acute and exact sense, and extends further and with more assurance than

that of hearing and smelling ; so the knowledge of faith is the most infallible way of knowledge ; it being built upon the revelation of the SON of GOD, who is the Word of GOD, and the wisdom of GOD : it is therefore called, "The evidence of things not seen ; the substance of things hoped for." (*Heb. xi. 1.*) It is not an imagination, or fancy, but a demonstration more firm than any natural demonstration can be ; it is a subsistence in the mind, as sure, and as it were as real, as the subsistence of the unseen things believed without us ; an evidence, as if the things not seen had not a being but by faith. To an unbeliever, GOD seems not to have that power, wisdom, holiness, which are really in his nature ; the perfections of GOD have no existence in the heart of such a man, so that he is without GOD, without the knowledge of GOD, an Atheist in the world. Faith in CHRIST renders GOD as visible as he was by the same grace to MOSES : "By faith he saw him who is invisible." (*Heb. xi. 27.*) As the knowledge and faith of the ancient believers under the figures of CHRIST rendered GOD and the things of the New Testament visible to them, according to the measure of the revelation, so doth the knowledge of believers under the New Testament represent GOD and his perfections, in a more certain manner visible to them, because the way of revelation is firmer ; that from GOD by MOSES : this from GOD by his SON. And upon the account of the greater sensibility of this knowledge under the Gospel, it is the promise to the Jews, That "then they shall know the LORD ;" (*Jer. xxxi. 34 ;*) as though the knowledge of him in nature, and the knowledge of him under the Law, had been a kind of ignorance in comparison of this, as it is indeed in regard of the clearness and certainty of this by CHRIST.

The second thing is,—

II. That the clear knowledge of GOD is attained only by CHRIST. The full revelation of GOD was promised to be given out by the MESSIAH, the grand Prophet GOD promised, upon the Israelites' desire that GOD might not

speak immediately to them: "The **LORD** thy **GOD** will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee," &c.; "to him shall you hearken." (*Deut.* xviii. 16—18.) Intimating thereby, that a higher discovery was to be made by him of the mind of **GOD**: why else should they be bound to hearken to him, more than any other Prophet? He was to be "a light to the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes." (*Isai.* xlii. 6, 7.) **GOD** would call them in righteousness, according to the promise he had made to **ABRAHAM**, and afterwards to the Israelites, of a great Prophet, to take off the veil and darkness in regard of **GOD**, and renew their conceptions of **GOD**, whence he is called "the Light of the world;" and verse 8 seems to intimate, that the majesty of **GOD** and his name, and the incommunicableness of his attributes, were to be the subject of this discovery: "I am the **LORD**: that is my name; my glory will I not give to another:" and **CHRIST** asserts, that he had manifested the name of his **FATHER**, and would further declare it to the sons of men. (*John* xvii.) So that the spring of all spiritual knowledge is **CHRIST**: He is made "wisdom to us;" (*1 Cor.* i. 30;) from him we draw all sorts of spiritual understanding and revelation; by him we have the illumination of our minds, as well as the justification of our persons, the sanctification of our natures, and redemption from our enemies: He is the mirror that represents to us the perfections of **GOD**; being the brightness of his glory. Every beam whereby **GOD** is manifested, is shot through him; as every pardon, whereby the grace of **GOD** is discovered, and the soul refreshed, is dispensed through him. The Jews expected the discovery of the face of **GOD** by the **MESSIAH**; and to that purpose interpreted *Dan.* ii. 22: "He reveals deep and secret things, and the light dwells with him." That light is the **MESSIAH** dwelling with **GOD**; and some of them call him by the name of Light, there mentioned נהירא: though the words seem only to declare that **GOD** is the author of all knowledge, and sees by a clear light whatsoever is done amongst the sons of men. It is certain that whatsoever tends to the glory of **GOD**, his sovereignty,

wisdom, righteousness, grace, is fully revealed by CHRIST. He hath declared who is the Creator, Governor, Judge of all; that he is the chief good, the last end, and revealed all the means whereby we may come to a conjunction with him, and fruition of him, and exchange our darkness and misery for light and blessedness; and this chiefly by his death; for by that the perfections of GOD, hid in the infinite depths of his own essence, were in their rays transmitted to us. He could not be known, either by creatures or bare Scripture, in such a manner as he is by the cross of CHRIST, wherein his immense goodness, profound wisdom, severe justice, exact truth, infinite condescension, are manifested in such a manner, that it is as impossible to conceive how GOD can make a higher discovery of himself, as it was for men and angels to conceive before, how he should make so rich a discovery of himself as this is. The cross of CHRIST was the dissolution of the ignorance of men. The darkness which had lain upon the land of Egypt, (a type of the ignorance of man by nature, as the Israelites' deliverance typified the redemption by CHRIST,) was taken off in the morning on the Passover-day, a type of the death of CHRIST.

But take in these propositions what is to be said about this

1. CHRIST was only capacitated for this discovery of GOD, in regard of his intimacy with the FATHER. Though MOSES spake with him face to face, yet he had not that intimacy as CHRIST had, who "lay in the FATHER's bosom;" (*John* i. 18;) in the depths of his counsels, the intimate knowledge of his nature, in the delights of his favour. The secret of the FATHER is called the bosom of the FATHER; wherein he not only was, but is; he is in the bosom of the FATHER in heaven, while he is exposed to infirmities below: "No man hath ascended into heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven;" (*John* iii. 13;) *i. e.*, No man hath understood the secret mysteries of GOD but CHRIST; he only knows those counsels, eternal transactions, and con-

descensions of GOD, because he only was interested in them. He hath not things by revelation, as the Prophets and Apostles; nor from the law and Scripture, as other teachers. None of them had seen any thing but the shadows, and tasted some refreshments in the visions when they were revealed; none of them had been in heaven, and seen those things in the fountain, in the counsel of GOD. ISAIAH, EZEKIEL, DANIEL, acquainted men with many secrets of GOD, but they had not seen in heaven the things which they declared to others; nor was the full scope and design of those revelations understood by the Prophets themselves: "They searched what the SPIRIT of CHRIST did signify." (1 *Pet.* i. 11.) They were more prophetic instruments, than prophetic agents; the SPIRIT rather spoke through them, than to them. They saw things in images, heard them in obscure representations, and so delivered them as obscurely as they understood them; and those that were most familiar with GOD, as MOSES, had their revelations on earth, not in heaven. But CHRIST saw all things in the secret of his FATHER, in their proper form, without dreams and visions; he had sucked in the truth from the fountain, and drew that which he taught from the depths of wisdom in the bosom of his FATHER, which could not be in the power of any man; and therefore, "He that comes from above, is above all, and what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth." (*John* iii. 31, 32.) Others testify what they have heard: CHRIST testifies what he hath seen and heard. He did not only hear and report, but he saw the things himself; and in regard of his divine nature is above all teachers, as well as above all creatures. Was any else ever sealed with the brightness of GOD's glory? Was any else the dew from the womb of the morning? Did any else come out of the depths of the Fountain and Father of Lights? None was ever called "the Angel of GOD's presence," or face, but JESUS CHRIST. (*Isai.* lxiii. 9.)

2. It was fit a higher knowledge of GOD should be manifested by CHRIST than by other Prophets. It had

not been for the honour of this Prophet, who was greater than SOLOMON, greater than MOSES, to have no more to discover of GOD than what was clearly known before in the Church of the Jews; he had then been no Prophet of note; a Prophet without a discovery, a title without an office. As he is but a King in name who hath nothing to govern, so is he but the echo of a Prophet that repeats only what was declared before. The intimacy of our LORD JESUS with the FATHER had not appeared, if he had not something to manifest which was hid from the messengers that went before. That he might have an excellency above other Prophets, and appear in the world with more eminent prerogatives, there was to be a greater effusion of light. He had not been the Sun of Righteousness, if he had shined no brighter than an ordinary star. Since his coming was to be glorious, wherein could the glory of it be, if the greatness of the knowledge of GOD were not one excellent prerogative belonging to his incarnation, and in such a measure, that the light that dawned before in the world, either from creatures, Law, or Prophets, should be as nothing, compared with this Sun? And though whatsoever was known of GOD by men, was known by the mediation and direction of CHRIST, to whom, after the fall GOD had committed all judgment, (whence the SPIRIT of CHRIST is said to "speak in the holy Prophets;" (1 *Pet.* i. 11;) and from him ISAIAH received his instructions, when he showed himself to be sitting upon his throne; (*Isai.* vi. 1, compared with *John* xii. 41;) yet some things were reserved hid for the gracing the office of this great Prophet, as, the doctrine of the Trinity, and real distinction of the three Persons in the Godhead, the union of the divine and human nature, which were as clearly revealed by CHRIST under the New Testament, as they had been obscurely under the Old.

3. The discovery of GOD was the great end of CHRIST'S appearance upon the earth. His office: He was to declare "things hid from the foundation of the world;" (*Matt.* xiii. 35;) to unfold the secret counsels of GOD, and

remove the shades and veils between him and the understandings of men, and reveal things which GOD never revealed before. In him, who was GOD's light, we were to see light: (*Psa. xxxvi. 9:*) in the MESSIAH, as the Jews expound it, or by the grace of GOD in him, we were to know GOD with clearness. The world was a dark chaos, until CHRIST the Sun appeared in it; as the earth was until light was formed. CHRIST was not only to make a propitiation for us, but a manifestation of GOD to us; this was the design of his FATHER in sending him. (*John xvii. 6.*) As the sun hath not light only for himself, but for the world; so had CHRIST the knowledge of GOD in his human nature, not for himself, but to spread abroad in the world. He came out from "the bosom of the FATHER to declare him:" (*John i. 18:*) to bring to light the hidden things of GOD, and comment upon the abstruse excellencies of the Deity.

The knowledge of CHRIST is urged in Scripture, not as the ultimate term of our knowledge, but as the medium of our knowledge of GOD; for the term Mediator, and the office of Prophet, evidence this. A Mediator is to discover the inclinations and resolutions of the party with whom we are at variance; a Prophet discovers something of the mind and will of GOD to us. We are to know CHRIST, as he is the only person appointed to direct us to the knowledge of GOD; therefore, though MOSES and ELIAS were with him upon the mount of transfiguration, *i. e.*, though the Law and the Prophets pointed to CHRIST, and declared something of GOD, yet we are ordered by the voice of GOD to "hear him" only, as the great Instructor of the world: "This is my beloved SON, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." (*Matt. xvii. 5.*) It is his incommunicable title as Mediator, to be our only Master: "One is your Master, which is CHRIST." (*Matt. xxiii. 10.*) He is only the wisdom of GOD, as discovering the secrets of heaven to the believer, without those clouds of Levitical rites.

The third thing is,—

III. The necessity of this medium for the knowledge of God. This hath been evident already, for,—

1. The insufficiency of other mediums shows us the necessity of some other, and GOD hath revealed no other but this of CHRIST, which seems to be a standing and eternal one, whereby GOD will transmit his beams upon glorified souls; for so it will be in that state of the Church in this world which is but one remove from that of heaven: “The glory of GOD did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” (*Rev.* xxi. 23.)

2. The immense glory of GOD, and our natural weakness, as creatures, evidence the necessity of it. The glory of GOD would overwhelm the understanding of a creature; there is too great a disproportion between GOD and us; his infinite glory would dazzle and stupefy us. The weakness of our sight hinders from a full prospect of the stars, much more from a sight of the body of the sun, which is more offensive than delightful to our eyes, both by its brightness and its heat, if we venture to lift them up without an instrument fitted for that purpose. If we cannot then gaze upon the sun with our bodily eyes without being oppressed by its lustre, how can we look upon GOD with the eyes of our minds, without being overwhelmed by that dazzling light wherewith he clothes himself as with a garment; since GOD is more transcendently excellent above the capacity of our understandings, than the sun can be too bright for the eyes of our bodies. The sun, as glorious as it is, may be seen and viewed, not only by its effects, but in a glass or a vessel of water, or a thin cloud, but we can only see and know GOD in CHRIST, who is his image, and the beam and “brightness of his glory.” (*Heb.* i. 3.) The glory of GOD is refracted by CHRIST, and tempered to our weakness; whereby we may believingly behold his love without complaints of a scantiness, and see his justice without fear of being consumed by it; and instead of being oppressed by his light may be “changed into the same image from glory to glory.” (*2 Cor.* iii. 18.) CHRIST is the veil through which we

may look upon **GOD**, as through a veil we may behold the sun. He that hath seen **CHRIST** hath seen the **FATHER** : “He that sees me, seeth him that sent me :” (*John* xii. 45 :) and he that knows **CHRIST** knoweth the **FATHER**, because of the likeness of one to the other ; he that spiritually “knows the **SON** knows the **FATHER**.” (*John* xiv. 9.) Not he that seeth **CHRIST** corporeally, for then the unbelieving Pharisees might be said to see the **FATHER** ; nor he that seeth **CHRIST** intellectually, for then mere christian notionalists may be said to see the **FATHER** ; but he that sees **CHRIST** spiritually with a knowledge of faith, knows the **FATHER** ; for the majesty and bounty of **GOD** shine in **CHRIST** as an exact image.

The fourth thing is,—

IV. What knowledge of **GOD** is discovered to us by **CHRIST**. We do not only know in **CHRIST** what we know by creation, but more than can possibly be known of **GOD** by the works of his hands. All his works in creation are but obscure flashes of his nature in comparison of this. **GOD** hath opened himself abundantly in the sufferings and exaltation of **CHRIST**, and done enough to raise himself from those common thoughts and apprehensions men have of him ; he hath spread abroad the ensigns of his majesty, to clear the minds of men, raise their admirations, and elevate their thoughts and esteem of him. The Church therefore, in the time of the Gospel, is called “the throne of **GOD**,” (*Jer.* iii. 17,) and a “glorious throne ;” (*Jer.* xvii. 12 ;) because therein by **CHRIST** he doth, as Kings upon the throne, show himself in his royalty and magnificence, in the largeness of his bounty, severities of his justice, lustres of his wisdom, and the honour of his law, in **CHRIST** the Head of the Church ; and this manifestation of **GOD** was chiefly in the death of **CHRIST** : “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and **GOD** is glorified in him.” (*John* xiii. 31.) Now shall there be a manifestation of my good will to men, and obedience to **GOD**, and a manifestation therein of **GOD**’s love to mankind, and justice against sin.

In CHRIST there is,—

1. A collection of GOD's perfections.
2. An exact harmony of all.

1. All the attributes of GOD are glorified in CHRIST. This was the petition of CHRIST: "FATHER, glorify thy name: then came a voice from heaven saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again;" (*John* xii. 28;) *i. e.*, thy attributes and perfections of thy nature, make them all illustrious in the work I have undertaken; which petition GOD readily assents to, so much was his heart and delight set to make the brightness of his own nature appear in this way, which glorification is not any addition to the essential glory of GOD, but the manifesting it in the riches of it, to the sons of men; CHRIST added no glory to GOD's nature by his death and resurrection, but opened the curtains, and manifested that which had lain hid from eternity in the infinite depths of his own essence. In this regard he is called by the name of the glory of GOD rising upon the world; (*Isai.* lx. 1;) for CHRIST is a certificate, wherein the world may read how excellent, wise, bountiful, just, faithful, holy, GOD is. These are all visible in him in the noblest manner, so that we cannot deliberately view and consider CHRIST, but we are presently informed of the glory of the Deity. Since CHRIST was so loving, tender, holy, righteous, we must conclude the FATHER is of the same nature: He would not send one unlike himself, one that was not the character of his person, upon such an errand as the discovery of his own nature to men and angels. GOD had in several ages of the world pitched upon particular seasons to manifest one or other particular property of his nature: his justice in drowning the old world, and firing Sodom; his truth and power in freeing the Israelites from the Egyptian chains; his truth in performing a promise which had lain so long dormant; his power in quelling his enemies by the meanest of his creatures; his wisdom in delivering them from the Babylonish captivity, by the ordering secondary means for the attainment of that end. In the creatures one or other

attribute seems to be more illustrious in one than another: in some appears more of goodness, in another more of wisdom, in another more of power, though his glory shines in all; as not a star in heaven but sparkles, and discovers not only itself, but something of the heaven wherein it is placed, yet some with more lustre than others, according to the portion of light afforded them. But in CHRIST all the perfections of GOD are centred together, as if all the stars were made one body, and transmitted their light in one beam upon the world; or as various streams gliding from several parts, and circling large compasses of ground, fall unanimously into the sea, and rest in the bosom of it. In him sparkle the justice of GOD, in the punishment of sin; mercy, in laying foundations of pardon; bounty, in his love to his creatures; faithfulness, in the accomplishment of his promises, and realizing the figures of the Law; wisdom, in framing and managing the Gospel design; holiness, against the pollutions of the world in the condemnation of sin; and power, in effecting what he pleased in his own council.

2. As in CHRIST all the attributes of GOD are manifest to man, so they are manifest in an exact harmony. In JESUS CHRIST those attributes that seemed to look with an ill aspect on one another, are mixed together with inexpressible sweetness. Patience rejoiceth at its indefatigable waiting; justice triumphantly flourisheth the bloody sword, bathed in the heart of the Redeemer, and mercy as triumphantly kisseth it; justice glorying, and mercy singing, at the triumphs of justice; truth holding both threatenings and promises in conjunction in her bosom; all caressing one another, and applauding the designs and accomplishments of manifold wisdom and infinite power, which removed the seeming contrarieties, and tied a knot between time and eternity. CHRIST is "the first-born of every creature," (*Col. i. 15.*) or, of all creation, *πάσης κτίσεως*: as the first-born is the strength of the parent, so is CHRIST the strength of GOD. The glories of GOD scattered in the creation are gathered into him, all things

in heaven and earth. The eternal glories of GOD in the confirmed felicity of angels, and restored happiness of man. As he gathered angels and men into one family, "all things in heaven and earth," (*Eph. i. 10,*) so he gathered all the attributes of GOD into one sun to conspire together for the welfare of believers.

He is made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, the power, wisdom, justice, holiness of GOD to us: Goodness, grace, love, righteousness, whatsoever distinction they have in themselves, meet all in him in their glory and sweetness, combine together, and sing one and the same note for the happiness of man; all the treasures of them are laid open in CHRIST, to be laid out in all the fruits flowing from them for the eternal welfare of believers. How delightful a knowledge of GOD is this which CHRIST transmits to his people? How much higher and ravishing is this prospect of GOD, than that in the creation! All variety with harmony is pleasant; the choicest music is made up of discords skilfully fitted to agree with one another. This is that CHRIST, in whom GOD hath made all his attributes, which seemed to be in debate against man, and irreconcilable to one another, to be in league together for the good of every believing soul, and rendered all their ways, "ways of pleasantness, and all their paths peace." Let our souls praise him, let us delight to view him: this is that Prophet; let us rejoice in him.

But, in particular, the patience, wisdom, purity, justice, mercy, power, and truth of GOD, with the reasons and depths of them, were manifested in and by CHRIST; as well as the nature, and excellency of GOD.

*First,* The patience of GOD. We see the patience of GOD as the first attribute coming to our view after the transgression of man, and the interposition of CHRIST. When CHRIST stepped out of the council of GOD, forbearance with a fallen world stepped out to meet him. This is the reason, why he did not dash the world in pieces upon the sin of the first man, and raise another that should keep his law; nothing of this glorious perfection had then been

visible. This is the reason why, after forbearance with the first man, and after multiplied provocation by his posterity, he did not destroy the whole race of mankind, and turn a defaced world into flames, and make it smoke by the fire of his justice, as well as he had reared and preserved it by the arm of his power. He had not then manifested the long-suffering, the unwearied duration of this attribute, nor answered the end of his patience, which was a discovery of himself in his SON. By this we come to know why we were not made a prey to the just wrath of God and the fury of devils; why the divine revenge was held back so many ages; why he “winked at the times of ignorance and corruption;” (*Acts xvii. 30, 31;*) even because he had appointed “a man to judge the world,” whom he would first send to save the world: why he suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, yet left them not without witness in the dispensations of his providence; *viz.*, that in time he might be known “in his SON to be the living God, which made heaven and earth.” (*Acts xiv. 15—17.*) He exercised his patience upon this account, and would not take the forfeiture in expectation of the fulness of time, wherein his SON should be manifested in him. For the great ground of it was the discovery of his name, his loving-kindness in JESUS CHRIST. “For my name’s sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain from thee that I cut thee not off.” (*Isaiah xlvi. 9.*) And he bore with an infinite patience the affront of Jews and Gentiles, till the time came that his SON should be set out to be a propitiation for the remission of sins that were past, through the forbearance of God. (*Rom. iii. 25.*) He discovered his patience, in not pouring down upon every sin destroying judgments; not for want of justice, but for the demonstration of his justice and loving-kindness together in the sacrifice of his SON, wherein he intended to represent himself in a glorious manner to the world. His kindness was the end of his forbearance. He supported himself under the indignities of men, and deferred the time of the

oblation of this sacrifice, that this attribute might be known, and that he might have a more glorious foundation for the display of his pardoning mercy, which he intended should follow after, and might bring forth his grace in its glory to take away the guilt of men's sins, upon the return of men to him, after the bearing with so many oppositions : "He is long-suffering to us, not willing that any should perish." (2 *Pet.* iii. 9.) It is highly discovered also, since the coming of CHRIST, that notwithstanding those repeated indignities offered to his SON by contempt and unbelief, and to himself in his SON, yet he keeps the world standing, till he hath gathered in the objects of his eternal grace, and completed his family in his SON, whereby he hath rendered his long-suffering more clear and admirable, than if he sustained the rejection of millions of more prophets, than ever yet were put to death or persecuted by the unbelieving world.

*Secondly*, His love, and goodness, and pardoning mercy. "I am the way, the truth, and the life ; no man cometh to the FATHER but by me : If you had known me, you should have known my FATHER also ; and from henceforth you know him, and have seen him." (*John* xiv. 6, 7.) As I am the way of access to the FATHER, so I am the medium of the manifestation of the FATHER : if you know me, my love and my heart toward you, you cannot but know my FATHER's heart and love too. Though man fell from his finite goodness, and duty to GOD, yet it is manifest in CHRIST, that the infinite CREATOR could not fall from his infinite tenderness. If the manifestation of his goodness was his end in bringing forth the creatures, it was much more his end in bringing forth his SON.

(1.) This the creation did not discover. Man might know that GOD was bountiful, in "filling his heart with food and gladness ;" but did not understand any thing of pardoning mercy in GOD. Had the creation had any inscription of forgiving grace upon it, why do we not find some supplications for it from the mouth of ADAM after the fall ? Do we not find his heart as naked of any thoughts

of this sort, as he was of his original righteousness: he was seized with an horror of conscience after his sin, but not a groan for pardon: for how could it enter into the heart of ADAM but by revelation? The law given him at his creation, spake not a syllable of it; the voice of that was nothing but death, death: "Thou shalt surely die." (*Gen. ii. 17.*) Nothing else could be expected by him upon his eating the forbidden fruit, nor could he have the least sentiment of remission, till the pronouncing the promise of CHRIST in "the Seed of the woman." The manifestation of CHRIST in the beginning of the book, was the first notice of any such perfection in the nature of GOD. That same moment of time wherein CHRIST was given, wrapt up in a promise, did pardoning grace sparkle out, and not before.

(2.) This then was only discovered in and by CHRIST. Both in the glory of it to GOD, and the sweetness of it to us. It was in CHRIST discovered to be GOD's nature, and our life. GOD is love, and the manifestation of it to us was in GOD's sending his "only begotten SON into the world, that we might live through him:" (*1 John iv. 8, 9:*) That the dead world might live through him. Hereby he did not only declare himself placable, not only desirous to manifest a scanty goodness to the creature; but to show that his nature was enriched with the choicest love and grace, and his desire that it should flow out in the highest manner, through a Mediator, to the polluted and rebellious world. In him GOD opened his bowels which lay yearning, and "brought life and immortality" (for the creature) "to light through the Gospel." (*2 Tim. i. 10.*) Both mercy and love were manifested. Love is a perfection of a higher strain than mercy: mercy may be prevalent, where love is absent. Mercy hath for its object a thing miserable; love hath for its object a thing amiable; pardoning grace hath for its object a thing criminal. The mercy of GOD is manifested in the death of CHRIST for us, when we wallowed in misery; the pardoning grace of GOD is declared upon us, as we are loaded with guilt; love is

manifested in being “well-pleased with us in the Beloved,” after we are made comely and amiable in him. CHRIST is the medium of the manifestation of this. This was his main design, that his grace might be discovered with an emphatical praise. “To the praise of the glory of his grace;” (*Eph. i. 6;*) *i. e.*, by an Hebraism, his glorious grace; and be known in its glory to men and angels, in the height, breadth, length, and depth of it; that he might communicate his Spirit, his heaven, himself to them; to be in them, and they in him; to love them with such a love as he loves his SON, *i. e.*, with such a love as he loves himself; and all his other attributes were employed in the design of glorifying this: wisdom contrives, truth designs the sacrifice, justice strikes, to render mercy and love triumphant. GOD constituted this his principal glory, and in a manner esteemed not all his other virtues but as they were ordered to manifest this.

In CHRIST his mercy was discovered,—

[1.] In the freeness of it. His goodness shined in the creation, but with a weaker light. Goodness was communicated to nothing in bringing it into being; which nothing, as it had not merited that goodness, so it had not deserved the contrary: it had as little of demerit, as it had of merit: he made his goodness break out then upon nothing; but in CHRIST upon things worse than nothing. He manifested his goodness in giving life to man, but without the expense of the blood of his SON, and the loss of his life, by whom he conferred the benefit of life upon sinners. When he gave the creatures to man at first, he gave them to a holy, just, righteous, perfect man, pure as he came out of the mint of GOD’s power and holiness; but he gives his SON to depraved man, who had affronted him, and cast those rich endowments of his nature behind his back. He finds out a way to glorify his mercy, when he might only have glorified justice; takes rebels into his arms, who had merited the thunders of his anger; and, by an incomparable and unimagined kindness, gives his SON to save his enemies, and adopts them for his children.

[2.] In the tenderness of it. The Gospel presents **GOD** in **CHRIST** under more tender titles to man, than either creation or law. In the one, it was the **LORD GOD**; in the other, “the mighty **LORD**, the **LORD** of hosts, the terrible **GOD** ;” names and marks of grandeur, sovereignty, and justice. In the Gospel he assumes the title of **FATHER**; a name of kindness and compassion; and is called in the New Testament more by that title of Father, than that of Lord; as if his sovereignty had been swallowed up in tenderness. In the Old Testament more rarely: once in regard of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, as typical of the redemption by **CHRIST**: “Is not he thy father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee and established thee?” (*Deut.* xxxii. 6.) And promised to be the familiar name whereby they should call upon **GOD** in the times of the Gospel: “Thou shalt call me, My Father, and shalt not turn away from me.” (*Jer.* iii. 19.) The name *Abba*, Father, is peculiar to the Gospel, and the name wherewith we have access to the throne of grace.

[3.] In the fulness of it, declared in the person of his **SON**. Rather than he would lose the whole race of mankind, he would spare nothing, no, not his best Beloved; with whom, though he were ever well pleased, yet he must suffer, that in him he might be well pleased with us. He advanced his mercy over all the difficulties which lay in his way; and to magnify it, would not spare his **SON**, that he might spare the sinner, but condemn him to death for the redemption of a servant. The immense goodness which appears in heaven and earth, sun and moon, and motions of them, and in every other creature, is nothing to the making Him a creature by whom he made the worlds. To make Him, who was the brightness of his glory, become as vile as earth; Him who was **GOD**, to be a man; the **LORD** of life to be the subject of death,—whereby the souls of men, sunk into the depths of misery, are made capable of deliverance and enjoyment of a happy immortality, a communion in glory with himself,—is a love infinitely above that goodness which appeared in the creation; and so

magnificent, that if angels and men had millions of years to busy their thoughts, they knew not how to imagine higher.

*Thirdly*, The wisdom of GOD is admirably manifested herein. The highest discovery of his wisdom is in the crucifixion of CHRIST, in the death of the SON of GOD upon the cross. Wisdom shined in the creation, it glitters every day in providence, but the depths and riches of it are in CHRIST. In those there are some lesser sums, but the treasures of it are in Him. Here are the deep counsels of GOD, which the Apostle cannot speak of without a ravishing admiration: "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD!" (*Rom. xi. 33.*) "A manifold wisdom;" (*Eph. iii. 10*;) in regard of the variety of effects in the glorifying his name, and dignifying his creature, in repairing the breach and establishing the repair. Wherefore the Apostle, speaking of this great mystery, breaks out into a doxology of the wisdom of GOD: "To GOD only wise, be glory through JESUS CHRIST for ever. Amen." (*Rom. xvi. 25—27.*)

When the creation was despoiled by sin, and not a jot of goodness left in it to give GOD any content, it was a greater wisdom to repair it without breaking it to pieces, than to have created a new one. The wisdom in a new creation had been but of the same level, but that in restoring was of a higher elevation. To bring his glory out of the ashes wherein it seemed to be buried, to bring man out of darkness wherein he was, as to his own strength, irrecoverably involved; to put heaven and earth in tune again, which sin had made at discord with one another, was a high piece of skill. It is an admirable wisdom among men to unite two Princes at variance without invading either of their rights; but entirely preserving them, to link them in a stronger peace than that they were in before they fell out; to enlarge their empire not only to a mutual satisfaction, but the increase of both their grandeur and glories. The case is the same: GOD repairs the breach between himself and man, and preserves his right; he loseth nothing of his

own honour, but enlargeth it; man is restored to favour with a temporary diminution of his bodily happiness, but with an eternal increase of the felicities both of his soul and body; all seeming contradictions are removed, and means fully proportioned to the ends intended are appointed. In this regard the Apostle calls it, "all wisdom and prudence." (*Eph.* i. 8.) Wisdom drawing the platform, and prudence disposing the means consonant to the end.

Wisdom is here largely displayed:—

(1.) In uniting the greatest extremes. In the creation GOD brought nothing to be something. In this he joins together beings at a greater distance.

[1.] The divine and human natures are united in one person. The highest intellectual nature, with the lowest rational nature, infinite and finite, glory and misery, time and eternity. CHRIST calls himself the "Son of Man," to show that he was really man in qualities. "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven;" (*1 John* iii. 13;) yet, saith he, "is in heaven," to manifest that he is GOD, Man born of the Virgin, yet the SON of GOD eternally begotten; the Word made flesh: GOD in heaven manifested in flesh upon the earth, each preserving their entire properties; the Son of Man by this union is become the SON of GOD, yet retains his pure and naked form as man; the Word by this union is made flesh, yet without losing his infinity, eternity, and original being.

[2.] The justice and mercy of GOD are united. He becomes merciful without being unjust, and just without impairing the honour of his compassion. Justice hath the highest right, and mercy its utmost intention; the cries of his justice and the yearnings of his bowels are united without depriving either of their rights; no complaints can be found in the mouth of the one, nor any discontent in the looks of the other, but mutual smiles and mutual applauses.

(2.) In uniting GOD and man in eternal fellowship. By this act he brings stubble to dwell with flames, and weak-

ness to behold and enjoy glory, without being overwhelmed by the weight and splendour of it, to draw near to the supreme Majesty through the veil of the flesh of CHRIST. He causeth pardon and punishment to meet, that GOD appeased, and man acquitted, may come together; the punishment is inflicted upon the surety that the offender might share in the glorious fruits of his mediation; GOD and man are brought to amity; angels and men are made one family; and more grace given to fit us for GOD than ADAM lost. This was the point his wisdom aimed at, to make the "riches of his grace abound toward us." (*Eph.* i. 7, 8.) And to add to the wonder of his wisdom, GOD saves the sinner in the same way whereby he condemned the sin, and advanceth the offender to communion with him, the same way whereby he showed his detestation of the crime. Sin is made the mark of the divine displeasure in the person of CHRIST, swallowed up and devoured by the flames of justice, that, the wall of separation being removed, he might meet his creature with arms widened by the dearest love.

(3.) In frustrating the subtlety of SATAN. The Devil thought he had brought a total destruction upon mankind, when he persuaded our first parents to eat of the forbidden fruit. But GOD orders it to bring about a greater glory to himself, and a firmer stability to his people, in introducing an everlasting covenant founded in a MEDIATOR, which could not be broken; and establishing their happiness upon surer terms than it was settled on in paradise: and afterwards GOD by his wisdom overrules him to a subserviency to his own glorious end; for by that very way he thought to stifle the good of mankind, he occasionally promotes their spiritual redemption. GOD turned the subtlety of the Devil to his own praise, bruised the Devil's head by letting him bruise the MEDIATOR's heel, and made his malice conduce to the restoration of mankind from that ruin he had before, by a prosperous subtlety, effected. GOD, by a mysterious wisdom, more signal than that in the creation, gained the victory over the Devil, who had defaced

his work, and gave men also a victory over the tempter who had depraved his soul.

*Fourthly,* The justice of GOD is more evidenced than by all other judgments in this world, or that which is to come. GOD would be acknowledged in his justice after the fall, which was not known, nor could be known, in an innocent state any other way than in the threatening; GOD would therefore have bloody sacrifices which might signify man's demerit. And his justice was never so evident as in CHRIST crucified: he chose his SON to lay upon him the guilt of the world; subjected him to the state of a criminal, depressed him to the condition of a servant, sunk him into the misery of rebels, caused him to swallow the disgraces of men, and drink down the vials of his anger, rather than the sin of the world should boast of impunity. What if the whole world was drowned by a wrathful deluge; Sodom and Gomorrah consumed to ashes by a shower of fire? What, if every son of ADAM were to lie roaring in endless torments? What, if not an angel of heaven had escaped the sin and punishment of devils? What, if this world were multiplied into millions? What, if every man upon earth and every angel in heaven, were multiplied into thousands of millions of men and angels? What, if every spire of grass, grain of corn, atom of the sand, were made a rational creature, and for sin thrown for ever into devouring flames? Is not here inexpressible justice? But what is this justice upon creatures that were made, to that justice upon his SON, by whom he made the creatures? What is this to the SON of GOD trailing a weak body for thirty-three years in the world, suffering the indignities of men and devils, bearing the weight of an infinite wrath? What are all other judgments to his bloody sweat in the garden, or the groans of this divine person upon the cross, of more worth than innumerable worlds of creatures? Who ever "knew" before "the power of GOD's wrath?" (*Psalm xc. 11.*) For as there is no proportion of creatures to GOD, so there is no proportion of the death of the SON of GOD, to the

death of all men and angels together. Consider the circumstances, to render the justice of God more visible.

(1.) He was innocent in his own person. He was beloved by his FATHER, had never displeased him; the sins he suffered for were none of his own by commission; he made them his own by a voluntary submission, and God made them his own by a penal infliction. God would have sin punished in the person of our Surety, though he was his only-begotten and perfectly innocent SON.

(2.) He was willing to pay the debt. He offered himself up with a design to glorify his FATHER, to restore the creation to its former loveliness, to renew the delight that God had in his works when he pronounced them good; a consideration which one would think might sweeten the severest justice; yet he must groan and bleed to death.

(3.) Yet he endured sorrows inexpressible. The powers of darkness had their hour against him, all the curses of the law were thundered out against him, while he was clothed in the garb of a sinner, as if when he had been leading to the cross, God had particularly spoken that word to him, "Cursed is he that hangs upon a tree." (*Gal. iii. 13.*) He was condemned and tormented by his servants, and those whose salvation he sought and designed; he was subject to that which no man, no, not the wickedest man had ever endured in this life; the heavens were darkened upon him, earth forsaking him, none seemed to have pity upon him; "terrors took hold upon him, and pursued his soul as the wind; his soul was poured out in him, his bones were pierced, and his sinews took no rest." (*Job xxx. 15—17.*) He had an angel to comfort him, but with no commission to remove the cup from him, that his FATHER held out for him to drink. What a demonstration of the justice of God is here! That he, in whom all nations of the earth were to be blessed, whom the angels in heaven bless, the saints on earth bless, yea, and is the blessed of his FATHER, yet is made a curse by him.

(4.) Deserted by his FATHER. His prayers were not answered for deliverance, nor the least ear lent to his cries

in his weightiest distresses. He was deserted as to the comforts of a Father, to be given up to the strokes of his wrath, as if he had discarded all bowels of compassion toward him; GOD dealt not with him as a father, but as a GOD of justice; whence CHRIST upon the cross calls not upon GOD by the name of Father, which was his wonted custom, and as he had used that title in the garden, but by the name of GOD: "My GOD, my GOD." GOD became, as it were, cruel to him, and with "strong hands opposed himself against him." (*Job xxx. 21.*) Nay, GOD regarded him not; as if he were for a time ashamed to acknowledge him for his SON, and when they had taunted him upon the cross, "He trusted in GOD, let him deliver him, seeing he trusted in him;" though they reflected upon the name and glory of GOD, he would not at present take notice of the sufferings of his own name in the reproaches of the Jews; nor remit upon that score, any thing of his indignation against the sins of men, when it was the fittest time to vindicate his SON'S innocence, because he was condemned in making himself the SON of GOD. But he was so intent upon revenging sin imputed to his SON, that he regarded not the present actual indignity offered to himself; so that our SAVIOUR himself seems to be astonished at his FATHER'S silence in such a case, since his words, "My GOD, my GOD, why hast thou forsaken me?" are uttered a little after that reproach of the Jews in the story. This was the highest act of justice that the arm of GOD could put forth, to make the soul of his dearly Beloved an offering for sin, whereby he manifested that without blood there could be no atonement. And since no other blood had a sufficiency in it to quench the flames of his justice, GOD would single the best blood in the whole creation wherewith to satisfy it; a blood though created, yet the blood of the Creator. Never could earth or hell read such a lecture of divine justice as this.

*Fifthly,* The holiness of GOD is manifested by CHRIST. His justice is founded in his holiness. "The holy GOD is

sanctified in righteousness." (*Isai.* v. 16.) His holiness is illustrated by his justice; he is exalted in judgment and sanctified in righteousness. Had not CHRIST died upon the cross, we had not had a discovery of the ingratitude and baseness there was in the first sin against GOD, and in all that followed it; nor could we have had so full a prospect of the holiness and purity of GOD's nature, as in the dreadful punishment of CHRIST for sin, because sin never appeared in its blackest and bloodiest colours, and nothing was ever able to show us the true tincture of sin comparably to the blood of the SON of GOD. This perfection did sparkle in the commands of the law, which he gave angels and men for the rule of their obedience; the constancy of this holiness appeared in the renewing of the law in tables of stone to the Jews; adding thereunto the ceremonial law, made up of sacrifices of beasts for the expiation of sin, as typical of a greater sacrifice, whereby he would declare, that he would never be pleased with iniquity. But this manifestation was with a fainter light than in a crucified CHRIST. If ever sin appeared odious, it was in the death of his SON: here we see nothing but frowns and displeasures against the breach of his righteous law; his detestation of sin, to be as great as his indignation; his hatred of it, to be as infinite as his wrath against it; both joining hand in hand together, to declare the contrariety between the beauty of the one, and deformity of the other, striking it to the heart, and condemning it for ever to that death and dissolution, the greatness of the evil had merited; and publishing an irreconcilable enmity to the filthiness and loathsomeness of it, showing that he would rather have his SON die than sin live.

*Sixthly*, The truth of GOD is manifested in CHRIST. CHRIST gave himself "a ransom for all, to be testified in due time;" (1 *Tim.* ii. 6;) τὸ μαρτύριον, for a testimony. A testimony not only of his grace, and the abundant goodness of GOD in redemption, that he would "have all men to be saved;" (*ver.* 4;) but also a testimony of the truth

of his first promise, constituting him the only Mediator, as the Seed of the woman; his passion was a testimony of the veracity of God in that promise, whereby it was accomplished: "Grace and truth came by JESUS CHRIST." (*John* i. 17.) Grace, in regard of our pardon; truth, in the regard of the promise, and truth in his threatenings: he had declared in paradise his certain resolution to punish the violations of his law, which he could not recede from, without making a breach upon the holiness of the Deity. This threatening, which SATAN had made man believe that GOD would falsify, he kept up without any spot upon his truth, any breach upon his word, and yet disappointed the Devil of the great end he aimed at in his lie. He makes in CHRIST the threatenings of the law, and the promises of the Gospel, kiss each other; and the honour of his truth is preserved in both. He hath hereby declared, that if he be wanting to his faithfulness, he would be wanting to his nature; and to break his word, would be to deny his Deity; which is such a discovery of GOD, as dreadful to an impenitent, as delightful to a believer; for he hath manifested his truth to be as much his nature, as his holiness, grace, and justice.

*Seventhly*, The power of GOD is manifested in CHRIST. Hence CHRIST is called the power of GOD, as well as the wisdom of GOD. (*1 Cor.* i. 24.) Not only in the fruits of the Gospel upon the hearts of men, but in his office, wherein was manifested the power of GOD in redeeming the world. It was in him GOD tore up the foundations of the Devil's empire, disarmed all the curses of the law, overthrew the false conceits of the world, knocked off the fetters of their captivity, demolished the power of death, snatched souls from the flames of hell, unbarred the gates of heaven, prepared everlasting mansions, laid his beams in the waters; the foundations of a happy eternity in the misery, afflictions, death, blood of his only SON. He restored man to glory by weakness; to wisdom by foolishness: he made the law lose its sting, in the sides of him whom it struck; took away our captivity by misery;

flung death to the ground by death ; quenched hell by its own flames ; opened heaven by a cross ; cemented an everlasting habitation by blood ; and condemned sin by a sacrifice for it. By a crucified man, and a weak flesh, encompassed with infirmity, the **God** of heaven subdues the god of the world, destroys the empire of the proud spirits, and subdues principalities and powers under his feet ; who, besides their usurped authority, had a vast ambition to preserve it, and a strength and subtlety unconquerable by the power of man ; and hereby shows, that no evil was so great, but his almighty arm could put in execution what his immense wisdom had provided as a remedy against it.

By his strength, he gives a being to his own word and promise, when neither angels nor man could conceive the methods of the execution, even after the promise of bruising **SATAN** by the Seed of the woman was declared. It is seen in raising **CHRIST** from the dead, after he had sustained the weight of the sin of the world upon him ; and bringing him forth with success and glory, after that great encounter with the powers of hell. In powerfully raising a Church to him from the seed of his blood, in spite of all spiritual and secular enemies ; defending it and supporting it under the most terrible waves of the world, that he might be acknowledged, adored, and praised in this world, and that which is to come. The power of **God** is not so manifest in laying the foundation of the earth, stretching out the heavens, turning the wheel of **Providence**, as in this, which is the top-stone of all his **Providences** in the world, to which they tend, and wherein they centre. "Twice we have heard that power belongs to **God** ;" also, "unto thee, **O LORD**, belongs mercy." (*Psa.* lxi. 11, 12.) Once we have heard of it in creation ; more gloriously in the work of redemption, wherein his power and his grace were linked together, as well as in creation his power and his goodness. And this is a comfortable manifestation of **God**, his power is as great as his mercy, and they join hands together. His power is known in

**CHRIST** to be able to save us without giving his enemies any ground to reproach him; and his mercy is made known, whereby he is willing to save us.

Endeavour, then, after suitable affections to whatsoever you know of **GOD** in **CHRIST**. Let the holiness of **GOD** in **CHRIST** be the awe of your souls. Let us not dandle any sin which **GOD** so hates, that he would not remit it without the price of the blood of his **SON**. Tremble at that justice which drank such draughts of precious blood in the punishment of sin, and consider every sin in its utmost demerit. Admire and bless that wisdom, which made itself so eminent in the untying so many knots, passing over such mountains of difficulties, that he might show himself a hater of sin, and a lover of his creatures; that he might entwine his mercy and justice in perpetual embraces. Let us have as strong affections of love and joy, as the Devils by their knowledge of **GOD**, as discovered in **CHRIST**, have of horror and hatred. We see in that, not only the manifestation, but the satisfaction of his justice; they see the manifestation of it, and the dissatisfaction of it for ever with them; they have such a knowledge of **GOD** in **CHRIST**, as to awaken their consciences; we may have such a knowledge of **GOD** in **CHRIST**, as to calm our consciences; their terrors are as much increased by that discovery, as a believer's comfort. They behold **GOD** in **CHRIST**, their implacable and inexorable judge; we behold **GOD** in **CHRIST**, a tender and condescending Father. They know a **GOD** in our nature, imparting his own nature to us; and refusing their nature, to leave them to lie in their fallen state for ever. The terrible attributes become sweet in **CHRIST** to man, and more dreadful to them. Let the motions of your will, and the affections of your soul, rise according to the elevation of your knowledge of **GOD** in **CHRIST**.

To conclude: Let us behold his justice to humble ourselves under it, his pardoning grace to have recourse to it under pressures of guilt; let us sweeten our afflictions by the sight of his compassions, and have confidence

to call upon him as a Father in our necessities. Not any discovery of GOD in CHRIST, but is an encouragement to a forlorn creature, lost in his own sense; his perfections smile upon man; nothing of GOD looks terrible in CHRIST to a believer; the sun is risen, shadows are vanished, GOD walks upon the battlements of love, his weapons are out of his hand, his bosom open, his bowels yearn, his heart pants, sweetness and love are in all his carriage. And “this is life eternal, to know GOD” believingly, in the glories of his mercy and justice in JESUS CHRIST.



---

AN  
EXTRACT  
FROM  
THE SERMONS  
OF  
DR. CALAMY.

---



# SERMON I.

PREACHED AT WHITEHALL.

---

---

ON CHRISTIAN BENEVOLENCE.

---

---

ACTS x. 38.

*Who went about doing good.*

WHICH words give us a short account of our blessed SAVIOUR'S life here on earth ; it was spent in "doing good." They also teach us after what manner we, his disciples, ought to live in this world ; namely, That we should omit no fair opportunity of doing good according to our several capacities. I shall speak to them,—

I. As referring to our LORD, and describing his manner of life to us.

II. As prescribing to us our duty in imitation of His example, "who went about doing good."

I. As referring to our LORD, and describing his manner of life to us. Now these words, "He went about doing good," especially signify these three things :—1. That this was the chief business and employment of his life. 2. That where he did not readily find, he went about to seek, objects of compassion. 3. This he constantly persevered in, notwithstanding the foul ingratitude and malicious opposition his good works met with.

1. This was the chief business and employment of his life. To propound to you the several instances of it, were to give you a history of his whole life, the four Gospels being nothing else but the authentic records of those good works JESUS of Nazareth did ; containing his excellent instructions, his free reproofs, the wise methods he used

for the reforming men's minds, together with those various kindnesses he showed to their bodies and outward estates, with a generosity and charity not to be paralleled. I shall not, therefore, descend to particulars, but only take notice, (1.) That "doing good" was his ordinary daily employment. (2.) That to the same end tended all his extraordinary miraculous works. And, (3.) That this was also the sum and substance of his religion. From all which it will easily appear, that he made "doing good" the chief business of his life.

(1.) Doing good was his ordinary daily employment. He did not only by the by, and on great occasions, exercise this charity, but it was as it were his only profession, his meat and drink, his business and recreation too; so that he denied himself the conveniences of life, that he might attend this work. How was he thronged after and pressed upon by the miserable and unfortunate, the diseased and possessed, in all places wherever he came; and can you tell of any one person whom he sent from his presence dissatisfied? It was but saying, LORD, have mercy upon me, and the poor humble beggar's wants (of what kind soever) were straight supplied.

And by these acts of love and kindness he engaged men to hearken to his wise counsels, and obey his gracious commands. For he had a farther design in all this compassion which he showed to men's bodies and outward estates, *viz.*, to heal their bodies and their minds together; to instill good instruction, and to promote men's eternal welfare, by contributing to their ease and happiness in this present life.

All this good he did with the greatest readiness and joy; it was his greatest pleasure to spread his healing wings over every place, continually to dispense his benign influences, and to make every one, who had the happiness to converse with him, sensible of his good-will to mankind. Nor from this would he ever rest, not so much as on the Sabbath-day, though he was accounted a transgressor for

it. He consulted the good of other men above his own reputation, and would cure the sick on that day, even before those who thought it a great piece of profaneness. He wanted objects sooner than will to show kindness; and nothing grieved him so much as that men, by their own perverseness, should obstruct and defeat his gracious designs towards them, and obstinately refuse to be made happy by him.

(2.) This was not only his ordinary daily employment, but for this end did he always exercise his extraordinary divine power. All his miracles were mercies to men, so that his wonderful works proved him to be sent from God, not more by that infinite power that was seen in them, than by that surpassing goodness they demonstrated to the world.

He never employed his omnipotence out of levity or ostentation, but only as the wants of men required it. His miraculous works were not such as the Jews sometimes demanded from him, such only as would strike their senses and fancy with admiration, as the making prodigious and amazing shows in the heavens, or in the air; but they were all expressions of a most immense benignity to mankind, such as healing the sick of all manner of diseases, making the lame to walk, and the blind to see, and the deaf to hear, cleansing the lepers, feeding the hungry, raising the dead, and casting evil spirits out of those that were miserably possessed and cruelly tormented by them.

In such good offices, so profitable to men, did he all along exert that divine power which God had anointed him with; thus demonstrating himself to be the most divine person that ever appeared in our flesh, not only by doing the most miraculous works, but especially by doing the most good in the world.

(3.) To do good was the sum and substance of his religion. He affected not any precise singularities, or unusual severities of life. Of all the time he was on earth,

he spent but forty days in the wilderness in close solitude and retirement; the rest of his time he conversed freely and openly, that thereby he might have opportunity of obliging and benefitting all sorts of men. He neglected not, indeed, any duty of piety towards GOD, but then his love to GOD shone most resplendently in his incessant care of, and charity to, his creatures. He knew he could not please or glorify his FATHER better, than by bearing much fruit, or, which is all one, doing much good in the world.

His religion was active and operative. It consisted not in notions, or formalities, or external strictnesses, by which the several sects among the Jews were distinguished one from another; but the principal thing he was remarkable for, was a most sincere readiness to do all manner of good to all that came to him. Others might pray longer, fast more than he or his disciples did; (as we know was objected against him by JOHN'S disciples;) but no saint, no Prophet, no man ever before him so served GOD in his generation, or was either able or willing to show such kindnesses to the world as our blessed LORD and SAVIOUR did.

And in this chiefly did his holiness appear above the rate of other men's, in that he was so infinitely merciful and charitable. He made not such a pompous show of religion as some of the Pharisees did, but his actions truly bespoke him what he was,—a person infinitely full of goodness, that could not be at ease without continual venting itself; nor yet by all the wants, infirmities, necessities, either of men's minds or bodies could ever be exhausted.

Thus he made doing good the chief business and employment of his whole life, which is the first thing signified by these words.

2. That "he went about doing good," implies farther, that where he did not easily meet with, he industriously sought objects of compassion. His goodness did often

prevent men's desires, always surpass them; doing for them beyond all their requests or hopes. "He came to seek and save that which was lost."

He descended from the bosom of his FATHER, and eclipsed the glory of his divine majesty with a veil of flesh, and lived amongst us, that he might redeem us from the greatest evils and miseries, even whilst we were enemies to him, and desired no more than we deserved his love and favour. And while he was upon earth, he was not only easy of access,—he did not only courteously receive all that addressed themselves to him,—he not only freely invited and encouraged all men to repair to him for succour and relief; but also did not disdain himself to travel up and down the country on purpose to give opportunity to all that stood in need of him, to partake of his healing virtue. Those whom his disciples checked for their rude and troublesome importunity, he lovingly entertained, and never dismissed without a blessing.

This mightily enhanced the value of every kindness he bestowed; the frankness of his doing it doubled the benefit. We spoil a good turn, when it is extorted from us. It loseth its grace when it is done grudgingly, and as of necessity.

Nay, our SAVIOUR denied not to converse familiarly with publicans and the greatest sinners; he endeared himself to them by signal condescensions, though this also proved matter of reproach to him; as if he countenanced those vices he attempted to cure, or it were a disgrace to a Physician to visit his patients. He refused not the civil offer of a Pharisee, though his sworn enemy; and would go to the houses, and eat at the table of those who sought his ruin; and whatever ill design they might have in inviting him, yet he always improved the occasion for the doing them good.

3. And lastly, He constantly persevered in this, notwithstanding the foul ingratitude and malicious opposition his good works met with in the world. Never did any one meet with greater discouragements, or more unworthy

returns than the SON of GOD ; when all his acts of beneficence, all the good offices he had done amongst them, were so far from obliging, that they rather tended to exasperate and provoke that untoward generation ; and the more kindness he expressed towards them, the greater haste they made to destroy him. This great Patron and Benefactor, this generous Friend and Lover of mankind, was mortally hated and cruelly persecuted, as if he had been a public enemy, and had done or designed some notorious mischief. They continually laid traps to ensnare him, loaded him with malicious slanders, greedily watched for an advantage to animate the multitude against him ; took up stones to stone him, as a reward of his gracious attempt to make them wise and happy ; made sinister interpretations of all the good he did, as if he designed to gratify his ambition, and make himself popular ; so that he was looked upon as a dangerous man, and the more good he did, the more he was suspected ; yet all this, and a thousand times worse usage could not dissuade him from persisting in doing good to them. He was ready to repay all these injuries with courtesies, even his bitterest enemies were partakers of his kindness, and he still continued to entreat them to accept of life from him, and, with tears of true compassion, bewailed their infidelity and wilful folly ; nay, at last, when they laid violent hands upon him, and put him to the shameful death of the cross, yet then did he pray to his FATHER to forgive them ; and, which is the very perfection of charity, he willingly laid down his life for them who so cruelly and treacherously took it from him. Thus our LORD “went about doing good.” Let us who are his followers go and do likewise : which brings me to the second thing I was to consider, *viz.* :—

II. Our duty to imitate His example, “who went about doing good.”

Though we cannot after that stupendous manner be beneficial to mankind as our SAVIOUR was, yet there are very many things which we are able to do for the good of others, which our blessed SAVIOUR could not do, by

reason of his low estate in this world, without the expense of a miracle.

Few of us but, as to our outward circumstances, are in a more plentiful condition than the SON of GOD was on earth; and it is in our power by ordinary ways to relieve and succour, oblige and benefit many, as our LORD could not do, without employing his divine power.

Be pleased therefore to take notice, that it is not doing good just in the same instances, or after that same wonderful manner, that this example obligeth us to, but to a like willingness and readiness to do good upon all occasions, as far as our power reacheth. It obligeth us all in our several stations, according to those opportunities GOD hath afforded us, and those abilities he hath endued us with, and those ways of life his Providence hath placed us in, to endeavour, as much as in us lies, the welfare and prosperity, ease and happiness, of all men; so that others may bless the divine goodness for us, the state of their bodies or minds being bettered by our imparting to them what GOD hath more abundantly bestowed upon us.

Contrary to which, is a narrow, selfish spirit, when we are concerned for none but ourselves, and regard not how it fares with other men, so it be but well with us; when we follow our own humour, and with great pleasure enjoy the accommodations of our own state; when we think our own happiness the greater, because we have it alone to ourselves: which of all other things is the most directly opposite to that benign and compassionate temper which our SAVIOUR came into the world by his doctrine and example to implant in men.

I shall not undertake to set before you the several instances of doing good, since they are so various and infinite, and our duty varies according to our circumstances and opportunities, which are very different; and every one may easily find them out by considering what good he would have other men do for him. What he should reasonably expect, or would take kindly from those he converseth with, or is in any ways related to,

all that he is in like cases to be willing to do for another ; so that this doing good is a work of large extent and universal influence ; it reacheth to the souls and bodies of men, and takes in all those ways and means whereby we may promote the temporal, spiritual, or eternal advantage of others. And to so happy and noble an employment, one would think there should be no need of persuasion. However, I beg your patience whilst I put you in mind of some of those arguments and considerations which seem most proper to engage men to the imitation of this blessed example, to do all the good they can in the world.

1. This of all other employments is most agreeable to our natures. By doing good, we gratify the noblest of our natural inclinations and appetites. The very same sense which informs us of our own wants, and doth powerfully move us to provide for their relief, doth also feel the distresses of another, and urge us to yield him all necessary succour. This is true in all men, but most apparent in the best naturèd, that at beholding the calamities of other men, they find such yearnings of their bowels, and such sensible commotions in their own breasts, as they can by no means satisfy, but by reaching forth their helping hand : therefore, to deny our assistance according to our ability, is a violence to our very natural instincts, as well as contrary to our religious obligations.

This is a gracious provision GOD hath made in favour of the necessitous and calamitous ; that since his Providence, for great reasons, is pleased to permit such inequalities in men's outward conditions ; the state of some in this life being so extremely wretched and deplorable, if compared with others ; lest the sick, and blind, and naked, and poor, should seem to be forgotten, or wholly disregarded by their Maker ; he hath implanted in men a quick and tender sense of compassion, which should always solicit and plead their cause, stand their friend, and not only dispose us, but force us for our own satisfaction, though with some inconvenience to ourselves, to relieve and succour the afflicted : and this sympathy doth

as truly belong to human nature, as love, desire, hope, fear, or any other affection; and it is as easy to divest ourselves of any other passion as of this: and he who, like the Priest and Levite in our SAVIOUR'S parable, is void of all compassion, is degenerated not so much into the likeness of a brute beast, as of the rock or marble. Thus to do good is according to the very make and frame of our beings and natures.

2. Hence it follows, that it must be the most pleasant and delightful employment. Whatever is according to our nature, must, for that reason, be pleasant; for all actual pleasure consists in the gratification of our inclinations. Since therefore the very constitution of our nature prompts us to the exercise of charity and beneficence, the satisfying such inclinations, by doing good, must be truly grateful to us; and it cannot be more delightful to receive kindnesses, than it is to bestow them. A seasonable, unexpected relief, doth not affect him that stands in need of it with more sensible content, than the opportunity of doing it doth rejoice a good man's heart. Nay, it may be doubted on which hand lies the greatest obligation, whether he who receives is more obliged to the giver for the good he hath done him, or the giver to the receiver for the occasion of exercising his goodness. When we receive great kindnesses, it puts us to the blush; we are ashamed to be so highly obliged; but the joy of doing them is pure and unmixed: and this our SAVIOUR hath told us, "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" (*Acts xx. 35*;) and some good men have ventured to call it the greatest sensuality, a piece of epicurism, and have magnified the exceeding indulgence of GOD, who hath annexed future rewards to that which is so amply its own recompense.

These two advantages this pleasure of doing good hath above all other pleasures whatsoever:—

(1.) That this satisfaction doth not only accompany the act of doing good, but it is lasting, endures as long as our lives. The very remembrance of the good we have

done in the world, doth refresh our souls with a mighty joy and peace, quite contrary to all other worldly and corporeal pleasures. There are indeed some vices, which promise a great deal of pleasure, but it is short-lived, a sudden flash presently extinguished. It perishes in the very enjoyment, "like the crackling of thorns under a pot," as the wise man elegantly expresses it; it presently expires in a short blaze and noise, but hath very little heat or warmth in it. All outward bodily pleasures are of a very fugitive volatile nature, there is no fixing them; and if we endeavour to make up this defect, by a frequent repetition and constant succession of them, they soon become nauseous; men are cloyed with them. Nor is this all; these sensual pleasures do not only suddenly pass away, but also leave a sting behind them: they wound our consciences; the thoughts of them are uneasy to us; guilt and bitter repentance are the attendants of them; sadness and melancholy come in the place of all such exorbitant mirth and jollity. These are the constant abatements of all outward unlawful pleasures; whereas that which springs from a mind well pleased with its own actions, doth for ever affect our hearts with a delicious relish; continually ministers comfort and delight; is a never-failing fountain of joy, solid and substantial; fills our minds with good hopes and cheerful thoughts, and is the certain ground of true peace and content.

(2.) This pleasure that attends doing good doth herein exceed all fleshly delights, that it is then at the highest when we stand in most need of it. In a time of affliction, old age, or at the approach of death; the remembrance of our good deeds will strangely cheer and support our spirits under all the calamities and troubles we may meet with in this state. By doing good we lay up a treasure of comfort, a stock of joy against an evil day, which no outward thing can rob us of. It is not thus with bodily pleasures; they cannot help us in a time of need, they then become miserably flat and insipid; the sinner cannot any longer taste or relish them; nothing remains but a

guilty sense, which in time of distress is more fierce and raging, especially at the hour of death.

Yet even then, when our former pleasures shall prove matter of torment to us; when all the flowers of worldly glory shall wither; when all earthly beauty, which now doth so tempt us, shall be darkened and eclipsed; when this world, and the fashion of it, is vanished and gone; when the pangs of death are just taking hold of us, and we are ready to step into another world, what a comfortable refreshment then will it be to look back upon a well-spent life? To consider with ourselves how faithfully we have improved those talents GOD hath entrusted us with; how well we have husbanded our time, estates, parts, reputation, learning, authority, for the glory of GOD, and the good of other men. The time will surely come wherein you shall vastly more rejoice in that little you have laid out for the benefit of others, than in all that which by so long toil and drudgery you shall have saved and purchased. They are not your great possessions, lands, or estates, nor your dignities and titles of honour, nor your eminent places and trusts, nor any external advantages you have purchased or acquired, that at such a time will yield you any true peace. What use you have made of them, and what good you have done with them, is that which your conscience will then inquire after.

3. To do good is the most divine and god-like thing. By it we most especially become like GOD, who is good, and who doeth good; and not only like him, but we resemble him in that which is his very nature and essence, and which he esteems his greatest glory: for such is his goodness, which doth, as it were, deify all his other attributes and perfections.

There is no quality or disposition whatever, by which we can so near approach the divine majesty, as this of beneficence, and delight in doing good. As for knowledge and power, the evil spirits partake of them in a greater degree than the best men; but a man hath nothing of GOD so much as to do good. By contributing to the

content of other men, and rendering them as happy as lieth in our power, we do God's work, are in his place and room; perform his office in the world; we make up the seeming defects of his Providence, and one man thereby becomes as it were a god to another. Hence this employment must needs be the highest accomplishment and perfection of our beings. It is the argument of a brave and great soul, to extend his care and thoughts for the good of all men; and not to do so is a certain indication of a little narrow spirit.

4. This is the very end of all the blessings and advantages God hath vouchsafed to men in this life, that by them they might become capable of doing good in the world; this is the proper use they are to be put to, for which they were designed by the author of them; and if they are not employed to such purposes, we are false to our trust, and the stewardship committed to us, and shall be one day severely accountable to God for it. For the sovereign LORD and disposer of all things both in heaven and earth hath assigned to every man his particular station in this world; hath given him his part to act on this great theatre, and hath furnished him with abilities of mind and body fitted for several uses, in the due improvement and management of which, every one may in some measure be helpful and serviceable to others.

There is no man but God hath put many excellent things into his possession, to be managed by him for the common interest; for men are made for society and mutual fellowship. We are not born for ourselves alone, but every other man hath some right and interest in us; and as no man can live happily in this world without the assistance of others, so neither is any man exempted or privileged from being in his place some way beneficial to others.

It is with men in this world, as it is with the parts of the body natural. It is ST. PAUL's comparison; (1 Cor. xii.) the body consists of divers members, which neither have the same dignity and honour, nor the same use and

office; but every part hath its proper use, whereby it becomes serviceable to the whole body, and if any one part fails or is ill affected, the whole suffers for it, and the meanest part is necessary for the good of the whole; so that the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you." Thus hath GOD distributed several gifts amongst the sons of men. They have art, skill, and experience, some in one thing, some in another, none in all; so that it is impossible but that every man must want something for the conveniency of his life, for which he must be obliged to others; upon which account it is highly reasonable that he also himself should some way serve others.

But besides this, there are many special advantages which some enjoy above others, which also are designed for the common good. It is plain, there is a very great inequality amongst men, both as to the internal endowments of their minds, and their external conditions in this life. Many more talents are committed to some than to others; but yet we greatly mistake when we think them given us merely for own sakes, to serve our own turns, and for the satisfaction of our own appetites and desires: no, at the best they are but deposited with us in trust; the more we enjoy of them, the greater charge we have upon our hands, and the more plentiful returns GOD doth justly expect from us; "for unto whomsoever much is given," saith our SAVIOUR, "of him shall be much required."

This ought especially to be considered by all those who by reason of the eminency of their qualities and dignities, and by their superiority above others, have authority over them; whose sphere is large, and influence great, who have many dependants that court their favour; what infinite good may such do in the world, especially by their example!

5. Doing good is a most substantial part of Christian Religion, a most acceptable sacrifice to GOD; and therefore do we so often find in Scripture all religion summed up as it were in this one thing, it being the best expression

of our duty towards God, and either formally containing or naturally producing all our duty towards our neighbour, whence this is said to be the fulfilling of the law. It is not enough that we give to every man what is due to him. His religion is but of a narrow compass, who is only just; nay, he that is rigidly so in all cases hath no religion at all. That I have wronged no man, will be a poor plea at the last day; for it is not for rapine or injury, for pillaging or cozening their neighbours, that men are then formally impeached and finally condemned, but "I was an hungry, and ye gave me no meat; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in:" You neglected to do that good which you had power and opportunity to do.

Some men are so taken up with their courses of piety and devotion, that they have no time to do good. If they be but temperate and just, and come frequently to Church, and constantly perform the duties of God's worship; this they hope will carry them to heaven, though they are covetous and uncharitable, and hardly ever do any good office for their neighbours or brethren. Some again there are who pretend to be of a more refined religion, spend their time in contemplation, and talk much of communion with God; but look upon this way of serving God by doing good, as a lower attainment, an inferior dispensation suitable to novices in religion. And yet read over the life of the best man that ever lived, the Founder of our faith and religion, and you cannot but confess what I have already shown, that the thing he was most illustrious for, was his unwearied readiness to help all men: "He went about doing good." And it is a scandal raised on our Church, that we do not hold the necessity of good works in order to salvation; we hold and teach them to be as necessary as Papists themselves can or do; but then we say, they are accepted by God only for the sake of JESUS CHRIST.

6. Lastly: Nothing hath greater rewards annexed to it than doing good, and that both in this life and that which is to come. I have time now but just to mention to you

some few of those advantages that either naturally flow from it, or by **God's** gracious promise are annexed to it.

To do good with what we enjoy is the most certain way to procure **God's** blessing upon all we have ; it entitles us to his more especial care and protection. "Trust in the **LORD,**" saith **DAVID,** "and be doing good ; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." The divine goodness cannot but be pleased to see men, so far as they are able, imitating itself, and following the example of **God's** benignity.

For every good office we do to other men, we may plead with **God** to engage him to bestow upon us what we want or desire ; not by way of merit or desert, but **God** himself graciously becoming our debtor, takes what is done to others as done to himself, and by promise obliges himself to full retaliation.

By this means we provide that which will mightily support us under all the troubles and afflictions that may happen to us ; our good works will attend us at the hour of death, nay, they will appear for us before **God's** tribunal, and will procure for us, for the sake of **JESUS CHRIST,** at the hands of our merciful **God,** a glorious recompence at the resurrection of the just ; for at the final reckoning, the great King shall pass his sentence according to the good men have done, or neglected to do, in this life.

## SERMON II.

---

ON THE WICKEDNESS OF THE HEART.

---

MATT. xv. 19.

*For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts—.*

As it is **God** alone that knows the thoughts of man, so his commands alone directly reach to them; and no little part of religion consists in the due government of them; whence it is commonly laid down as a rule of interpreting any of **God's** laws, that though only the outward action be expressly commanded or forbidden, yet it must be extended to the inward thoughts, affections, and dispositions of our minds; and he that appears unblameable as to his words and actions, may yet really in the sight of **God** stand guilty of the greatest wickedness by reason of his impure, malicious, or otherwise evil thoughts.

Thoughts indeed are free from the dominion of men: we may conceal or disguise them from all the world: we may deceive the most subtle, by speaking and acting contrary to our minds; by pretending what we never mean, by promising what we never intend: but yet our thoughts are absolutely subject to **God's** authority; are under His jurisdiction who is omniscient, "who seeth not as man seeth, nor judgeth as man judgeth; for the righteous **God** trieth the hearts and reins," discerneth the most hidden workings of our souls, is conscious to all the wanderings of our imaginations, is acquainted with all our private designs and contrivances, and knoweth our secret ends; so that in respect of the divine laws, our very thoughts are as capable of being really good or really evil as our actions.

Now *thoughts* here I understand in the largest sense, as comprehending all the internal acts of the mind of man, *viz.*, not only simple apprehensions, fancies, pondering, or musing of any thing in our minds ; but also all the reasonings, consultations, purposes, resolutions, designs, contrivances, desires, and cares of our minds, as opposed to our external words and actions. Whatever is transacted within ourselves, of which none are conscious but God and our own souls, I understand here by *thoughts*.

But, then, by *evil thoughts*, I do not mean the bare thinking of any thing that is evil, or the apprehending or considering what is sinful ; for this of itself doth no more defile our souls, than seeing a loathsome sight doth hurt the eye.

The Prophet indeed tells us, “ that God is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and that he cannot look on iniquity,” that is, not with the least degree of complacency or approbation ; but yet for all this, God seeth all the sins that are committed in the world ; “ for he beholdeth mischief and spite to requite it with his hand ;” and when he forbids it, punisheth it, or pardons it, sin must then be the object of the divine understanding. “ The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.”

Thus our blessed SAVIOUR, though he was free from all sin, yet when he was tempted by the Devil, had in his mind the apprehension of that evil he was instigated to by that wicked spirit ; it was all at that instant represented to his thoughts ; but since his will did not in the least comply with it, since the motion was rejected with infinite abhorrence, he contracted not the least guilt thereby.

A bad man may often think of what is good, may entertain his mind with speculations about God, his immortal soul, a future life, the benefits purchased for us by JESUS CHRIST ; nay, he may take pleasure in thinking of such objects, and in using his reason, judgment, invention, or fancy about them, as other men are delighted in the study of any other sciences, or in any acquired knowledge. Yet these thoughts about good things, are not good thoughts,

nor is the man at all the better for them, if his will do not join with nor is governed by them.

And on the other side, good men may, and sometimes must, think of those things that are sinful. There is no reading the Holy Scriptures, or any other history, wherein the evil actions and speeches of wicked men are recorded; there is no living or conversing in the world, where so much evil is every day committed, without thinking of that which is sinful: but then in good men the thought of any such thing is always with grief and detestation; they think of it as of a thing that is most hateful to them; as men think of a plague, shivering at the very naming of it, and praying to God to preserve them from it. Our thoughts then are not to be counted evil, only from the object of them.

Nor by evil thoughts do I understand any sudden thoughts, starting up in our minds before we are aware, which will not, I believe, be imputed to us as sins, though if consented to, they are undoubtedly evil. For nothing will be reckoned to us as a sin, but what is some way or other voluntary, and might have been avoided. Now such first motions which come upon us, without our knowledge and against our wills, are only the exercise of our virtues, when presently checked and contradicted; but when consented to and delighted in, they then "bring forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death."

But to be more particular, I shall first show you, When our thoughts may be counted voluntary, and we are justly answerable for them.

Secondly, Propound to you some of the several kinds of evil thoughts.

Thirdly, Lay down some rules for the government of our thoughts.

First, I shall show, when we are justly answerable for our thoughts, or when they may be reckoned voluntary. And here I shall only give these three instances.

1. When evil thoughts are plainly occasioned by any thing that was voluntary in us, then they are to be

accounted voluntary and sinful. What our thoughts shall be, depends very much upon the choice of the outward objects that we converse most with in the world. They will be oftenest on those things which we delight most in, and accustom ourselves most to. So far therefore as our company, discourse, employments, books, I may add diet too, contribute to the stirring up in our minds, wanton and lustful, covetous or ambitious, angry or revengeful thoughts, so far are such thoughts voluntary in us, and though they may arise in our minds without any actual consent of our wills, yet we are justly answerable for them, as having by some wilful act of our own disposed ourselves for such thoughts.

By sensuality, and intemperance, and indulging themselves in bodily pleasures, men may so debase their minds, that hardly any thoughts shall offer, but what are beastly and lewd, or at best trifling and useless. Empty, light, vain, foolish, extravagant thoughts, are the natural product of idleness, pride, and luxury. So that, though what we shall think of be not at all times in our power, yet it is in our power in a very great measure to abstain from those things which are apt to incite evil thoughts, and minister fuel to them; from all incentives or provocations to inordinate or filthy imaginations. And as far as we ourselves give occasion to the raising evil thoughts in our minds, so far are they voluntary and imputable to us.

2. When evil thoughts proceed from negligence and carelessness, then are we accountable for them: when we keep no guard over our minds, but give them liberty to rove, and let what will come into our thoughts; if they then prove vile and wicked, it is very much our own fault, and we must answer for them. When we set the doors wide open without any watch or guard, we must blame ourselves if dishonest men enter in sometimes as well as good friends.

Our souls are active and busy; and if we do not take care to furnish our minds continually with good and useful matter for our thoughts, they will soon find out something

else to exercise themselves upon ; and when we let them run at random, and think as it happens, we then tempt the Devil to choose a subject for us, we expose ourselves to the wildness and extravagance of our own vain imaginations ; and when we keep no watch, no wonder though we be over-run with swarms of vagrant thoughts. When, therefore, our evil thoughts arise from neglect and carelessness, they then may be accounted voluntary, and charged on us as sins.

3. Though evil thoughts may be involuntary at first, being occasioned by what we could not avoid hearing or seeing, or coming upon us unawares, or proceeding from the habit of our bodies, or impulses and motions of the animal spirits in our brain ; yet if we with pleasure entertain and cherish them, this implies the consent of our wills, and they then become greatly sinful in us.

Nay, when such enemies have invaded our minds, if we do not presently raise all the forces we can against them, labour with all our power to quell and root them out, we are reasonably presumed to join with them. My meaning is this, That though evil thoughts at first enter without our leave and consent, yet if afterwards we knowingly indulge them, nay, if we do not straight upon reflection reject them with utter hatred and indignation, we then stand guilty of them ; which some have used to express thus, That “though we cannot hinder the birds from flying over our heads, yet we may prevent their making of nests in our hair.”

The sum of all I have said is this : That evil thoughts are no farther sinful, than they are voluntary, or than they may be helped and avoided : Whenever, therefore, we give manifest occasion to them, by allowing ourselves in such practices as are apt to incite evil thoughts, or when we do not beforehand duly watch against them, or when, if they do at any time arise in our minds, we fail to stifle them as soon and as far as we are able, then they are reckoned to us as sins, and are to be repented of as well as actual transgressions.

*Secondly,* Having thus briefly shown you when we are

in fault if our thoughts be evil ; I proceed now, Secondly, to give some account of the nature and kinds of evil thoughts.

And here you must not expect that I should give you a particular enumeration of the several sorts of them, for that would be an impossible thing: "Who can tell how oft he offendeth?" Who can declare all the several thoughts that come into a man's mind but in one day or one hour, which yet he would blush to have made known to those he converses with? Our thoughts are very nimble and volatile, can wander in a moment to the utmost ends of the earth, can leap straight from one pole to the other, are as various as the several objects of our senses, and the infinitely different ways whereby they may be disposed, united, or blended together. And if we should be at a loss for external objects to think of, the mind can easily frame objects to itself, and a thousand frenzies and extravagancies, and whimsies and conceits, are the monstrous issues of men's brains: I shall therefore only give some few instances of thoughts undoubtedly evil and sinful. Such are,—

1. The representing and acting over sins in our thoughts: when we erect a stage in our fancies, and on it, with strange complacence, imagine those satisfactions which yet we dare not, which yet we have not opportunity to bring into outward act. This is by some called *speculative wickedness, the dreams of men awake*. When we gratify our covetous or impure desires with the feigned representation of those pleasures we have a mind to. Now such kind of thoughts may be considered with respect to the time present, past, or to come.

(1.) If we consider these imaginations as to the present time, there is no sin so vile and heinous, but a man may become truly guilty of it in the sight of God, by imagining it done in his mind, and taking pleasure in such a thought.

Thus the revengeful person, who perhaps hath hardly courage to look his enemy in the face, yet in his thoughts can fight him and subdue him, imagine him lying at his

mercy, and exercise all manner of cruelty towards him: he may fancy him undone and ruined, and then rejoice in his own mind, that he is thus even with him; and by this means may become guilty of the sins of murder and revenge, though he hath not done his enemy the least mischief.

Thus again, modesty, shame, fear of discredit, or some other temporal consideration, may prevail with a man so far, as that he shall never attempt a woman's chastity; but yet if in his thoughts he fancies her present with him, this is the adultery of the heart; our mind then becomes a stew, and is polluted and defiled: and though the actual sin be a sign of more untamed lust, yet this argues the same kind of wickedness.

Thus he is a thief that covets, though he never rifles another man's goods, if in his imagination only he possesses them: nay, a man may thus contract the guilt of more sins than ever he can possibly act. It is but a little, in reality, that the most ravenous oppressor can grasp to himself, or defraud other men of; but in his thoughts he may swallow empires, and plunder whole towns and cities. Thus a man, even whilst in this place, may stab another, though in Turkey; he may ravish every beautiful woman he sees; rob every man he meets with, and, in the twinkling of an eye, murder whole societies and kingdoms.

For this I take for an undoubted truth, that they who allow themselves in evil thoughts and imaginations, who give way to their ambitious, covetous, or lustful fancies, are not restrained by the fear of God from the actual commission of those sins they love to think of; it is some other by consideration, not the sense of their duty and religion: and this, I believe, every one that faithfully examines his own mind will yield, that if he could as freely, and as safely and secretly commit any sin, as he can think of it, he should not stick to do all those things he thinks of with so much joy. Could the revengeful person, whose mind boils with inward spleen and rage, by a thought, with as little danger, and as secure from all

knowledge of other men, kill, or wound, or mischief his enemy, as he can desire it in his mind, do you believe he would spare any of his adversaries? Could the greedy wretch as secretly get the possession of his neighbour's goods, as he can covet them, I doubt not but every such person would soon actually invade and usurp all those things he now swallows in his imagination. But, farther,—

(2.) As to what is past, there is repeating over those sins in our fancies, which we had long before committed, and perhaps, as to the external acts, quite forsaken. When we revive our stolen pleasures in our memories, and run over all the circumstances of sins long since committed, with new delight, this is much the same as if we lived continually in them. As good men with satisfaction reflect upon a well-spent life, recalling to their minds with joy what at any time they have well done; after the same manner do wicked men, as it were, raise again, by the witchcraft of their filthy imaginations, their past sins, renew their acquaintance with them, and approbation of them. When weak and impotent, disabled by poverty, age, want of convenience or opportunity for the repeated commission of them, they possess the sins of their youth, and place them ever before them, with the same contentment almost as they first acted or enjoyed them; and thus their souls sin still as much as ever, although, as to the outward act they may be chaste, temperate, and sober. This is certain, we cannot be truly said to have forsaken those sins, the remembrance of which is grateful to us. To think of our evil ways with grief and shame, and to abhor them, is our duty; but to relish them in our thoughts is still to approve of them; it is a sure sign that we have not really renounced the sin, though we may have left it for some accidental reason.

(3.) If we consider evil thoughts with respect to the time to come; the speculative wickedness of men's imaginations shows itself in the wild and extravagant suppositions they make to themselves, feigning themselves to be what they would fain be, and then imagining what, in

such circumstances, they would do. God only knows how much time men fool away in such childish conceits of becoming great, and rich, and honourable, and how bravely they would then live, how they would please every appetite and humour, fulfil every desire, have their will in all things, and enjoy perfect ease and content. What preferments and advancements, what success and prosperous fortune, do some men (especially young men) promise themselves! How do their thoughts go out to meet that pleasure and happiness they so much desire! They feed and live upon the promises of their own hearts beforehand; and as one hath well expressed this vanity, 'They take up beforehand in their thoughts upon trust the pleasures they hope to enjoy, as spendthrifts do their rents, or heirs their revenues, before they come of full age to enjoy them.'

'Well,' says the impatient youth, 'when my parents are once dead, and my time of being subject to masters, tutors, and guardians shall be expired, how merry will the days be, how short the nights, when I shall sin without fear of an angry look, or a severe check, please only myself, give no account to any!' Thus his mind is debauched long before his body is entered. These are the first sort of evil thoughts, lewd, or wicked, or trifling and useless imaginations. I shall but just mention some others, as,—

2. Unworthy, atheistical, profane thoughts of God: "saying in our hearts, There is no God;" either secretly denying there is any, or wishing there were none; questioning his power and goodness, distrusting his truth or faithfulness, bidding him "depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of his ways. What is the ALMIGHTY, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray to him? What advantage will it be to me, if I be cleansed from my sin?" 'Here is a deal of bustle about conscience and religion; I will venture as I see a thousand others do; I shall escape as well as the rest of my company.' God only knows how many of us suffer such vile thoughts as these to lodge in our breasts.

3. I might instance in our thinking upon things innocent in themselves, which yet become evil because of the seasons of them ; that is, because we should then be thinking of better things. For it is certainly lawful to think of our friends, relations, temporal concerns, but then it must be in due time and place ; they must not jumble out other thoughts ; nay, we must wholly banish them from our minds when we come into GOD's more especial presence : at our prayers, or at the sacrament, such thoughts are by no means to be admitted. Ought we to suffer them to wander to the ends of the earth, whilst in show we are engaged in worshipping that GOD who "is a SPIRIT, and will be worshipped in spirit and truth ?" What man that now hears me would be content that all the several things, not only, that have suddenly come into his mind, but which he hath for a considerable time dwelt upon and entertained his mind with during this short exercise, should be here exposed to the whole congregation ? How many of us have been telling our money, or counting over our bags, or selling or buying in our shops, or ordering our household affairs, or conversing with distant friends ? Into how many countries have some of us travelled ? How many persons have we visited ? How many affairs have we despatched, to say no worse, since we first this day began divine service ?

4. I might farther mention envious or fretting thoughts, when our spirits are disquieted and vexed at the prosperity of other men, who are preferred before us, because they have a greater trade, or are better loved and more respected than ourselves. Or,—

5. Anxious thoughts of future events, multiplying to ourselves endless fears and solitudes, distracting our minds with unnecessary cares for the things of this life. How many who want nothing they can reasonably desire, render their lives miserable, only by discontented and melancholy thoughts, and ill-boding apprehensions.

6. I might insist on haughty, proud, admiring thoughts of ourselves. How much time do many men spend in con-

sidering their own worth and excellencies? How do they please themselves with viewing their own accomplishments, and imagining others to have the same opinion of them they have of themselves!

I have not time now to speak of vain, insignificant thoughts, when, as we ordinarily say, we think of nothing; that is, not any thing we can give an account of; when our thoughts have no dependance nor coherence one upon the other, which I may call the nonsense of our thoughts; being like the conceits of madmen, or like little boys in a school, who, as long as the master is with them, all regularly keep their places, every one minding his proper work, but as soon as his back is turned, are all straight out of their places, in disorder and confusion; such are our thoughts when we forget to watch over them: but this is an endless subject.

*Thirdly,* The only thing remaining is, to give some plain rules for the right government of our thoughts.

1. The first rule shall be grounded upon the words of my text: "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts." If they proceed from our hearts, then we must look especially after them. In the words therefore of SOLOMON: "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." (*Prov. iv. 23.*) Thus the Prophet: "Wash thy heart from wickedness. How long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee?" (*Jer. iv. 14.*) By "heart," in the Scripture phrase, is ordinarily meant the affections; such as love, hope, fear, joy, desire. Such as men's affections are, such will their thoughts be; we shall certainly think most of those things that we love most, that we fear most, that we desire most. Do we not find it thus in all other instances? And were our affections but duly set upon divine and heavenly objects, we should as constantly think of them, as the worldly or ambitious man doth of his honours and riches. Were our hearts but once throughly affected with a sense of God and goodness, and the things of the other world, we should hardly find any room for meaner objects; divine matters would fill our souls, and

wholly take up our minds. If we once really loved God above any present enjoyment, it would be impossible that things sensible should exclude the thoughts of him out of our minds, or that we could pass any considerable time without some addresses to him. Have we a business of such infinite moment depending upon those few hours that yet remain of our lives; and have we time and leisure to spend whole days in unprofitable dreams, in the mean time forgetting the danger we are in, and the only necessary work we have to do?

Here then must the foundation be laid, in setting our affections upon things above, in frequent considering the absolute necessity of our duty in order to our happiness, until we love religion, and then holy, pious, and devout thoughts will be easy, free, and natural to us. It is a vain thing to persuade you to look after your thoughts, whilst your minds are estranged from God; but a renewed mind, a renewed heart, as the Scripture calls it, would produce new thoughts. As the fountain is, such will the streams be; "where the treasure is, there will the heart be also;" "an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, nor can we gather figs from thorns, or grapes from thistles:" evil thoughts, lusts, foolish imaginations, are the genuine spawn of a wild, dishonest mind. "When I was a child," saith ST. PAUL, "I thought as a child, I spake as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." As it is impossible for a wise man, after he is arrived to years of understanding, and his mind is furnished with the knowledge of the best things, to please himself with those childish imaginations, which were the entertainment of his younger years; so it is impossible for any who is deeply touched with the things of God, and hath a due sense of those things which are more excellent, to endure such silly, worldly, extravagant thoughts as possessed his soul, and pleased him in the days of his ignorance and folly. "How do I love thy law!" saith DAVID; "it is my meditation day and night." This is the first rule: Look after your heart and affections.

2. And more particularly, consider what care and art wicked men use to prevent good thoughts; and let us use the same diligence and endeavours to hinder evil thoughts. There is no man that lives in a place where religion is professed, that can go on in a course of sin, without some regret; sometimes his conscience will speak, notions of a God and a future state will be stirring, and are apt to disturb the repose of the most secure and hardened sinner. Now to one resolvedly wicked, such thoughts cannot but be unwelcome; therefore doth he strive all that he can to stifle them in their very first rise: he would fain run away from himself; he chooses any diversion, entertainment, or company, rather than attend to the dictates of his own mind; is afraid of nothing so much as being alone and unemployed, lest such ghastly apprehensions should crowd in upon him: he keeps himself always in a hurry and heat, and by many other artifices endeavours to shut all sober thoughts out of his mind, until, by often quenching the motions of GOD'S good SPIRIT, and resisting the light of his own conscience, he by degrees loses all sense of good and evil, and arrives at his wished-for state of sinning without disturbance or interruption.

Now if we would but use equal diligence and watchfulness to prevent or expel evil thoughts, our minds would be in a great measure free from their importunity; would we but presently reject them with the greatest disdain, use all manner of means to fix our minds on more useful subjects, avoid all occasions, or provocations, or incentives to evil thoughts, as carefully as wicked men do reading a good book, we certainly should find our minds no longer pestered with them, and they would become as uneasy to us as now they are pleasant and grateful.

3. Would you prevent evil thoughts? Above all things avoid idleness. The spirits of men are busy and restless; something they must be doing: and what a number of monstrous, giddy, improbable conceits daily fill our brain, merely for want of better employment? No better way, therefore, to prevent evil thoughts, than never to be at

leisure for them. "I went by the field of the slothful," saith SOLOMON, "and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns." When consideration and argument are not able to drive out these wicked companions, yet business will; and therefore I know nothing more advisable, than that we should be always stored with fit materials to exercise our thoughts upon; such as are worthy of a reasonable creature, that is to live for ever. Those who are most busy, yet have some little spaces and intervals of time in which they are not employed. Some men's business is such, as though it employs their hands and requires bodily labour, yet doth not much take up their thoughts. Now all such should constantly have in their minds a treasure of useful subjects to think upon, that so they may never be at a loss how to employ their minds; for many of our evil thoughts are owing to this, that when our time hangs upon our hands, we are to seek what to think of. Let us therefore every one resolve thus with ourselves: The first leisure, the first vacant hour, I will set myself to consider of such and such a subject, and have this always in readiness to confront any evil thoughts that may sue for entrance; for if we do thus, temptations will always find our minds full and prepossessed: and it is a hard case, if neither the visible nor invisible world, neither GOD's works, nor providences, nor word, can supply us with matter enough for our thoughts.

Another rule I would give is this: That we should live under the due awe of GOD's continual presence, and bear this always in our minds, that the pure and holy GOD, the Judge of the world, before whose tribunal we must shortly stand, is conscious to every secret thought and imagination that passes through our minds; that he knows them altogether; that GOD is in us all: "One GOD and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all;" (*Eph. iv. 6*;) that he is present in the most inward recesses of our hearts, and knows every one of those things that come into our minds.

Now who of us is there but must confess, that if his

thoughts were all known and open to other men; if his parents, his friends, his neighbours, or enemies, could have certain cognizance of them, he would be infinitely more careful about them than he is; he would not allow himself that liberty which he now takes; he would be as watchful that his thoughts should be orderly, rational, and virtuous, as he is now that his words and actions may be such. And while we profess to believe that the Majesty of heaven and earth is privy to all our wishes, desires, and purposes, observes and takes notice of all the motions of our minds, and that at the last day he will bring every secret thing into judgment, are we not ashamed of showing in his sight such folly, of committing such wickedness in his presence? Should we blush to have but a mortal man know all the childish, vain, wanton, lustful thoughts that possess our minds? And is it nothing to us that the great God of heaven and earth beholds and sees them all? Consider this, O vain man, who pleasest thyself in thy own foolish conceits. Consider, there is not a thought that ever thou takest any pleasure in, not a deceit or imagination of thy heart, but what is perfectly "naked and open before that God with whom we have to do;" that he is with thee in the silent and dark night, when no other eye seeth thee, when thou thinkest thyself safe from all discovery, and that thou mayest securely indulge thy appetites and inclinations; for "the light and darkness are both alike unto God; he compasseth thy path and thy bed, he is acquainted with all thy ways." The due consideration of these things would certainly produce a mighty awe in us, and a suitable care not willingly to entertain any such thoughts as we should be ashamed to have known to all the world, nor ever to suffer any other to remain in our minds, than such as we should not blush to have written in our foreheads.

For the right government of your thoughts, let me recommend to you, above all things, serious devotion, especially humble and hearty prayer to God. Man is compounded of two natures, a spiritual and a bodily; by

our bodies, we are joined to the visible corporeal world, by our souls to the immaterial, invisible world : now as by our outward senses the intercourse is maintained between us and the corporeal world, so by our devotions chiefly, our acquaintance is kept up with the spiritual world. When we lay aside all the thoughts of this lower world, and apply ourselves to the Father of Spirits, we then more especially converse with him, as far as this state will admit ; and the more frequently we do this, the more do we abstract our minds from those inferior objects, which are so apt to entangle our hearts, and take up all our thoughts.

Every devout exercise, conscientiously performed, will season our spirits, and leave a good tincture upon them ; it is like keeping good company ; a man is by degrees moulded and fashioned into a likeness unto them : on the other side, the intermission, neglect, or formal and perfunctory performance of our devotion, will soon breed in us a forgetfulness of **GOD** and heavenly things ; as omitting to speak of an absent or dead friend, or neglecting to call him to our mind, by degrees wears him quite out of our thoughts and memory. So that you see a due sense of **GOD** upon our minds, and of those things that belong to our greatest interests, is by nothing so well maintained as by our constant devotion ; this is like seeing our friends often, or conversing with them every day ; it preserves acquaintance with them, it cherishes our love and kindness towards them.

## SERMON III.

---

### ON THE RESURRECTION.

---

I COR. xv. 35.

*But some man will say, How are the dead raised up?  
And with what body do they come?*

THE Apostle having in the beginning of this chapter established the truth of our SAVIOUR'S resurrection from the dead, proceeds to infer from thence the certainty of our own resurrection. "Now if CHRIST be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is CHRIST not risen." (*Ver. 12, 13.*) It cannot now any longer seem impossible to you that GOD should raise the dead, since you have so undoubted an example of it in the person of our blessed LORD, who having been dead is now alive, and hath appeared unto many. And to show of what general concern his resurrection was, "the graves were opened," as ST. MATTHEW tells us, "and many bodies of saints which slept, arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection;" showing that the same power "which raised JESUS from the dead, is able also to quicken our mortal bodies."

In my text, the Apostle brings in a sceptical person, objecting against this doctrine of the resurrection: "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" Two questions that every one almost is ready to start, especially those who love to cavil at religion; and it hath not a little puzzled such as have undertaken to give a rational account of our faith, to

give a satisfactory answer to them. "How can these things be?" How is it possible that those bodies should be raised again, and joined to the souls which formerly inhabited them, which many thousand years ago were either buried in the earth, or swallowed up in the sea, or devoured by fire; which have been dissolved into the smallest atoms, and those scattered over the face of the earth, and dispersed as far asunder as the heaven is wide; nay, which have undergone ten thousand changes, have fructified the earth, become the nourishment of other animals, and those the food again of men? How is it possible that all those little particles which made up, suppose the body of ABRAHAM, should at the end of the world be again ranged and marshalled together, and, unmixed from the dust of other bodies, be all disposed into the same order, figure, and posture, they were before, so as to make the self-same flesh and blood, which his soul at his dissolution forsook?

This was one of the last things that the Heathens believed, and is, to this day, a great objection against Christianity. "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" In my discourse of these words, I shall,—

I. Show that the resurrection of the dead, even in the strictest sense, contains nothing in it impossible or incredible.

II. Since it is certain that the body which we shall rise with, though it may be as to substance, the same, yet will be much altered in its qualities; I shall give you a short account of the difference the Scripture makes between a glorified body and this mortal flesh. And,—

III. Lastly, I shall draw some practical inferences from the whole.

I. I shall show that the resurrection of the dead, even in the strictest sense, contains nothing in it impossible or incredible. But before I do this, give me leave to lay before you some of the principal reasons and Scriptures upon which it is established. And,—

1. It must be acknowledged that this hath been all along the received opinion amongst Christians, that at the last day we shall rise again with the very same flesh which we put off at our death; and that our heavenly bodies will consist of the same substance with our earthly, though in some properties changed. Most of the ancient Fathers believed, that at the general resurrection men should be restored to the very same bodies which they dwelt in here; that their bodies should be then as truly the same with those they died in, as the bodies of those whom our SAVIOUR raised when he was upon earth were the same with those they had before; that no other body should be raised but that which slept; and that as our SAVIOUR CHRIST arose with his former flesh and bones, and members, so we also, after the resurrection, should have the same members we now use, the same flesh and bones.

2. This hath not only been the received opinion of Christians, but also the most plain and easy notion of a resurrection requires it; namely, that the same body which died should be raised again. Nothing dies but the body, nothing is corrupted but the body; the soul goeth upward and returns to GOD, and therefore nothing else can be said to be raised again, but that body which died and was corrupted. If GOD give to our souls at the last day a new body, this cannot be called the resurrection of our bodies, because here is no reproduction of the same thing that was before, which seems to be plainly implied in the word resurrection.

3. There are many places of Scripture which plainly favour this sense of the article, that the very same flesh shall be raised again; what more plain and express than that of JOB: "Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see GOD; whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another?" (*Job* xix. 26, 27.) And there are others in the New Testament of the same importance.

ST. PAUL, in the fifty-third verse of this chapter, speaking of our body, and the glorious change it shall undergo,

tells us, that “ this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality ; ” now by this corruptible, and this mortal, can only be meant that body which we now carry about with us, and shall one day lay down in the dust. Thus the same Apostle tells us, “ He that raised up CHRIST from the dead, shall also quicken our mortal bodies.” (*Rom. viii. 11.*) Now that which shall be quickened, can be nothing else but that very body which is mortal, and died : though the “ quickening our mortal bodies by the Spirit of CHRIST dwelling in us,” may also be understood, in a metaphorical sense, of the first resurrection from the death of sin to the life of righteousness.

But farther : The mention and description the Scripture makes of the places from whence the dead shall rise, plainly prove that the same bodies which were dead shall revive again. Thus we read in *Dan. xii. 2*, “ That those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt : ” Where we may yet farther observe, that the metaphor of sleeping and awaking, by which our death and resurrection are here expressed, imply, that when we rise again, our bodies will be as much the same with those we lived in, as they are, when we awake, the same with those we had before we laid down to sleep. Thus again it is said, “ The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.” (*John v. 28, 29.*) And, “ The sea gave up the dead which were in it, and they were judged every man according to their works.” (*Rev. xx. 13.*) Now if the same flesh shall not be raised again, what need is there of ransacking the graves at the end of the world ? The sea can give up no other bodies but the same which it received ; nor can the grave deliver up any, but only those that were laid therein : if it were not necessary that we should rise with the same bodies, the graves need not be opened, but our flesh might be permitted to rest there for

ever. To this may be added, that **ST. PAUL** tells us in the third chapter to the **Philippians**, that our **SAVIOUR** “shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like to his glorious body.” Now this vile body can be no other than this which we are now clothed with, restored to life again.

4. If we consider the instances either of those who did immediately ascend up into heaven, or of those who after death were restored to life, they all confirm this opinion, that at the last day we shall rise again with the same bodies which we had here. **ENOCH** and **ELIAS**, of old, were translated into heaven in their terrestrial bodies; and therefore may be supposed now to live there with the same bodies they had when they were here upon earth. And those three that were raised from the dead in the **Old Testament**, and those that were recalled to life by our **SAVIOUR**, or accompanied him at his resurrection, all appeared again in the same bodies they had before their dissolution. Now these were examples and types of the general resurrection, and therefore our resurrection must resemble theirs, and we also must appear at the last day with the same bodies we lived in here. Even our **SAVIOUR** himself, who was “the first-fruits of them that slept,” did raise his own body, according to that prediction of his: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it up again.” Nay, he appeared to his disciples with the very prints of the nails in his hands and feet, and with all the other marks of his crucifixion: “Behold my hands and my feet,” says he, “that it is I myself; handle me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have:” From whence it follows, that we, in our resurrection, shall be conformable to our **SAVIOUR**, and resume the very same bodies that were laid in the sepulchre.

I come now to show, that there is nothing in all this impossible or incredible; which I shall do by proving these three things:—

1. That it is possible for **GOD** to observe, and distinguish, and preserve unmixed, from all other bodies, the

particular dust and atoms into which the several bodies of men are dissolved, and to re-collect and unite them together, how far soever dispersed asunder.

2. That God can form the dust so re-collected together, of which the body did formerly consist, into the same body it was before. And,—

3. That when he hath made this body, he can enliven it, and make it the same living man, by uniting it to the same soul and spirit that used formerly to inhabit there. It cannot be denied, but that these three things express the whole of the resurrection in the strictest sense.

1. God can observe, distinguish, and preserve unmixed, from all other bodies, the particular dust and atoms into which the several bodies of men are dissolved, and re-collect and unite them together, how far soever dispersed asunder. God is infinite in wisdom, power, and knowledge, “ He knoweth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names ; he measureth the waters in the hollow of his hand, and metes out the heavens with a span, and comprehends the dust of the earth in a measure ; he numbers the hairs of our head, and not so much as a sparrow falls to the ground without his knowledge : ” he can tell the number of the sands of the sea shore, as the Heathens used to express the immensity of his knowledge ; and, is it at all incredible that such an infinite understanding should distinctly know the several particles of dust into which the bodies of men are mouldered, and plainly discern to whom they belong, and observe the various changes they undergo in their passage through several bodies ? Why should it be thought strange, that He who at first formed us, “ whose eye did see our substance, yet being imperfect, and in whose book all our members were written ; from whom our substance was not hid, when we were made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts ” of the earth, should know every part of our bodies, and every atom whereof they are composed ? The curious artist knows every pin and part of the watch or machine which he frames, and if the little engine should fall in pieces, and

all the parts of it lie in the greatest horror and confusion, yet he can soon rally them together, and as easily distinguish one from another, as if every one had its particular mark. He knows the use of every part, can readily assign to each its proper place, and exactly dispose them into the same figure and order they were in before: and can we think the almighty Architect of the world doth not know whereof we are made, or is not acquainted with the several parts and materials of which this earthly tabernacle is composed? The several corporeal beings that now constitute this universe, at the first creation of the world lay all confused in a vast heap, till by the voice of the Omnipotent they were separated one from the other, and framed into these distinct bodies: and cannot the same power, at the consummation of all things, out of the ruins of the world, collect the several relics of our corrupted bodies, reduce them each to their proper places, and restore them to their primitive shapes and figures, and frame them into the same bodies they were parts of before? All the particles into which men's bodies are at last dissolved, however they may seem to us to lie carelessly scattered over the face of the earth, yet are safely lodged by GOD's wise disposal in several receptacles and repositories till the day of the restitution of all things; *in aquis, in alitibus, in bestiis*, saith TERTULLIAN, they are preserved in the waters, in birds, and beasts, till the sound of the last trumpet shall summon them, and recall them all to their former habitations.

But the chief objection against what I am now pleading for, is this: That it may happen, several men's bodies may consist of the same matter: for the bodies of men are often devoured by beasts and fishes, and the flesh of these is afterwards eaten by other men, and becomes part of their nourishment, till at last the same particles of matter come to belong to several bodies; and it is impossible that at the resurrection they should be united to them all. Or, to express it shorter, it is reported of some whole nations, that they devour the bodies of other men; so that

these must necessarily borrow great part of their bodies of other men; and if that which was part of one man's body, comes afterwards to be part of another man's, how can both rise at the last day with the same bodies they had here? To this it may be easily replied, that but a very inconsiderable part of that which is eaten, and descends into the stomach, turns into nourishment; the far greater part goes away by excretions and perspirations; so that it is not at all impossible but GOD, who watcheth over all things by his providence, and governs them by his power, may order that what is really part of one man's body, though eaten by another, yet shall never come to be part of his nourishment; or else if it doth nourish him, and consequently becomes part of his body, that it shall wear off again, and before his death be separated from it, that so it may remain in a condition to be restored to him who first laid it down in the dust. And the like may be said of men-eaters, if any such there be, that GOD by his wise providence may take care, either that they shall not be at all nourished by other men's flesh, or if they be, and some particles of matter which formerly belonged to other men be adopted into their bodies, yet they shall yield them up again before they die, that they may be in a capacity of being restored at the last day to their right owners.

2. Of this dust, thus preserved and collected together, GOD can easily rebuild the very same bodies which were dissolved. That this is possible, must be acknowledged by all that believe that GOD formed ADAM of the dust of the ground. If the body of man be dust after death, it is no other than what it was originally; and the same power that at first made it of dust, may as easily remake it, when it is reduced to dust again.

Nay, this is no more wonderful than the formation of a human body in the womb, which is a thing that we have daily experience of, which, without doubt, is as great a miracle, and as strange an instance of the divine power, as the resurrection of it can be; and were it not so common a thing, we should as hardly be brought to believe it possible, that such a beautiful fabric as the body of a

man is, with nerves, and bones, and flesh, and veins, and blood, and the several other parts whereof it consists, should be raised out of those principles of which we see it is made, as now we are, that hereafter it should be rebuilt, when it is crumbled into dust. Had we only heard or read of the wonderful formation of the body of man, we should have been as ready to ask, 'How are men made? And with what bodies are they born?' as now we are, when we hear of the resurrection, "How are the dead raised up? And with what bodies do they come?"

3. When GOD hath raised again the same body out of the dust into which it was dissolved, he can enliven it, and make it the same living man, by uniting it to the same soul and spirit which used formerly to inhabit there. And this we cannot, with the least show of reason, pretend impossible to be done, because we must grant that it hath been already often done. We have several undoubted examples of it in those whom the Prophets of old, and our blessed SAVIOUR and his Apostles, raised from the dead. Nay, our SAVIOUR himself, after he was dead and buried, rose again, and appeared alive unto his disciples and others, and was sufficiently known and owned by those who had accompanied him, and conversed with him for many years together, and that not presently, but after long doubting and hesitation, upon undeniable conviction and proof, that he was the very same person they had seen expiring upon the cross.

Thus I have endeavoured to show you, that in the strictest notion of the resurrection there is nothing that is absurd or impossible, or above the power of such an infinite being as GOD is.

I conclude this head, therefore, with that question of ST. PAUL: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that GOD should raise the dead?" (*Acts xxvi. 8.*) The change from death to life is not so great as that from nothing into being; and if we believe that GOD, by the word of his power, at first made the heavens and the earth of no pre-existent matter, what reason have we to doubt, but that the same GOD, "by that mighty power whereby he

is able to subdue all things to himself," can also raise to life again those who were formerly alive, and have not yet wholly ceased to be? And though we cannot answer all the difficulties and objections which the wit of men (whose interest it is that their souls should die with their bodies) hath found out to puzzle this doctrine with; though we cannot fully satisfy our minds about the manner how it will be done, or the nature of those bodies we shall rise with, yet this ought not in the least to shake or weaken our belief of this most important article. Is it not sufficient that an almighty Being, with whom nothing is impossible, hath solemnly promised, that he will reanimate our mortal bodies, and after death raise us to life again? Let those who presume to mock at this glorious hope of all good men, and are continually raising objections against it, first try their skill upon the ordinary appearances of nature, which they have every day before their eyes; let them rationally solve and explain every thing that happens in this world, of which themselves are witnesses, before they think to move us from the belief of the resurrection, by raising some difficulties about it, when Omnipotency itself stands engaged for the performance of it. Can they tell me how their own bodies were framed and fashioned, and curiously wrought? Can they give me a plain and satisfactory account by what orderly steps and degrees this glorious and stately structure, consisting of so many several parts and members, which discovers so much delicate workmanship and true contrivance, was at first erected? How was the first drop of blood made, and how came the heart, and veins, and arteries to receive and contain it? Of what, and by what means, were the nerves and fibres made? What fixed those little strings in their due places and situations, and fitted and adapted them for those several uses for which they serve? What distinguished and separated the brain from the other parts of the body, and placed it in the head, and filled it with animal spirits to move and animate the whole body? How came the body to be fenced with bones and sinews, to be clothed with skin and flesh, distinguished into

various muscles? Let them but answer me these, and all the other questions I could put to them about the formation of their own body, and then I willingly undertake to solve all the difficulties they can raise concerning the resurrection of it. But if they cannot give any account of the formation of that body they now live in, but are forced to have recourse to the infinite power and wisdom of the first Cause, the great and sovereign Orderer and Disposer of all things; let them know that the same power is able also to quicken it again after it is returned to dust. Let us then hold fast what is plainly revealed, namely, that all those who love and fear God shall be raised again after death the same men they were before, and live for ever with God in unspeakable happiness.

Thus I have endeavoured to show the possibility of a resurrection in the strictest sense; I now proceed to the second thing I propounded, which was,—

II. To give a short account of the difference the Scripture makes between a glorified body and this mortal flesh.

But before I do this, I shall premise, that all our conceptions of the future state are very dark and imperfect. We are sufficiently assured that we shall all after death be alive again, the same persons we were here; and that those that have done good shall receive glory, and honour, and eternal life. But the nature of that joy and happiness which is provided for us in the other world, is not so plainly revealed; this we know, that it vastly surpasses all our imaginations, and that we are not able in this imperfect state to conceive the greatness of it; we have not words big enough fully to express it; or if it were described to us, our understandings are too narrow to comprehend it. And therefore the Scriptures, from which alone we have all we know of a future state, describe it either, first, negatively, by propounding to us the several evils we shall then be totally freed from; or else, secondly, by comparing the glory that shall then be revealed, with those things which men most value here; whence it is called an inheritance, a kingdom, a throne, a crown, a sceptre, a rich treasure, a river of pleasures, a splendid

robe, and an "exceeding and eternal weight of glory." All which do not signify to us the strict nature of that happiness which is promised us in another world, which doth not consist in any outward sensible joys or pleasures; but these being the best things which this world can bless us with, which men ordinarily most admire and value, are made use of to set out to us the transcendent blessedness of another life, though indeed it is quite of another kind. These are only little comparisons to help our weak apprehensions; but we shall never fully know the glories of the other world until we enjoy them. However, so much of our future happiness is revealed, as may be sufficient to raise our affections above the empty shadows and fading beauties, and flattering glories, of this lower world; to make us sensible how mean our present joys are, and to excite our best endeavours towards the attainment of it, whatever difficulties and discouragements we may meet with in this life; though all that can be said, or we know of it, comes infinitely short of what one day we shall feel and perceive, and be really possessed of.

Having premised this, I come to consider what change will be wrought in our bodies at the resurrection, which is no small part of our future happiness. Now this change, according to the account the Scriptures give of it, will consist chiefly in these four things:—1. That our bodies shall be raised immortal and incorruptible. 2. That they shall be raised in glory. 3. That they shall be raised in power. 4. That they shall be raised spiritual bodies.

All which properties of our glorified bodies are mentioned by ST. PAUL: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." (1 Cor. xv. 42—44.) And the explication of these words will give us the difference between the glorified body which we shall have in heaven, and that vile earth which we are now burdened with.

1. The bodies which we shall have at the resurrection will be immortal and incorruptible: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must, put on immortality." (*Ver.* 53.) Now these words, "immortal," and "incorruptible," do not only signify that we shall die no more, (for in that sense the bodies of the damned are also raised immortal and incorruptible,) but they denote farther a perfect freedom from all those bodily evils which sin hath brought into the world; and from whatever is penal, afflictive, or uneasy to us; that our bodies shall not be subject to pains or diseases, or those other inconveniences to which they are now obnoxious. This is called in Scripture "the redemption of our bodies;" the freeing them from all those evils and maladies which they are here subject to. Were we at the general resurrection to receive the same bodies again, subject to those frailties and miseries which in this state we are forced to wrestle with, I much doubt whether a wise considering person, left to his choice, would willingly take it again; whether he would not choose to let it lie still rotting in the grave, rather than consent to be again bound fast to all eternity to such a cumbersome clod of earth. Such a resurrection as this would indeed be what PLOTINUS calls it: *ἀνάστασις εἰς ἄλλοιον ὕπνον*,—"a resurrection to another sleep." It would look more like a condemnation to death again, than a resurrection to life.

The best thing that we can say of this tabernacle of clay, the tomb and sepulchre of our souls, is, that it is a ruinous building, and it will not be long before it be dissolved and tumbled into dust; that it is not our home, or resting place, but that we look for another house, "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" that we shall not always be confined to this doleful prison, but that in a little time we shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption; and, being disengaged and set free from this burden of flesh, shall be admitted "into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Alas! what frail and brittle things are these bodies of ours! How soon are

they disordered ! To what a troop of diseases, pains, and other infirmities, are they liable ! And how doth distemper or weakness disturb our minds, interrupt our ease, and make life itself a burden ! Of how many several parts and members do our bodies consist ! And if any one of these be disordered, the whole man suffers with it ; if but one of these slender veins, or tender membranes, or little nerves and fibres, whereof our flesh is made up, be either contracted or extended beyond its due proportion, or obstructed, or corroded by any sharp humour, or broken, what torment and anguish doth it create ! How doth it pierce our souls with grief and pain ! Nay, when our bodies are at their best, what pains do we take, to what drudgeries are we forced to submit, to serve their necessities, to provide for sustenance, and supply their wants ; to repair their decays, to preserve them in health, and to keep them tenantable, in some tolerable fitness for the soul's use ! We pass away our days with labour and sorrow, in mean and servile employments, and are continually busying ourselves about such trifling matters as are beneath an immortal spirit to stoop to ; and all this only to supply ourselves with food and raiment, and other conveniences for this mortal life, and to make provision for this vile flesh, that it may want nothing that it craves or desires. And what time we can spare from our labour, is taken up in resting and refreshing our tired and jaded bodies, and giving them such recruits as are necessary to fit them for work again, and restore them to their former strength and vigour. How are we forced every night to enter into the confines of death, even to cease to be, at least to pass away so many hours without any useful or rational thoughts, only to keep these carcases in repair, and make them fit to undergo the drudgeries of the ensuing day ! In a word, so long as these frail, weak, and dying bodies, subject to so many evils and inconveniences both within and without, are so closely united to our souls, that not so much as any one part of them can suffer, but our souls must be affected with it ; it is

impossible we should enjoy much ease or rest, when it is in the power of so many thousand contingencies to rob us of it. But our hope and comfort is, that the time will shortly come when we shall be delivered from this burden of flesh; “when GOD shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away; when we shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on us, nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed us, and shall lead us to living fountains of waters.” O! when shall we arrive at those happy regions, where no complaints were ever heard, where we shall all enjoy a constant and uninterrupted health and vigour both of body and mind, and never more be exposed to pinching frosts or scorching heats, or any of those inconveniences which incommode this present pilgrimage? When we have once passed from death to life, we shall be perfectly eased of all that troublesome care of our bodies, which now takes up so much of our time and thoughts; we shall be set free from all those tiresome labours, which here we are forced to undergo for the maintenance and support of our lives, and shall enjoy a perfect health, without being vexed with any nauseous medicines, or tedious courses of physic for the preservation of it. Those robes of light and glory which we shall be clothed with at the resurrection of the just, will not stand in need of those careful provisions, or crave those satisfactions, which it is so grievous to us here either to procure or be without. “But they,” as our SAVIOUR tells us, “which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage, neither can they die any more;” for they are *ισάγγελοι*,—equal to angels; they shall live such a life as the holy angels do. Whence TERTULLIAN calls the body we shall have at the resurrection, *Carnem angelificatam*,—angelified flesh, which shall neither be subject to those weaknesses and decays, nor want that

daily sustenance and continual recruit which these mortal bodies cannot subsist without. "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but GOD shall destroy both it and them." This is that happiness which all good men shall enjoy in the other world: which, according to a heathen Poet, may be thus briefly summed up, *Mens sana in corpore sano*; 'a mind free from all pains and diseases.' Thus our mortal bodies shall be raised immortal; they shall not only, by the power of GOD, be always preserved from death, for so the bodies we have now, if GOD please, may become immortal; but the nature of them shall be so wholly changed, that they shall not retain the same principles of mortality; so that they who are once clothed with them, as our SAVIOUR tells us, "cannot die any more."

2. Our bodies shall be raised in glory. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their FATHER." (*Matt. xiii. 43.*) Our heavenly bodies in brightness and glory shall contend with the splendour of the sun itself: a resemblance of this we have in the lustre of MOSES'S face, which, after he had conversed with GOD in the mount, did shine so gloriously, that the children of Israel were afraid to come near him, and therefore when he spake to them, he was forced to cast a veil over his face to eclipse the glory of it: and that extraordinary and miraculous majesty of ST. STEPHEN'S countenance seems to be a presage of that future glory which our heavenly bodies shall be clothed with: "And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." That is, they saw a great light and splendour about him; and if the bodies of saints sometimes appear so glorious here on earth, how will they shine in the other world, when they shall be made like unto CHRIST'S own glorious body? For so ST. PAUL tells us, that "CHRIST will fashion our vile bodies like unto his glorious body." Now, how glorious the body of CHRIST is, we may guess by the visions of the two great Apostles, ST. PETER and ST. PAUL.

The former of them, when he saw the transfiguration of our SAVIOUR, when "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment became shining, and white as snow," was at the sight of it so transported and over-charged with joy and admiration, that he was in a manner besides himself, for he knew not what he said. When our SAVIOUR discovered but a little of that glory which he now possesses, and will, in due time, communicate to his followers, yet that little of it made the place seem a paradise; and the disciples were so taken with the sight of it, that they thought they could wish for nothing better than always to live in such pure light, and enjoy so beautiful a sight. "It is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles;" here let us fix and abide for ever. And if they thought this so great a happiness, only to be where such heavenly bodies were present, and to behold them with their eyes, how much greater happiness must they enjoy, who are admitted to dwell in such glorious mansions, and are themselves clothed with so much brightness?

The other appearance of our blessed SAVIOUR after his ascension into heaven, to ST. PAUL, as he was travelling to Damascus, was so glorious, that it put out his eyes; his senses were not able to bear a light so refulgent: Such glorious creatures will our LORD make us all, if we continue his faithful servants and followers; and we shall be so wonderfully changed, by the word of his power, from what we are in this vile state, that the bodies we now have will not be able so much as to bear the sight and presence of those bodies which shall be given us at the resurrection.

3. Our bodies shall be "raised in power." This is that agility of our heavenly bodies, the nimbleness of their motion, by which they shall be rendered most obedient and able instruments of the soul. In this state our bodies are no better than clogs and fetters which confine and restrain the freedom of the soul: "The corruptible body," as it is in the Wisdom of SOLOMON, "presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things." Our dull, sluggish, and

inactive bodies are often unable, oftener unready, to execute the orders, and obey the commands of our souls; so that they are rather hinderances to the soul, than any ways useful to her. But in the other life, as the Prophet ISAIAH tells us, "They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint:" (*Isa. xl. 31*;) Or, as another expresses it; "They shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the stubble;" the speed of their motion shall be like that of devouring fire in a heap of dry stubble, and the height of it shall surpass the towering flight of the eagle; for they shall "meet the LORD in the air," when he comes to judgment, and afterwards mount up with him into the highest heavens. This earthly body is continually groveling on the ground, slow and heavy in its motions, listless and soon tired with action; and the soul that dwells in it is forced, as it were, to drag and hale it along; but our heavenly bodies shall be as free, as active, and nimble as our very thoughts are.

4. And, lastly, Our bodies shall be "raised spiritual bodies;" not of a spiritual substance, for then the words would imply a contradiction; it being impossible that the same thing should be both a spiritual and a bodily substance. Spiritual here is opposed, not to corporeal, but to natural or animal; and by it is expressed the subtlety, and tenuity, and purity of our heavenly bodies. Yet I would rather explain it thus: In this state our spirits are forced to serve our bodies, and to attend their leisure, and depend upon them in most of their operations; but on the contrary, in the other world our bodies shall wholly serve our spirits, and minister unto them, and depend upon them. So that by a natural body, I understand a body fitted for this lower and sensible world, for this earthly state; by a spiritual body, such a one as is suited to a spiritual state, to an invisible world, to such a life as the angels lead in heaven. And indeed this is the principal difference between this mortal body, and our glorified body.

This flesh, which now we are so apt to doat upon, how doth it hinder us in all our religious devotions? How soon doth it jade our minds, when employed in divine meditations; how easily by its bewitching pleasure doth it divert them from such noble exercises? "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Who shall? Death shall. That shall give us a full and final deliverance. When once we have obtained the resurrection unto life, our flesh shall cease to vex our souls; and being itself spiritualized, purified, exalted, and freed from this earthly grossness, shall become a most fit and proper instrument of the soul in all her divine and heavenly employments. It shall not be weary of singing praises unto God Almighty through infinite ages: it shall want no respite or refreshment, but its meat and drink shall be to do the will of God.

In these things chiefly consists the difference between those bodies which we shall have at the resurrection, and this mortal flesh; which we can but very imperfectly either conceive or express: but yet from what hath been discoursed on this subject, it doth sufficiently appear that a glorified body is infinitely more excellent than that which we now carry about with us. The only thing remaining is,—

III. And lastly, To draw some practical inferences from all I have said on this subject. I shall but just mention these five, and leave the improvement of them to your own private meditations.

I. From what I have said, we may learn the best way of preparing ourselves to live in those heavenly and spiritual bodies which shall be bestowed upon us at the resurrection; which is, by cleansing and purifying our souls still more and more from all fleshly filthiness, and weaning ourselves from this earthly body, and all sensual pleasures. We should begin in this life to loosen and untie the knot between our souls and this mortal flesh, to refine our affections, and raise them from things below, to things above; to take off our hearts, and disengage them from things present and sensible, and to accustom ourselves to converse

with things spiritual and invisible ; that so our souls, when they are separated from this earthly body, may be prepared to actuate a pure and spiritual one, as having beforehand tasted spiritual delights, and been, in some degree, acquainted with those objects which shall then be presented to us. A soul wholly immersed and buried in this earthly body, is not at all qualified for those glorious mansions which God hath provided for us : an earthly, sensual mind is so much wedded to bodily pleasures, that it cannot enjoy itself without them, and is incapable of relishing any other, though infinitely to be preferred before them. Nay, such persons that mind only the concerns of the body, and are wholly led by its motions and inclinations ; as do, *σωματῶν τὴν ψυχὴν*, as it were, *embody their souls*, would esteem it a great unhappiness to be clothed with a spiritual and heavenly body. Such glorious bodies would be uneasy to them ; they would not know how to behave themselves in them ; they would be glad to retire and put on their rags again. But by denying the solicitations of our flesh, and contradicting its lusts and appetites, and weaning ourselves from bodily pleasures, and subduing and mortifying our carnal lusts, we dispose ourselves for another state : and when our souls are thus spiritualized, they long for their departure ; they are always ready to take wing, and fly away into the other world, where, at last, they will meet with a body suited to their rational and spiritual appetites.

2. From hence we may give some account of the different degrees of glory in the other state. For though all good men shall have glorious bodies, yet the glory of them all shall not be equal ; they shall all shine as stars, and yet “one star differeth from another star in glory : There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars ; so also is the resurrection of the dead.” Some will have bodies more bright and resplendent than others. Those who have done some extraordinary service to their Lord, who have suffered courageously for his name ; or those who by the constant

exercise of severity and mortification have attained a greater measure of purity and holiness than others, shall shine as stars of the first magnitude: "And they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." (*Dan.* xii. 3.) It is certain that the purest and most spiritual bodies shall be given to those who are most fitted for them, to the most heavenly and spiritual souls; so that this is no little encouragement to us to make the greatest proficiency we can possibly in the ways of virtue; since the more we wean ourselves from these sensible objects, the more glorious and heavenly will even our bodies be at the resurrection.

3. Let this consideration engage us patiently to bear those afflictions, sicknesses, and bodily pains, which we are exercised with in this life. "The time of our redemption draweth nigh;" let us but hold out a while longer, and all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and we shall never sigh nor sorrow any more. And how soon shall we forget all the misery we endured in this earthly tabernacle, when once we are clothed with that house which is from above?

We are now but in our journey towards the heavenly Canaan, are pilgrims and strangers here, and therefore must expect to struggle with many difficulties; but it will not be long before we shall come to our journey's end, and that will make amends for all. We shall then be in a quiet harbour, out of the reach of those storms wherewith we are here encompassed: we shall be at home, at our FATHER'S house, no more exposed to those inconveniences which, so long as we abide in this tabernacle of clay, we are subject to. And let us not forfeit all this happiness only for want of a little more patience and constancy; but let us hold out to the end, and we shall receive abundant recompense for all the trouble of our passage, and be in perfect endless rest and peace.

4. Let this especially arm us against the fear of death; for death is now conquered, and can do us no hurt. It

separates us indeed from this body for a while, but it is only that we may receive it again far more pure and glorious. It takes away our old rags, and bestows upon us royal robes : Either, therefore, let us lay aside the profession of this hope of the resurrection unto life, or else let us with courage expect our dissolution, and with patience bear that of our friends and relations. "Woe is us, who are forced still to sojourn in Mesech, and to dwell in the tents of Kedar ?" For how can it be well with us so long as we are chained to these earthly carcasses ? As GOD, therefore, said once to JACOB, "Fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will go down with thee, and I will surely bring thee up again ;" so may I say to you, Fear not to go down into the house of rottenness ; fear not to lay down your heads in the dust ; for GOD will certainly bring you out again, and that after a much more glorious manner. Let death pull down this house of clay, since GOD hath undertaken to rear it up again infinitely more splendid and useful.

5. *And, lastly,* Let us all take care to live so here, that we may be "accounted worthy to obtain the other world, and the resurrection from the dead." Let us "rise," in a moral sense, "from the death of sin to the life of righteousness," and then the second death shall have no power over us. A renewed and purified soul shall not fail of an heavenly and glorified body ; but a sensual and worldly mind, as it hath no affection for, so can it find no place in, those pure regions of light and happiness.

Since, therefore, we have this comfortable hope of a glorious resurrection to life eternal, let us "purify ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit ;" let us hold fast our profession, and steadfastly adhere to our duty, whatever we may suffer by it here, as knowing "we shall reap, if we faint not." And this is ST. PAUL's exhortation, with which he concludes his discourse of the resurrection : "Therefore, my beloved Brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the LORD ; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the LORD."



---

DISCOURSES

ON

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS:

BY HENRY SCOUGAL, A. M.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A SERMON PREACHED AT HIS FUNERAL,

By G. G., D.D.

---



## TO THE READER.

---

---

MR. SCUGAL, the author of the following Discourses, and of “The Life of GOD in the Soul of Man,” had taught Philosophy four years before he entered into holy orders ; after which he was one year Minister of a country parish, and four years Divinity Professor in King’s College, in Aberdeen ; in which See, his father, BISHOP SCUGAL, sat above twenty years from the Restoration. This his son was born about the end of June, 1650, and died on the thirteenth of the same month, 1678, having scarce completed the twenty-eighth year of his age. But being made perfect in a short time, he fulfilled a long time ; for “wisdom is the grey hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age.”



# A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE FUNERAL

OF

THE REV HENRY SCOUGAL, A. M.

BY G. G., D.D.

---

PHIL. i. 21.

*For me to live is CHRIST, and to die is gain.*

IT hath been the usual practice of all nations, of whatsoever religion, sect, or persuasion, to leave upon record to after ages, the lives and memorable actions of those who have been eminent among them for great or good things: and however this practice may have been abused, sometimes to serve the interest of a sect or party, or other undue ends, yet, that the memory of good men ought to be transmitted to posterity, may be deduced both from Scripture and common reason; it being fit thus to manifest the grace and goodness of GOD in men, and thereby to advance his glory and kingdom, and to make their light so shine before us, that they may be useful instructions to the world. To this we owe the remembrance of all those good and great men recorded in the Old Testament; nay, on this is grounded the establishment and purity of our most holy religion: we have left us the memorials of the life and doctrine of our blessed LORD in the holy Gospels, and the Acts of his Apostles, whom he sent to convert the world. And the pious Christians of succeeding ages, according to this pattern, were careful, both by public discourses and writings, to awaken their own and after-times, with the remembrance of holy and devout persons.

And now, if by the general practice and consent of all

men, records of exemplary piety be thus useful to posterity, even though they be strangers to the persons of those whose lives and actions are transmitted to them, I am sure we have much more reason to think, that some seasonable meditations, at such a time, and in such a place as this is, may have some influence on our minds, when we have here before us the remains of our departed friend, whose presence and conversation were so comfortable to us, whose innocence and goodness were so exemplary, whose good-will, affection, and beneficence, were so sincere and universal, whose remembrance is so dear to us, who was so much the stay and honour of our church : sure the sense of all these, and the sight of all this funereal attendance, cannot but cast our souls into some deep thoughts. Would I could say something useful and suitable to your present temper, and this subject ! May God assist and direct our thoughts !

When I reflect upon the life of our friend, (of which I have had the happiness to be so frequent an observer,) and when I consider the constant temper of his soul, as to this and the other world, the great resignation of his mind, his willingness to stay here, that he might do some service to his ever blessed Maker and Redeemer, and yet his cheerful apprehensions of that happiness that is above, and his ardent breathings after it, methinks I hear always from him the words of St. PAUL : “ To me to live is CHRIST, and to die is gain.”

I shall not trouble you with any large explanation of these words : we shall only consider them in their most obvious meaning. The blessed Apostle, being in bonds at Rome, writes this letter to the Philippians, to exhort them to perseverance in the faith of CHRIST, and to have their conversation suitable to it ; and that they might not be discouraged by his bonds, he tells them the happy fruits of them ; how much they had conduced to the furtherance of the Gospel ; so that thereby many were converted to the faith of CHRIST, and others strengthened in it, and made more bold to preach the Gospel ; so that he hoped,

whether by life or death, CHRIST should be magnified in him; if he lived, by his constant preaching his Gospel, and living his life; if he died, by signing the truth of it with his blood. For “to me to live is CHRIST;”—‘the whole of my life in this world, the end of my living here, the aim of all my thoughts, and designs, and actions, is CHRIST; to be endued with his spirit, and lead his life; to spread his Gospel, and enlarge his kingdom: I have no other design than this. GOD knows, and the world sees, whether I mind riches, or pleasures, or glory, among men; no, I have consecrated my life and spirit to my blessed Master, and they shall be employed in his service. CHRIST is my life! so that I live, “yet not so much I, as CHRIST that liveth in me.”’

Few words, but full of sense and truth; they are not like those airy expressions, which, when searched into, have nothing but imagination at the bottom of them; but they contain the very marrow of Christianity; and this will appear if we consider a little more distinctly their importance. For one to live another may be said in two respects: 1. When he is endued with the same spirit, and has the same temper of mind, and leads the same kind of life. And, 2. When his heart and life are wholly devoted to his love and service: and in both these respects (which indeed cannot be separated) we may consider the Apostle’s words: “To me to live is CHRIST,” or CHRIST is my life.

*First,* As he was endued with the Spirit, and led the life of his blessed Master. “Be ye followers of me,” saith he, “even as I also am of CHRIST:” and indeed this is the great design of Christianity, and the truest character of a Christian. All our duty, and all our happiness consist in being like GOD, and living in that dependance upon and subjection to him, that reasonable creatures owe their Almighty Creator. Now, seeing GOD “dwelleth in that light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see;” therefore, “the only-begotten SON, which is in the bosom of the FATHER, he hath

declared him ; ” he hath clothed himself with our flesh, and become man, and conversed amongst us like one of ourselves, and shown us what the Father is, and how we must be like him. Would we know how **GOD** would live amongst us, were he clothed with our nature and infirmities? Behold the **SON** of **GOD** ; consider his life and spirit ; and this is the life of **GOD** : for “ he is the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person.” Would we learn how far our nature is capable of being like to **GOD** ; how we must be partakers of the divine nature, and be renewed in the spirit of our minds, putting on the new man, which, after **GOD**, “ is created in righteousness and true holiness ? ” consider **JESUS CHRIST**, subject to the infirmities of our nature, and living the life of **GOD**. Behold, “ he hath given us an example, that we should follow his steps.”

Consider the profound humility of his soul ; the great meekness of his spirit ; the entire resignation of his will to his heavenly Father ; the unspotted purity of his desires and affections ; the ardency of his love to **GOD**, and his zeal and delight to do his will ; his wonderful patience under the greatest sufferings ; his sincere and boundless charity towards men, doing good even to those who hated and persecuted him, and dying for those who crucified him. In these and in all other graces, he hath gone before us, and called upon us to learn of him and follow him ; for this end did he live and die, to endue us with his Spirit, and change our nature into his : he hath revealed unto us the nature of **GOD**, and his undeserved grace and goodness to us, and our unspeakable misery and corruption, and estrangement from our heavenly Father ; and hath put us again into a capacity of being his children, he himself becoming our elder brother.

He hath breathed his **HOLY SPIRIT** into the world, to inspire us with his life, and change us into his image ; and he hath told us, that without this we shall never see the face of **GOD**. We have therefore, all the obligations in

the world to make **CHRIST** our life, and to follow **JESUS** : this is the only mark whereby **GOD** will acknowledge us for his.

He is the most perfect example of purity and holiness, in whom there was no spot nor blemish ; who had no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth ; but his life was uniform, and always pure and constant to himself ; and yet he hath given us the most plain and familiar copy, and the most exactly fitted to the state of men in this world.

His commands are nothing but the transcript of his own life and spirit : we ought always to have him in our eye, and in every disposition of our soul ; in every undertaking and design, to consider how our blessed Master would have done in these circumstances, and aspire always to have the same mind that was in him, and never rest till **CHRIST** be formed in us.

And well might the Apostle say, “ To me to live is **CHRIST**,” who was so much endued with his Spirit, and conformed to his life ; whom nothing could separate from the love of **GOD** ; who rejoiced as much in suffering his will, as in doing it ; who was so often in labour, and stripes, and prisons, in perils of all sorts, in watching, and hunger, and thirst ; in fastings, and cold, and nakedness : so far was he from enjoying the pleasures of the world, who knew so well both how to abound and be in want, and in “ whatsoever state therewith to be content ; ” who was so much “ crucified to the world, and the world unto him ; ” whose love was boundless towards his brethren, being ready to spend and be spent for them ; who travelled through the world to make men better, and spared no pains to make them happy ; spending his life in this employment, and enduring all kinds of hardships in it : so that in a word, he lived, yet not so much he, as **CHRIST** that lived in him.

But, *Secondly*, These words import, that his heart and life were wholly devoted to the service of **CHRIST** ; that he loved him above all things, and minded nothing more

than his interest, and employed his life in serving his designs, and doing his will, and lived by his faith. The life of man in this world is to be considered both as to the inward and outward man; the former, which is that of the soul, consists in the understanding, the will, and the affections; the other, being the outward life and conversation, is regulated according to the inward dispositions of the soul; and as a man's sentiments and dispositions are, such is his life. Now as the life of the body is strangely disordered, when the blood and spirits do not run in their ordinary course, but make convulsive and involuntary motions; so the life of our souls is so corrupted, that we may be said to be dead while we live, when our judgment is blind and false, our will perverse and crooked, our affections earthly and carnal: and this is the state of our life by nature.

What a strange blindness is there in the spirit of man? We understand almost nothing of the greatest things, and judge perversely of other things. How little do we know of our God, of our souls, of their misery, or wherein their true happiness consists? And how perversely do we judge of the trifles of this life, as if our happiness and our all were summed up in them? How corrupt are the affections and dispositions of our hearts? We love what we ought to hate; we trust what will certainly fail us, and distrust that which should be our only confidence; we fear that which can do us no harm, and are regardless of our greatest dangers. Now JESUS CHRIST is come into the world, full of grace and truth, to renew the spirit of our minds, and the course of our lives; and the life that we ought to lead, is "by the faith of the SON of GOD, who loved us, and gave himself for us." We must not live by sense, and our own foolish passions; but according to that faith, that he by his word and Spirit inspires us with.

And then do we truly live by the faith of CHRIST, when the sense of our own sinfulness and misery sinks us into the deepest humility, and abhorrence of ourselves; and the thoughts of the unspeakable goodness and mercy

of **God**, and what our ever-blessed Redeemer hath done, suffered, and purchased for us, inspire our hearts with ardent love to them ; and this becomes the spring of all our actions, makes us delight to do his will, and be well pleased to suffer it, and study always to promote his interest in the world, to make him be known and loved by all we can, and seek his glory and honour in all we do, and not our own.

And thus it was with **ST. PAUL**, who, however before his conversion he was acted by a blind zeal, yet no sooner had that glorious light which dazzled the eyes of his body, enlightened those of his mind, but he made appear by his life and spirit, that he lived “by the faith of the **SON** of **God**,” and that to him “to live was **CHRIST**.” How did that light and life shine before men, and how manifest were they in him, who “counted all things but dung and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of **CHRIST JESUS** ?” Who gloried in nothing so much as his cross, “by which the world was crucified to him, and he unto the world ?” Who reckoned “the sufferings of this present time, not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed ?” Whom neither worldly advantage, nor the greatest crosses and afflictions ; neither the power nor malice of devils and men could separate from the love of **CHRIST** ? Who gloried in nothing more than in suffering for him, whose zeal was so great, and his industry and diligence so vigorous, and his care and management so prudent and wise in propagating his life and spirit, and spreading his doctrine ?

But **I** forbear to speak of that great Apostle of the Gentiles ; the present occasion leads us hither, nor shall **I** presume to make a parallel. **I** know “there is one glory of the sun, another of the moon, and another of the stars ; and one star differeth from another star in glory.” As the happiness of the other world, so the piety and goodness of this, have their degrees and measures. **I** shall only consider, how, in its own measure, the life and spirit of our friend breathes forth the same sentiments. “To me to live is

**CHRIST :**” How his life and example, his conversation and instructions, his thoughts and designs, the inward dispositions of his soul, and the outward actions of his life, were the fruits and effects of a Christian spirit, of a holy and divine temper; and how they all tended, and were employed to increase the same in himself, and stir it up in others; and to revive something of the ancient Christian piety and goodness in the world.

“**To me to live is CHRIST :**” Indeed well may it be said of his life, whose early beginnings and first blossoms were seasoned with pious inclinations, as well as the maturer periods of it. The right management of infancy and childhood is ordinarily the least of a parent’s care, and any pious exercises are usually the least of children’s thoughts. Every trifle takes up their spirits: little passions and envies, and other issues of our natural corruption, begin to sprout forth even in that tender age. But in our deceased friend, as it was his Father’s pious design to devote him to the service of **God**, who did therefore take a suitable care even of his infancy and childhood, so his pious inclinations did happily conspire with it, and he gave early indications of them even in those tender years. He was not taken up with the plays and diversions of those of his age, but upon such occasion did usually retire from them; and that not out of sullenness, or dulness of spirit, (the sweetness and sincerity of whose temper did even then appear,) but out of a stayedness of mind, going to some privacy, and employing his time in reading, prayer, and such serious thoughts as that age was capable of. Sometimes he would be taken up with the thoughts of the **Law of Moses**, wondering how altars and sacrifices, and other ceremonies, were not now among the exercises of our worship; at other times employing himself in little imitations of the exercises of the holy function, as preaching, and the like; and among other instances of the happy fruits of such retirements, this deserves to be remembered, that being once in a serious reflection what course of life he should take, that might be conducive to the salvation

of his soul, he took up a Bible to read a portion of it ; and could not but take notice of the first words which he cast his eyes upon, and which made no small impression on his spirit. By what “means shall a young man purify his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.”

The diversions he was then most taken with, did speak the greatness of his mind, and he seemed to act all the grandeur of this world while a child ; for when in learning the Latin tongue, he began to understand the Roman story, he retired usually with the most ingenious of his fellows, composed little orations, and acted the parts of the Roman Senators.

I cannot here omit that vastness of memory, and forwardness of judgment, which did even then appear, in that when he began to take notice of the daily reading of the holy Scriptures at home, he could not only repeat several verses at that time, whether the historical or other parts ; but afterwards upon the turning to any such particular chapter, could call them to remembrance ; and whereas those of that age can, for the most part, remember only some little incoherent passages of public sermons, he did usually take up their whole scope, and give a brief account of them. And though children generally love only the society of their fellows, or such as can entertain them with foolish stories, yet such was the seriousness of his spirit, and the love he even then had for knowledge and good men, that when he had the opportunity of hearing serious and reverend persons, who used to resort to his father’s house, he was careful to attend to them, and listen to their wise and pious discourses. His improvements in human literature were beyond the ordinary attainments of his age ; having not only acquired a singular elegance in the Latin tongue, but also a considerable proficiency in the Greek, and in the Hebrew, and some other of the oriental languages ; being also versed in history, and in geometry, and other parts of the mathematics. And such was the clearness of his apprehension, and the forwardness of his judgment, that upon the over-hearing

an occasional discourse of some who were passing their first years in the university, he did quickly take up the nature of a syllogism, and could readily form one upon any subject.

These were the early dawnings of goodness which appeared in him in those first years of his age, before he came to this corner of our land, and there became still more conspicuous. His improvements had now fitted him for the university, and here he gave farther proofs of a pious disposition, and a capacious understanding; he was far removed from those levities and foolish customs, those little animosities and strifes, which the inconsiderate youth are sometimes guilty of; but was even then grave and stayed in his deportment, yet free and unaffected. The learning that was then in fashion, did not satisfy his understanding, nor could he perceive its use, save to wrangle *pro* and *con* about any thing. He was desirous to dive into the nature of things, and not to be involved in a strife of hard words, and a maze of nice distinctions, and therefore by his own industry, and private study, he became even then master of that philosophy, which has now got such footing in the world; besides a singular proficiency he made in the several parts of mathematics, in history, and other human learning.

But he was always careful to beware of any philosophy, or false knowledge, that was apt to have a bad influence on the mind, and debauch the spirit, and never suffered himself to be tainted with such; and there was nothing that more endeared any philosophical truths to him, than when they gave right apprehensions of God. His mind being always composed to a religious temper, he even then made it his business by the frequent reading of the most pious books, and a happy conversation, sanctified by a constant devotion, to frame to himself, amidst the various opinions and distractions of Christendom, right apprehensions of religion, and accordingly to suit his practice; so that even then religion was the matter of his serious and impartial choice, and not merely the prejudice of educa-

tion. He used sometimes to write essays of morality, and occasional meditations; which, as they were singularly ingenious, so they breathed forth the devotions of his mind, and the seriousness of his spirit, and would well become a riper age.\*

Such was his deportment and improvement for the few years he resided in the University. And, therefore, he no sooner came out of the University, but he was thought worthy to be a master, where he had so lately been a scholar. And even in this station, "To him to live was CHRIST;" he was careful so to behave himself in his conversation, and in the exercises of that office, as to preserve his own conscience void of offence, and to serve the interests of Christianity, training up the youth in such principles of learning and goodness, as might make them most serviceable to Church and State.

He was careful not to drive on little designs, or to maintain factions in the society, but studied always to compose them; and when it would not do, they were his regret, but he was sure not to make one of them. He always preserved his authority entire amongst the unruly youth, and would quickly compose their disorders, and yet gain their love and esteem, and knew well how to entertain them with freedom and kindness, and yet oblige them to that respect that becomes a scholar towards his master.

He was careful to instruct the youth in the most intelligible and useful principles of human knowledge; and it deserves to be remembered, that he was the first in this corner of the land, (perhaps in the whole nation,) who taught the youth that philosophy which has now the preference by all the knowing world. He was careful to train them up in the best principles of morality. And as he thus made human learning serviceable to the ends of religion, so he made it his great endeavour to have their minds inspired with this. On the LORD'S Day in the evening, he usually read some pious discourses to them, laying open the folly and heinousness of vice and impiety, and the excellency of religion; and such other considera-

tions as might both instruct their minds, and gain upon their tempers; and he failed not to deal with each of them in private; those who were of bad inclinations he studied to reform, and in whom he saw any appearance of goodness, he was careful to cherish them. Thus he hath made appear by his practice, that philosophy and religion are not enemies to one another, but that the sober use of our reason makes us more capable of the truths and graces of our religion.

But God had designed him for the more immediate service of his Church, unto which he had been devoted from the womb; and, therefore, by the counsel of some serious persons, whose advices were of great weight with him, he was called forth to preach the Gospel, and a little after entered into holy orders, and was employed, as you know, in the office of the ministry in the country; where, though his stay was so short, yet the proofs he gave both of his fitness for, and zeal in that holy function, were singular: He found he had now more obligations lying on him to piety, and as the ambassador of his blessed Master, he must be very tender of his honour: and therefore he was careful to shun even all appearances of evil. He studied during his short stay, by catechising, to instruct his people with the greatest plainness and affection, in the right sense and knowledge of religion, and to show them the folly and unreasonableness of those pretences, whereby they encouraged themselves in a bad life. He endeavoured to understand their tempers, and accordingly to apply himself to them; he was deeply sensible of the little sense of religion that generally appeared, and when he saw any spark of goodness, how strangely was he cheered with it; he more valued the humble innocence, and cheerful contentment of one poor woman in that place, than all the more goodly appearances of others; having oft in his mouth, *Indocti cœlum rapiunt*. He endeavoured to bring them to a devout and constant attendance on the public worship, where he always went, and joined with them at the beginning of it. His sermons were always devout and serious

and seasonable, and he endeavoured to fit them to the capacities of the people, and he revived the use of Lectures, looking on it as the most edifying way, to have (as a great light of this nation used to say) long texts and short sermons.

I come now to the last stage of his life, wherein it most eminently appeared, that "To him to live was CHRIST." God had designed him for a more universal service in his Church, and therefore, by the wise Providence of the ALMIGHTY, he is removed from a private charge in the country, to a more general one of training up the youth for the holy ministry. Both his natural, acquired, and moral endowments, made him be judged by all worthy of his charge. His memory was singular, and though he loved more to study things than words, yet, for instance, in a few days' time, he learned to understand one of our western languages, and could read it in English with more readiness than those who have lived many years where it is spoken. His understanding was ready, clear, and piercing, and he could quickly see through things in civil affairs, as well as in matters of learning. He did not so much read books as think them, and, by a transient view, would quickly comprehend the design and marrow of them. He had not spent his whole time in reading, being sensible that it often served to dull, confuse, and prejudicate men's understandings, and make them of imperious and dictating tempers; and therefore he made a prudent mixture of moderate reading, and consulting the living as well as the dead, having a singular art of benefiting both himself and others by conversation and discourse; and he digested and improved all by retired meditations and fervent devotion; so that his learning seemed rather the issues of his own mind, and the inspiration of the ALMIGHTY, which teacheth knowledge.

He employed two summers in going to a neighbour nation, in which he made it his business to converse with those who were of greatest reputation for learning and goodness, where, as he gained their singular esteem, so,

by useful conversation, and a serious observation of tempers and things, he improved his mind and knowledge. But, indeed, we may look upon his excellent endowments, as the reward of the pious dispositions of his soul, and of the good designs he proposed to himself in all his studies and endeavours; and GOD knows, in the undertaking this office, there was nothing he had more before his eyes than the service of JESUS CHRIST, and the good of his Church. He was deeply sensible of the great weight and importance of the holy ministry, and did much bewail the general failings in the exercise of it, how every man minded "his own things, and not the things of JESUS CHRIST." And therefore he made this the one great design of all his endeavours in that charge, the training up the youth for that holy function; and this was the great aim both of his public and private care of them.

It was his great care, to make his private conversation with them as useful as his public; and by this indeed he hoped to do most good. They had always free access to him, and his counsels and advices were still suited to the dispositions he perceived in them; he could so modestly and prudently tell them their failings, as to make them perceive and amend them without being offended; he was careful to lend and direct them to the use of good books, and indeed one of the great ends of his buying so many was to serve them. Those who were of the most eminent endowments and best inclinations, he stirred up to serious thoughts of the ministry; he gave them the most undoubted proofs of his love and care of them, opened his heart freely to them, and learned their inclinations and studies; he directed them to the best means of bettering their heart, as well as informing their judgments; prayer, meditation, and frequent retirements; and made them sensible, that self-will was the root of all our sin; and an entire resignation to the will of GOD, the very spring of all our duty; and directed them to frequent and constant acts of self-denial and resignation. And as he was thus careful of his charge, so also of maintaining that entire correspondence

with, and due respect that he owed towards his reverend colleague: and that entire and constant love and harmony between them, and that esteem they had for one another, was very singular and exemplary.

Thus “to him to live was CHRIST.” Thus faithfully and prudently did our dear friend manage his charge, in serving the interest of his blessed Master; and we might have hoped confidently, ere long, that by their joint endeavours, through the blessing of the ALMIGHTY, we should have seen another face on our Church. But amidst all his pious designs, he is called by his great Master in an hour that we thought not of, from his stewardship here, to a higher employment in the other world.

The end of his life was no less CHRIST’S than the beginning and whole course of it: the time of his sickness was as cheerfully spent in suffering the will of GOD, as the former was in doing of it. He manifested the greatest meekness and cheerfulness of spirit through the whole course of it; he used not the least harsh expression, either to any of those that waited on him, or concerning the present providence: he expressed a perfect indifferency as to life and death, and an entire resignation to the will of GOD. He found himself never more sensible of the vanity of this world, nor ever felt more ardent love to GOD, than at that time. He was wrapt in admiration of GOD’S goodness to him, and the little returns he said he had made to it; and acknowledged his own great unworthiness, and his humble confidence in the mercy of GOD, through the merits of his blessed SAVIOUR. And thus meekly did he pass his sickness, and resign his spirit, without any trouble from the world, or great pain of body, or any anguish of mind; for, “mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, the end of that man is peace.”

He had been constant in his private prayers to GOD from his childhood, and that great secret of devotion which he recommends in his book, was his frequent practice; and he sent up sometimes such aspirations of love, with such ardent sighs, and groanings, and heavings of his

spirit, as perhaps unclogged his spirit, and made his soul take its flight so soon from this earthly tabernacle.

And sure a soul so much inflamed with the love of God, could not be wanting in charity towards men; and indeed to this his very natural temper seemed to incline him. There was nothing of harshness in the disposition of his spirit, but it was full of sweetness and love, which appeared in his very air and countenance, and was apt to attract men's hearts at the first sight; and this happy disposition was hallowed and raised by the love of God into a holy charity. His soul was wide as the world, and his love and goodwill were universal, and every man the object of them. His prayers and good wishes were extended to all men, and all the harm he could do to his enemies (if there were any such universal haters of mankind as to do him bad offices) was to pray for them the more earnestly to God. He did not confine his charity within a sect or party, but loved goodness wherever he found it, and entertained no harsh thoughts of men, merely upon their differing from him in this or that opinion. He was grieved at the divisions and distractions of the Church, and that religion, the bond of love, should be made the bone of contention.

What prudent methods would his sincere love to others prompt him to, to undeceive them in their errors! How meekly would he discourse with them about their differences, calmly showing the small importance of some things, not worth the contending for, and making appear the bad influence that other things had as to holiness and a good life, and yielding in others again that were not contrary to the designs of religion, making them sensible of the sincerity of his soul, and his hearty good-will to them. He was far from maintaining a difference, upon the account of stoutness of humour, or keeping up the reputation of a sect or party; being desirous we should be all united in the general religion of JESUS CHRIST, and studying to make friends, and unite the hearts of those who had been divided by names and parties: and thus, if at first he did not prevail over men's prejudices, yet he failed not to gain their

hearts, and so, by degrees, made way for his seasonable discourses. And, O what holy charms and pious arts had he to catch men's souls, and to make them pursue their own happiness; a charity which he thought far superior to any that could be done for the body, (though he was eminent in that kind also,) and of which he would speak with the greatest concern. How many arts had he to make them good and happy! His love made him always as intent upon this, as the love of money will make the covetous man intent to add to his treasure. How would he take advantage from every thing, to make all things work together for their good! He seemed to be the visible spring that put all good designs in motion, for bettering the state of our Church. He was the genius that put life and spirit into the pious endeavours of those he conversed with. How careful was he to propagate every where right apprehensions of religion, and what a visible influence had he among us in this matter! What wise methods had he to make his friends sensible of their infirmities, by speaking to them of his own! and to stir them to zeal and diligence in piety and good works, and to the use of the most effectual means for purifying their souls, by telling them instances of the piety of others of his acquaintance. He was careful even to make his ordinary conversation useful for this end, both in giving the example of an unaffected modesty and meekness, and dropping always something that might make them more in love with religion. The effects of his love and care of men's souls extended even to those who knew him not, and he obliged always his friends and acquaintance, as there was occasion to employ the interest of their friendship and familiarity with others, in persuading them to piety; and alluring them to the reading of good books, and such other means, as might serve both to enlighten and purify them; and when he heard of the good fruits of such designs, how much would he be cheered with it! His love and veneration for good men was singular and extraordinary: nothing he more delighted in than their conversation; and he could so well represent their

piety and good life to others, as to make them enamoured with it.

His love and charity were eminent also in the bounty of his alms, and the relief of the outward necessities of others. The first money he gained, being at the University, he was careful to lay by a portion for the poor, before he made any use of it for himself; devoting as it were the first-fruits to God: and this course he observed throughout the rest of his life; laying aside always a portion of his income for the relief of the necessitous. And as he was careful thus to provide for alms, so also to dispose of it aright: he “did not his alms to be seen of men;” many were revived by his bounty, who knew nothing of it. He chose out some fit persons both in city and country, who were acquainted with the necessities of poor, modest, honest house-keepers, to whom he frequently gave money to relieve their wants: and these were sometimes honest persons of different persuasions, who were relieved in their straits they knew not by whom. Nor was his charity so exemplary only in the liberal dispensing of portions of his yearly incomes, but also in such a prudent disposition of what his pious father’s care had provided for him in his last will, as might most tend to the public good and advantage.

But among the other expressions of his love, his friendship surely deserves a grateful remembrance. How eminent an example was he of sincere and hearty friendship; this was the darling of his soul, and the delight of his spirit. He did not act it to serve little designs and private interests, but he was full of cordial love and affection, even like the love of JONATHAN. How freely would he open his heart, and unbosom his thoughts, and give faithful counsel to his friend! How dear were his interests to him, and how wisely would he manage them! If there was any worldly thing that was apt to create trouble to him, it was the bad success that befell them; and their happy events would so refresh his spirits, that it had even influence on his sickly body, and would give it some greater

measure of health. How readily would he forego his own interests to oblige his friend, and deny himself, even in those designs and inclinations for which usually we have a great concern, when once we are engaged in them. So far was he from desiring to engross the kindness of his friends, that he made it his great business to propagate true friendship, and make them friends to one another; and in this he studied to render it the most useful thing in the world, and to make it serve the great ends of religion. Those in whom he observed the spirit of true piety, or any likelihood of one's having influence on, and bettering the other, he endeavoured to bring them into acquaintance, to endear them to each other, and to make their friendship useful for promoting true piety, both in themselves and others; and this perhaps is the most effectual means for recovering something of the ancient Christian spirit in the world. Such an holy combination (not to observe the vows of any particular order, or to divide from the rest of the world, but) to follow **JESUS**, to live according to his holy religion, and to persuade others to a sincere conformity thereunto, O how desirable was it! It was thus, methinks, that the **SON OF GOD** did at first spread his religion in the world; it was thus that the zeal and piety of his first followers did continue it; and it is thus that we must expect to see the life and spirit of it breathe once again amongst us.

I need not speak much of his great unconcernedness for this present world. He looked indeed always as a stranger and pilgrim in it, and was dead to it in heart and spirit long before his body had taken leave of it. **GOOD GOD!** what a deep sense had he of the meanness and vanity of this world's hurry and designs, which he used to say looked like the projects and scuffle of children and fools. In his very youth his heart was clear of any inclination to it, and he would even then say to his intimates, that, abstracting from the will of **GOD**, mere curiosity would make him long for another world, it being a tedious thing to see still the same dull play acted over again here. What little

regard had he to the getting or keeping of what the world calls riches! Never was he seen to have any project that tends that way; he could scarce expend any thoughts about his yearly incomes, but remitted still the care of that to others. How excellently had he learned his Master's lesson: "To take no thought what he should eat, or what he should drink, or wherewithal he should be clothed." Never any thing he was more unconcerned in than this; whatever was set before him he did eat of it, asking no questions for appetite's sake: his thoughts and spirit were never taken up with those actions of the animal life; even when he was about them, and while he supported nature, he scarce suffered his taste to have any complacency in them. He thought strange to see those who pretended to christian temperance, exercise such a voluptuous pleasure in their meats, making them the subject of their table-talk, and, as if they owned their bellies for their gods, professing they loved such and such dishes with all their souls. Alas! that the infirmity of human nature, by which we are levelled with the beasts, should become the matter of our vanity, instead of that humble and abasing sense we ought to have of ourselves.

The purity of his life was observable from his very childhood; he was never tinctured with the least appearances of those impurities which are the reproach of the christian world. How great an example was he of christian continence to all that knew him. His very air and conversation showed how much he was mortified to the world in this respect. He had no small abhorrence of all discourses and actions that savoured any thing of impurity, and could not endure those who were apt to wrest the talk of men's ordinary discourse that way.

As the pleasures and pomp of the world could never bewitch, so the hardships and troubles of it did never overcome his spirit, but in all conditions his mind seemed always equal. When he lived in the country, the hardships and inconveniences he endured, were the common talk of all that knew him; his coarse fare, and hard

lodging, and unwonted solitude, the extreme coldness of the season, and the comfortless shelter he had against it, did excite the compassion of others, but never lessened the quiet and contentedness of his own spirit; and he suffered them with as much patience as if he had been bred up from his infancy in the Turkish galleys. Any traverses that befell him in the circumstances of his life and designs, did never becloud the serenity of his mind; and he used to say in relation to such discontents, that as he blessed God he was not naturally melancholy, so he thought an acquired melancholy was scandalous in a Clergyman.

And O what a profound humility did shine forth in his life and actions! The admiration of the perfections of the ALMIGHTY, had sunk him into truly mean thoughts of himself. All who had occasion to converse with him were sensible of the lowliness of his mind, and yet he scarce ever observed those little ceremonies or compliments which we oftentimes make use of to cover or counteract the pride of our spirits, or which it prompts us to traffic with, to purchase the esteem and regard of others. He disdained not to converse with the meanest, and looked upon every man as his companion; and the exemplary regard he had to young children, was equally the expression of his humility and his love. How ready was he on all occasions to converse with them, taking a singular delight in their harmless innocence, and usually, after the great Master of love, affectionately embracing them and blessing them. And such was the pious meekness of his soul towards others, that if at any time his natural temper raised any little commotion in his spirit, (which was scarce ever taken notice of after his entering into the holy function,) yet he quickly appeased it, and never suffered the sun to go down upon his wrath. He was never seen to boast of any of his performances, nor yet to use the more subtle fetch of vain-glory, in an elaborate undervaluing of them, that others might commend them; but the expressions of his mean thoughts of himself were always so natural, and so full of simplicity, that one might easily

observe them to arise from the bottom of his soul, and all his actions and his conversation made appear the truth and sincerity of them. Though his piety and innocence were eminent in the eyes of all that knew him, yet he had no small sense of his own unworthiness, when he set himself in the light of God's countenance, beheld his purity, and thought on his infinite goodness to him in JESUS CHRIST. O how deeply was he humbled under the sense of his sinfulness and ingratitude, and the little returns he had made to such undeserved goodness. When we are in a total darkness, we cannot discern one thing from another; and an ordinary light will discover to us the grosser lineaments, and more remarkable differences of things; but some beams darted in from the sun, will show us much impurity, where we thought all to have been pure and clean. And O, with what seriousness did this enlightened soul express the sense he had of the sinfulness of his nature, and the worthlessness of his person! Almost the very last words he spoke were to this purpose, uttered with an extraordinary devotion of spirit. After having witnessed his resignation to the will of God, and his humble hopes in his mercy: 'but,' says he, 'when you have the charity to remember me in your prayers, do not think me a better man than I am, but look upon me as indeed I am,—a most miserable sinner! a most miserable sinner!' O "if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the wicked appear?"

But I forbear to mention any farther the graces which shined forth in the life and spirit of our friend. The experience which many of you have had of them in his conversation, will furnish you with a better sense of them than all I can say.

Give me leave only to join in with your meditations, and to think with you on the lessons we may learn from the present dispensation, according to our different relations and circumstances.

And now, good people, let us consider his example, and our early loss of him. O that we would once learn to be

wise, and to live like Christians! You are all sensible what an eminent example he hath given us; and, alas! what hinders that we should not be followers of him, even as he also was of CHRIST? How may we see in him all our little pretences and prejudices against piety dashed and confounded! Where is the man that will say, he tastes as much solid pleasure in his jollity and cups,—that his lusts and vices create in him as great a serenity of mind, afford him as much comfort, dispose him to as much patience and contentedness in any condition, as were always seen to be the reward and blessing of the innocence and goodness of his life? And why should we turn off all serious thoughts to old age? as if we were then only fit for GOD, when we were fit for nothing else! May not the piety of his youth shame us into a better mind, and more christian lives? For honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years; but “wisdom is the grey hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age.”

And O, what shall we say of that divine Providence which hath taken this light from among us? The ways of the LORD are wonderful, and his judgments are a great deep. One who was so great an example of piety, is quickly removed from us in his youth; and many who are the reproach of religion, are left to old age; whether to fill up the measure of their sins, or to lead them to repentance, GOD knows. He whom GOD had blessed with so much light to instruct us, and virtue and zeal to direct us,—who was so helpful to enlighten us by his sermons and discourses, and to edify us by his example, is suddenly snatched away from us. O that we may hear the rod, and him that hath appointed it! When we make no use of GOD’s talents, (such are the instructions, and counsel, and example of good men,) he takes them from us. Alas! what an ill account can we render of this! O that our present loss may have this influence upon us, that we may be truly sensible of GOD’s goodness in bestowing this blessing so long upon us; that we may adore

his Providence in depriving us of it ; and that the impressions he hath left on our minds of his life and spirit, and the seed of the Gospel he hath sown in our hearts, may by God's grace yet bring forth fruit in us.

And you, my friends, who were his more peculiar care, his children, of whom he travailed in birth until CHRIST should be formed in you, whom he was solicitous to have fitted for the service of JESUS, and the care of souls ; alas, who can blame your tears, or withhold your grief ? “ My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof ! ” It is not possible for me to express the blessing you had in him : I know your own hearts are sensible of it beyond all I can say. O what a useful guide and director was he ! How dear were you to him ! How unaffectedly humble and ingenuous in his conversation ! How wise and pious were his instructions ! How much were his thoughts taken up about you, making them all serve for his great design of fitting you for the holy function ! And how great and unspeakable is your loss ! O let us adore and submit to the divine Providence. Search and try your hearts, and consider your ways, and reckon what fruit you have brought forth worthy of such a blessing ; and whether you have not deserved the removal of that light, while you have been so little careful to be enlightened by his instructions, or warmed by his piety and zeal.

And you, whom Providence hath entrusted with the care and education of the youth, pardon me also to call to mind the example of our dear friend, while he made one of your society. You know you have the charge of the hopes of the next generation ; and that the welfare both of the Church and State, and their own good happiness, doth very much depend upon the right forming of their minds in their younger years. We are all made for eternity, and we cannot go about any thing aright, if our eye be not fixed upon its end, and if all subordinate ends have not a respect to the great end of our being. The holy calling has this for its immediate end ; and next to it,

yours has the nearst relation to it. We are set apart to declare the light which **JESUS CHRIST** has revealed from heaven, by which “he brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel; and you to clear up the remains of the light that is within us; and he that dwells in light inaccessible is the **Fountain and Author of both.** I doubt not but these and such like considerations, engage you to make this your great view and design, to dispose the youth, both by your instructions and example, to a right sense of religion, and suitable apprehensions of the **Maker of the world, and the Redeemer of mankind,** without which view, philosophy is altogether vain and impertinent.

And now, my brethren, what shall we say, or whither shall we turn our thought! Alas! our loss is great and unspeakable. How much do we stand in need of such lights and examples! How weighty is our employment! What prudence and piety does it call for! How dangerous is the neglect or ill management of it! What need have we of such a monitor to shake off our sloth, and awe and instruct us by his example! ‘Parishes are holy ships,’ as one says, ‘whose Curates are the pilots, and eternity the port they must guide them to. If it need so much art, and so long experience to sail upon the seas, what knowledge and prudence does it call for, to pass over happily the sea of this world, where tempests never cease! Alas! who can think without sensible grief, and bitter tears, that the helm of these vessels, which contain such precious wares, as cost no less than the blood of **God,** should be committed ordinarily to men of so little experience, that they are not only ignorant of the tempests, shelves, and banks of this terrible sea, but even have not the strength and industry to guide their own little vessel back to the road. But even when the pilots are able, who would not at last lose their courage, to see themselves sailing amidst so many hazards, and with so little success? How many stupid ones fall out of the vessel! How many imprudent ones get out to sail apart in shallops! How many

desperate ones throw themselves over, and abandon themselves to the fury of the waves! What disputes, and what trouble for the poor pilot! He must run on all sides to reach out his hand to those that fall; he must exhaust his lungs, in trying to call those that flee away; he must even frequently throw himself into the sea, to recover those whom the waves swallow up. If he watch not, the fall of the first will be imputed to him; if he be silent, he will answer for the flight of the second; if he fear labour and travail, he will be accused of the other's despair; if, in a word, he want vigilance, strength, and courage, he will be guilty of as many bloodsheds as he lets souls perish.' This is a faint image of our condition. How may these thoughts fill us with astonishment and fear! What a risk do we run, while we are engaged in such a dangerous employment! What piety, and prudence, and vigilance, and courage does it call for! How strangely do our sloth and negligence infect one another, and lull us into carelessness, until the waves swallow us up! What need have we of some to call upon us, to mind us of our danger, to make us ashamed of our sloth, and to stir us up by their example! And what a blessing was our friend to us in this respect! How did he inspire life and spirit in all good designs amongst us, and stir us up to our duty by his public and private care, as far as his influences could reach, and by his example! How well did he answer the character of a good man, and a good Clergyman! His mind was stored with all sorts of knowledge, without vanity or contention; his piety was eminent, always accompanied with an unaffected humility; his spirit and disposition were ever peaceable; his love to God, and men's souls, made him study the divine art of becoming all things to all men that he might save some; none was ever more mortified to covetousness or filthy lucre; he watched all occasions of doing good to men's souls, and would not let them slip. Never man was more apt to teach, being gentle to all men. Those that opposed themselves to the truth, or were overtaken in a fault, he

endeavoured to instruct and restore in the spirit of meekness, avoiding foolish questions and strifes of words. And by walking in all good conscience before God and man, he hath among other things given a singular instance of preserving his person and his office from that contempt, which they say is so generally thrown upon our order. O that his life and example may be yet active among us, that we may be acted by the same spirit, not to mind our own things, but the things of JESUS CHRIST; that we may have pity on ourselves and this miserable Church; that the sense of our lamentable distractions, and the universal corruption of men's lives, may sink deep into our hearts! O that the love of JESUS, and the care of souls, may inspire our hearts, and direct our studies, and enliven our sermons, and increase our vigilance, and guide our lives! "Save us, LORD, or else we perish."

But whither would our passions drive us? Shall we forget the Governor of the world, and who is "the Lord of life and death?" We must not look on his removal as a fatal necessity, or a blind stroke of chance: no, no! the Author of the universe employs still the same power, and wisdom, and goodness, in ruling the world, that he did in making it; "in him we live, and move, and have our being:" his hand is in every thing that befalls us; all that strikes our senses, which we see, or hear, or know, or feel, within ourselves, and impute to other instruments, are really the effects of his power, and are ordered by him for great and wise ends: "a hair of our heads does not fall to the ground without his leave." This that has now befallen us, is a holy and indispensable effect of the Providence of God; he had not sent him into this world for a lasting temporal comfort unto us, but for the great and wise ends of his own glory, and of the world that is to come. Let us not look upon this accident in itself, but in God and in his will. Let us in humble silence adore the unsearchable depth of his secrets, bless the conduct of his Providence, and uniting our wills to the will of God, and sacrificing our natural passions unto it, let us walk with

him, in him, and for him, and what he hath willed in us, and for us, to all eternity.

And truly if we look upon our dear friend, and consider what he hath been, and what he now is, and shall be to all eternity, it will make us yet the more sensible, how much we ought to resign ourselves to, and glorify the will of our heavenly FATHER, in his wise disposal of him. The life of a Christian is a continual sacrifice to GOD, crucifying our earthly affections, mortifying our sinful passions, and subduing our wills to his ; and this sacrifice is finished and perfected by death ; and the lives of men, and the accidents that befall them, ought to affect our spirits, according as they break off or advance in sacrificing their lives and hearts to GOD. How comfortable has his life been to us and to all good men in this respect ? From the time he was given and devoted unto JESUS CHRIST in his baptism, how has he been fitted by the grace of the HOLY SPIRIT, to offer up his life a continual sacrifice to GOD, restraining constantly the corruption of his nature from breaking out, subduing every day his passions, purifying his affections, studying to do every thing in and for GOD, and endeavouring a continual resignation of his will to him ; and in this, we must not regret his few years, and the shortness of his days, for with GOD, “ one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” Length of life is not to be measured by many revolutions of the heavens, but by the progress we have made in the great design for which we are sent into the world ; and in this respect “ he being sanctified in a little time, hath fulfilled a long time ; ” so that he hath truly lived much in a few years, and died an old man at eight and twenty. He hath now finished the work that GOD had given him to do ; he hath accomplished the thing for which he was sent into the world ; by death he hath now perfected the sacrifice of himself, and the will of GOD is fulfilled in him. Whatever horror there may be in death to the natural man, however terrible it is to the impenitent, yet to the godly, to all that consider it in JESUS CHRIST,

It is full of joy and comfort. He hath made the King of Terrors to become the object of the most ardent desires and wishes of his own: for if to us "to live be CHRIST," sure—

"To die is gain." I will not now launch into the boundless ocean, to speak of the unspeakable happiness of the death of those whose life is CHRIST'S: but O, how may this, after the example of the ancient Christians, fill us with joy and comfort, in the well-grounded hopes of the happiness of our dear friend! Well may we think we hear him say, Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves; for "to me to die is gain." We live still in a world of sin and misery, of darkness and folly; we see nothing here but matter of tears and grief; we are among a crowd of people who are marching on to eternal misery, who know not but the next step may bring them to their journey's end, and yet never think of any thing but filling their bellies, satisfying their lusts, or worrying one another by the way: We have great difficulty to find the strait path to eternal life, and when we know it, and are entered into it, the seeming pleasure of the by-paths, the temptations and examples of the throng about us, a rooted corruption within us, and a subtle enemy that watches us, are ready at every step to betray us, and to turn us aside into the paths that lead to destruction; and what a blessing is it to be freed from all these?

How happy is our friend, who enjoys now an absolute freedom from all the pains and troubles of this miserable world, who is out of the reach of all those temptations and snares, whose soul is unclogged from its earthly body, freed from its guilt, and cleansed from its corruptions by the blood of JESUS, and put beyond the possibility of ever sinning or offending against its Maker; which now only begins to live, (the being born into this world being rather a death, and dying the beginning to live for ever,) being now all light, and life, and love, and motion, seeing and enjoying GOD, having its will wholly swallowed up in his, being as it were lost in him, and in the rapturous

bliss of his love, joining in pure and holy friendship with angels and archangels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, in adoring our Maker and Redeemer; being enlarged in holy charity and ardent prayers for us poor mortals here below, and rejoicing over one sinner that repenteth; waiting for the redemption of the body, when this mortal shall put on immortality. Who can speak aright of that happiness which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived. O let us not bewail the absence of our friends with fruitless sighs and tears, nor "sorrow as they that have no hope;" but let us always endeavour, after his example, so to live to CHRIST in this world, that our death may be the same gain to us; that with him and all the blessed spirits we may live in eternal friendship and love with the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST, GOD over all, blessed for evermore. Amen.

# SERMON I.

---

---

THE SUPERIOR EXCELLENCY OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

---

---

PROV. xii. 26.

*The Righteous is more excellent than his Neighbour.*

HE who considereth the excellency and advantage of piety and religion, how conformable it is to the best principle of our nature, and how profitable to our interests, may justly be surprised at the bad entertainment it receives in the world, and easily conclude, that this must needs flow from some gross mistakes about it, and prejudices against it.

Certainly all who are enemies to holiness have taken up false measures, and disadvantageous notions of it. The sensual person hateth it, as harsh and unpleasant, doing violence to his appetites, and looks on religion as a contrivance to rob him of the pleasures of this world, by proposing those of another. The politic wit slights it as foolish and imprudent; and though he acknowledge it a necessary instrument of government, yet he counts it a great weakness to be further concerned in it than may be subservient to secular designs. Again, the gallants of our age despise it as a base and ignoble temper, unworthy of a high birth, and genteel education, proceeding from cowardly and superstitious fear, depressing the mind, and rendering it incapable of high and aspiring thoughts. Hence they make it their business to pour contempt upon piety, and advance the reputation of those vicious courses which themselves have embraced: and because there are yet some left, who, by practising and recommending virtue,

oppose and condemn their practices, they study to avenge themselves on them by the persecution of their tongues, and all the scoffs and reproaches they can invent ; which hath proved a means most unhappily successful to deter many weak minds from goodness, making them choose to be wicked, that they may not be laughed at.

It is to discover the grossness of this mistake, and expose the unreasonableness of these principles and practices ; to vindicate the excellency of piety, and to recommend it to all truly generous souls, that we have made choice of this text ; which tells us in plain terms, that, “ The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.”

None can be so little acquainted with the Scripture dialect, as not to know that though righteousness in its truest acceptation, importeth only the observation of those duties we owe our neighbour ; yet it is usually taken more largely for piety and virtue in general ; and good reason too, since there is no part of our duty but we owe as a debt to God ; no exercise of religion but it is an act of justice ; whence the clear importance of the text is, that whatever excellency other persons may pretend to, the pious and religious men are the truly noble and generous persons in the world ; as the Psalmist expresseth it, “ The saints are the excellent ones in the earth.”

We shall not trouble you with any further explication of the words, which are so clear, or with any division of a proposition so simple, but shall illustrate and confirm the assertion, by producing such undoubted evidences of nobleness and excellency as are proper to godliness, and to those who practise it ; where we have occasion to hint at such characters of a pious man, as, besides the general design, may perhaps serve to put us in mind of some parts of our duty which we are not so careful to observe, and which, therefore, may be useful even to those who have already embraced the practice of religion.

Being to speak of the nobleness and excellency of religion, it may be expected we should say something of its origin, that being the whole of nobility which some

understand and others pretend to: we might take occasion to discover the folly of glorying in the antiquity of an illustrious house, or the virtue of worthy ancestors, who perhaps, were they alive, would disown their degenerate progeny; but I shall not insist upon this, it is a vanity which hath been chastised sufficiently even by heathen pens. Nay, we shall so far comply with the common sentiments of the world, as to acknowledge, that high birth, and liberal education, may contribute much to elevate the minds of men, and accustom them to great thoughts. But sure, whatever advantages any may pretend to by their birth, there are none to be preferred to the children of **GOD**, the blood-royal of heaven, the brethren of **CHRIST**, of whom we say, "That as he is, so are they, each one resembling the Son of a King."

If we trace the lines of earthly extraction, we shall find them all meet in one point, all terminate in dust and earth; but in the heraldry of heaven, we shall find a two-fold pedigree. Sin is the offspring of hell, and "wicked men are of their father, the Devil." On the other hand, holiness is the seed of **GOD**, and the saints have obtained to be "the sons of the Most High." And think not these are empty titles, to amuse the world; no, they are equally just and important: pious men are really "partakers of the divine nature," and shall obtain an inheritance which is entailed on that relation. Never were the qualities of a parent more really derived unto their children, than the image and similitude of the divine excellencies are stamped upon the heaven-born souls; some beams of that eternal light are darted in upon them, and make them shine with an eminent splendour; and they are always aspiring to a nearer conformity with him, still breathing after a further communication of his **HOLY SPIRIT**, and daily finding the power thereof, correcting the ruder deformities of their natures, and super-inducing the beautiful delineations of **GOD**'s image upon them, that any who observe them may perceive their relation to **GOD**, by the excellency of their deportment in the world.

Having spoken of the righteous man's excellency, in regard of his birth and extraction, we proceed to consider his qualities and endowments, and shall begin with those of his understanding, his knowledge and wisdom.

The wise man tells us, that "A man of understanding is of an excellent spirit." And sure if any man in the world is to be accounted of for knowledge, it is the pious man: his knowledge is conversant about the noblest objects; he contemplates that infinite Being, whose perfection can never enough be admired, but still affords new matter to astonish and delight him, to ravish his affections, to raise his wonder. He studies the law of God, "which maketh him wiser than all his teachers." As one hath it; 'It is deservedly accounted an excellent piece of knowledge to understand the laws of the land, the customs of the country we live in; how much more to know the statutes of heaven, the eternal laws of righteousness, the will of the universal Monarch, and the customs of that country where we hope to live for ever?' And if he have a mind to the studies of nature and human science, he is best disposed for it, having his faculties cleared and his understanding heightened by divine contemplations.

But his knowledge doth not rest in speculations, but directeth his practice and determineth his choice. And he is the most prudent as well as the most knowing person. He knows how to secure his greatest interest, to provide for the longest life, to prefer solid treasures to gilded trifles, the soul to the body, eternity to a moment. He knoweth the temper of his own spirit; he can moderate his passions and over-rule his appetites; which certainly is a far more important piece of wisdom, than to understand the intrigues of a State, to fathom the counsels of princes, to know the pulse of a people, or balance the interests of kingdoms. Yea, piety doth heighten and advance even moral prudence itself: both obliging and directing a man to "order his affairs with discretion; it maketh the simple wise;" and what was said by holy DAVID, and twice repeated by his wise Son, will hold good in every man's

experience, that, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom." And thus much of the knowledge and wisdom wherein the righteous man excelleth his neighbour.

We proceed to another of his endowments, the greatness of his mind, and his contempt of the world. We can never take better measures of a man's spirit, than from the things he delighteth in, and sets his heart upon, *Qualis amor, talis animus*. To be taken up with trifles, and concerned in little things, is an evidence of a weak mind: and so are all irreligious persons; their thoughts are confined to low and mean things, designs of scraping together money, or spending it in luxury, or of satisfying a passion, or pleasing a lust, of obtaining the favour of great ones, or the applause of the vulgar. The greatest happiness they aim at, is, to be a master of the country where they live, to dwell in stately houses, and to be backed with a train of attendants, to lie softly, and fare deliciously, and such like attainments, which a wise man would think himself unhappy if he could not despise.

But the pious person hath his thoughts far above these painted vanities; his felicity is not patched up of so mean shreds: it is simple, and comprised in one chief good; his soul advanceth itself by rational passions towards the Author of its being, the Fountain of goodness and pleasure; "he hath none in heaven but him, and there is none upon earth whom he desires beside him."

The knowledge of nature hath been reputed a good means to enlarge the soul, and breed in it a contempt of earthly enjoyments: he that hath accustomed himself to consider the vastness of the universe, and the small proportion which the point we live in bears to the rest of the world, may perhaps come to think less of the possessions of some acres, or of that fame which can at most spread itself through a small corner of this earth.

Whatever be in this, sure I am, that the knowledge of God, and the frequent thoughts of heaven, are far more effectual to elevate and aggrandize the mind. When once

the soul is raised to a right apprehension of the divine perfections, and the foretastes of celestial bliss, how will this world, and all that is in it, vanish and disappear before his eyes? With what holy disdain will he look down upon things, which are the highest objects of other men's desires? All the splendour of courts, all the pageantry of greatness, will no more dazzle his eyes, than the faint lustre of a glow-worm will trouble the eagle after it hath been beholding the sun. He is little concerned who obtained this dignity, or that fortune; who sits highest at table, or goes first out of the door: his thoughts are taken up with greater matters, how he shall please his Maker, and obtain an interest in that land of promise, some of the fruits whereof he hath already tasted. And from thence ariseth that constant and equal frame of spirit, which the pious man's mind maintains in all the changes and vicissitudes of things, while he, who hath not his spirit balanced with religious principles, is lifted up and cast down like a ship on the sea with every variation of fortune, and partakes of all the motions of this inferior world, whereunto his affections are fastened. And certainly, he must be far more happy and generous both, who sitteth loose to the world, and can, with the greatest calmness, possess his own soul, while all things without are in hurry and confusion. Private disasters cannot discompose him, nor public calamities reach him; he looks upon the troubles and combustions of the world, as men do on the ruin and desolation of cities wherein themselves have little interest, with no other concernment than that of pity, to see men trouble themselves and others to so little purpose. *Si fractus illabatur orbis*: if the world should shake, and the foundations of the earth be removed, yet would he rest secure in a full acquiescence to the will of God, and confident dependance on his Providence. "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD."

And this will lead us to another endowment, wherein the excellency of the righteous man doth appear, and that is, the heroic magnanimity and courage wherewith he is

inspired, and which makes him confidently achieve the most difficult actions, and resolutely undergo the hardest sufferings that he is called to. For this see the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Through faith, some have subdued kingdoms," &c.; (*chap. xi. 33*;) this was their active courage: "Others again were tortured," &c.; (*ver. 35*;) this was their passive courage, which in Christians is most eminent and useful. True valour doth more appear by suffering, than by doing; and, doubtless, this is the hardest trial of the two. Were it not for suffering hardships, the greatest coward in the world would be man enough for the highest enterprises. It is not so much the difficulty of great actions as the danger that attends them, which makes men fear to undertake them; so that to suffer cheerfully, must be the greatest proof of courage. And sure we may appeal to the world to produce such eminent instances of fortitude and resolution, as christian martyrs have shown under those torments which cannot be mentioned without horror: how often hath their constancy amazed their bloody persecutors, and out-wearied the cruelties of their tormentors? Nor was this patience by force; they might have saved themselves that trouble by throwing a little incense into the fire, or speaking a few blasphemous words; but well had they learned "not to fear those who can only kill the body." Nor were they borne out by an obstinate humour and perverse stoical wilfulness: they were neither stupid and insensible, nor proud and self-conceited: but their sufferings were undertaken with calmness, and sustained with moderation.

Let heathen Rome boast of a **REGULUS**, a **DECIVS**, or some two or three more, stimulated by a desire of glory, who have devoted their life to the service of their country; but, alas! what is this to an infinite number, not only of men, but even of women and children, who have died for the profession of their faith, neither seeking nor expecting any praise from men? And tell me, who among the Heathens did willingly endure the loss of reputation? Nay, that was their idol, and they could not part with it:

and certainly it is a great meanness of spirit to be overawed with the fear of disgrace, and depend upon the thoughts of the people: true courage doth equally fortify the mind against all those evils, and will make a man hazard his honour, as well as other things, when occasion calls for it.

Now if the celebrated actions of the Heathens come short of true courage, what shall we say of the furious boldness of the Hectors of our age, who pretend to prowess and gallantry by far less reasonable methods? When blinded with passion, and animated with wine, they are ready on half a quarrel, to hazard their own and their neighbour's life and soul too in a duel: yea, they will not stand to brave heaven itself, and to provoke the Almighty by their horrid oaths and blasphemies: and one should think that these must needs be the most valiant people in the world; if they are not afraid of the ALMIGHTY, sure nothing else should fright them. And yet you shall find these very persons, when cast on a bed by sickness, or brought to the scaffold by justice, to betray a miserable faintness and pusillanimity; they are forced now to think on the terrors of death, and the more terrible consequences of it; and their counterfeit courage being destitute of those props which formerly sustained it, doth now discover its weakness. Nor is it any wonder; for what should make a man willingly leave this world, unless he expected a more happy condition in another? Certainly there is nothing can fortify the soul with a true and manly courage, but a confidence in God, and hopes of future blessedness. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous is bold as a lion;" and from that, is accounted "more excellent than his neighbour."

From courage and magnanimity, we pass to that which is the genuine consequent of it, the liberty and freedom of the righteous person.

Liberty is a privilege so highly rated by all men, that many run the greatest hazards for the very name of it; but there are few that enjoy it. I shall not speak of those

fetters of ceremony and chains of state, wherewith great men are tied, which makes their actions constrained, and their converse uneasy; this is more to be pitied than blamed. But irreligious persons are under a far more shameful bondage; they are slaves to their own lusts, and suffer the violence and tyranny of their irregular appetites: this is frequently talked of, but seldom considered or believed; and therefore, it will not be amiss to bring an instance or two for the illustration of it.

Observe a passionate man, and you shall find him frequently transported and overpowered by his anger, and carried to those extremities, of which a little time makes him ashamed; and he becomes as much displeased with himself, as formerly he was with his adversary: and yet on the next occasion, he will obey that same passion which he hath condemned.

What a drudge is a covetous man to his riches, which take up his thoughts all the day long, and break his sleep in the night.

How must the ambitious man fawn and flatter, and cross his very humour with hopes to satisfy it; stoop to the ground that he may aspire, courting and caressing those whom he hates; which, doubtless, is done with great violence and constraint.

The drunkard when he awakes, and hath slept out his cups, and finds his head aching, his stomach qualmish, and perhaps his purse empty; and reflects on the folly and unhandsome expressions or actions he may have fallen into in his drink; how will he condemn himself for that excess! What promises and resolutions of future sobriety! And yet on the next occasion, the poor slave shall be dragged away by those whom he must call his friends; and thank them who put that abuse upon him, which a wise and sober man will rather die than suffer.

Further, the luxurious would fain preserve or recover his health: and to this end, finds it requisite to keep a temperate diet; no, but he must not, he is present at a feast, and his superior appetite calls for a large measure

of delicious fare, and his palate must be pleased, though the whole body suffer for it ; or he hath met with a lewd woman, and though his whole bones should rot, “and a dart strike through his liver,” yet must he obey the command of his lusts : “he goeth after her straightway, as the ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks.”

Now there can be no greater evidence of slavery and bondage, than thus to do what themselves know to be prejudicial. It were easy to illustrate this bondage of the soul, in all the other instances of vice and impiety ; and certainly what ST. PETER saith of some false teachers, may be well applied to all wicked persons : “While they promise freedom, they themselves are the servants of corruption ; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage.”

But the religious person hath broken these fetters, cast off the yoke of SATAN, and become the freeman of the LORD. It is religion that restores freedom to the soul, which philosophy did pretend to ; it is that which doth sway and moderate all those blind passions and impetuous affections which hinder a man from the possession and enjoyment of himself, and makes him master of his own thoughts, motions, and desires, that he may do with freedom what he judgeth most honest and convenient. And thus “the righteous excelleth his neighbour,” as much as a freeman doth the basest slave.

Another particular wherein the nobleness and excellency of religion does appear, is in a charitable and benign temper.

There is no greater evidence of a base and narrow soul, than for a man to have all his thoughts taken up about private and selfish interest ; and so, if they be well, not to care what becometh of the rest of the world. On the other hand, an extensive charity and kindness, as it is the one half of our religion, so it is an eminent point of generosity.

Now, “the righteous is gracious, and full of compassion,

he showeth favour and lendeth ;” and makes it his work to serve mankind as much as he is able. His bounty is not confined to his kindred and relations, to those of his own party and mode of religion ; this were but a disguised kind of self-love ; it is enough to him that they are Christians ; or if not, yet are they men, and therefore deserve our pity, but not our hatred or neglect, because of their errors. It is true, he carries a special kindness for those in whom he discovers a principle of virtue ; in those “ excellent ones ” is all his delight ; but then he doth not take his measure so much from their judgment and opinions, as from the integrity of their life.

His charity doth not express itself in one particular instance, as that of giving alms, but is vented as many ways as the variety of occasions calls for, and his power can reach to. He assisteth the poor with his money, the ignorant with his counsel, the afflicted with comfort, the sick with the best of his skill ; and all with his blessings and prayers. If he cannot build hospitals, yet he will study to persuade those who can ; if he hath no money to redeem captives, yet he will employ his interest in the court of heaven for their deliverance ; though he cannot recover a dying child to the afflicted parents, yet will he endeavour to persuade them to submission and resignation, which will render them more happy ; and will go hard but he will find some way either to benefit or oblige every man with whom he converseth. Let no man upbraid us with the contrary practices of many high pretenders to religion, who are selfish and churlish persons. We are not to defend the actions of all who would be thought godly ; nor must you take your measures of piety from what you observe in them ; but look through the Gospel, and you shall find charity and bounty so passionately recommended, and so indispensably required, that you may easily conclude there are no Christians in earnest, but those who practise it. Yea, so peculiar is this benign temper to holy and religious persons, that nothing but a faint resemblance and false imitation are to be found else-

where in the world; other men's seeming bounty is always marred by the base principle it proceeds from, and the selfish end it tends to. The Apostle hath told us, "that a man may give all his goods to feed the poor, and yet want charity," and all these expenses shall "profit him nothing." Importunity may perhaps wring something out of his pocket, or desire to be delivered from the trouble of a miserable spectacle; but vanity and desire of applause have usually the greatest interest in his distributions. This made the hypocrites of old proclaim their alms with trumpets; and this makes their successors in our times delight to have their good works of this kind recorded to the greatest advantage, that posterity may read them on walls and public registers.

To the same principle must we refer what in the world passeth for a very considerable instance of generosity, the keeping a great house, and well-furnished table, which nevertheless is more ordinarily the effect of pride and vain glory, than of humility or hospitality. It is a part of their splendour and state, and they deck their tables for the same end that they put on fine clothes,—to be talked of and admired in the world. You may guess it by the persons whom they entertain; who are usually such as need least of their charity, and for whom they have many times as little kindness as an innkeeper for his guests; nor are they less mercenary than he: the one sells his meat for money, the other for praise. Far more generous is the practice of the pious man, who, as he chooseth most to benefit those who can make him no recompence, so he doth not trouble the world with the noise of his charity; yea, "his left hand knoweth not what his right hand bestoweth;" and that which doth most endear his bounty, is the love and affection whence it proceeds.

We shall name but one instance more wherein "the righteous man excelleth his neighbour;" and that is, his venerable temperance and purity. He hath risen above the vaporous sphere of sensual pleasure, which darkeneth and debaseth the mind, which sullies its lustre, and abates its

native vigour; while profane persons, wallowing in impure lusts, sink themselves below the condition of men. Can there be any spark of generosity, any degree of excellency in him who makes his belly his god, or places his felicity in the embraces of a strumpet? We spoke before of the slavery, we speak now of the deformity, of those sins; and shall add, that one of the most shameful and miserable spectacles in the world, is to see a man, born to the use of reason, and perhaps to an eminent fortune, drink away his religion, his reason, his sense; and so expose himself to the pity of wise men, the contempt of his own servants, the derision of his children and fools, to every danger, and to every snare; and that this must pass in the eyes of many for a piece of gallantry, and necessary accomplishment of a gentleman.

Good God! how are the minds of men poisoned with perverse notions! What unreasonable measures do they take of things! We may expect next they shall commend theft, and make harangues to the praise of parricide; for they are daily advancing in the boldness of their impieties, and with confidence avowing them. Other ages have practised wickedness, but to ours is reserved the impudence to glory in it. But would men open their eyes, and give way to the sentiments of their own minds, they would soon alter their maxims, and discover the miserable deformity of vice, and the amiable beauty and majesty of religion; that it doth at once adorn and advance the human nature, and hath in it every thing generous and noble, cheerful and spiritual, free and ingenuous; in a word, that "the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour."

Before we proceed, it will be necessary to take off some objections that arise against the nobleness and excellency of religion.

And the first is, That it enjoineth lowliness and humility, which men ordinarily look upon as an abject and base disposition. 'What!' will they say, 'can ever that man aspire to any thing that is excellent, whose principles

oblige him to lie low and grovel on the ground; who thinks nothing of himself, and is content that all the world think nothing of him? Is this a disposition fit for any but those whom cross fortune obliges to suffer miseries and affronts?’

Such are men’s thoughts of humility, which God loves so much, that we may say He sent his own Son from heaven to teach and recommend it. But if we ponder the matter, we find that arrogance and pride are the issues of base and silly minds; a giddiness incident to those who are raised suddenly to unaccustomed height; nor is there any vice that doth more palpably defeat its own design, depriving a man of that honour and reputation which it makes him aim at.

On the other hand, we shall find humility no silly and sneaking quality, but the greatest sublimity of mind, and the only way to true honour: “Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.” Lowliness is the endowment of high-born and well-educated souls, who are acquainted with the knowledge of excellent things, and therefore do not dote upon trifles, or admire little things merely because they are their own. They have no such high opinion of riches, beauty, strength, or other the like advantages, as to value themselves for them, or to despise those who want them; but they study to surmount themselves, and all the little attainments they have hitherto reached, and are still aspiring to higher and more noble things. And it is worth our notice, that the most deep and pure humility doth not so much arise from the consideration of our faults and defects, (though that also may have its own place,) as from a calm contemplation of the divine perfections. By reflecting on ourselves, we may discover something of our own sinfulness and misery, and thereby be filled with a kind of boisterous and turbulent grief and indignation; but by fixing our eyes on the infinite greatness and holiness of God, we are most fully convinced of our own meanness; this will sink us to the very bottom of our being, and make us appear

as nothing in our own sight, when beheld from so great a height. And this is really the greatest elevation of the soul, and there is nothing in the world so noble and excellent as the sublimity of humble minds.

Another objection against the excellency of a religious temper, is, That the love of enemies and pardon of injuries which it includeth, are utterly inconsistent with the principles of honour.

Now, though it be highly unreasonable to examine the laws of our SAVIOUR by such rules as this, yet we shall consider the matter a little. Nor shall we seek to elude or qualify this precept, as some men do, by such glosses and evasions, as may suit with their own practices; nay, we shall freely profess that there is no salvation without the observation. A man had even as well abandon Christianity, and renounce his baptism, as obstinately refuse to obey it. But if we have any value for the judgment of the wisest man and a great King, he will tell us, that "it is the honour of a man to cease from strife," and "he that is slow to wrath is of great understanding." The meek and holy person liveth above the reach of petty injuries, and blunts the edge of the greatest by his patience and constancy, and hath compassion towards those who offend him; being more sorry for the prejudice they do themselves, than for that which they intended him. And let all the world judge, whether it be more generous to pity and love even those who hate us, and to pardon the greatest offences, than to quarrel on every petty occasion, and make men fear our passion, hate our humour, and abandon our society. So that what is here brought as an objection against religion, might with reason have been brought as an instance of its nobleness.

Having thus illustrated and confirmed what is asserted in the text, that "the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour," let us improve it in a check to that profane and atheistical spirit of drollery and scoffing at religion, which hath got abroad in the world. Alas! do men consider what it is which they make the butt of their scoffs

and reproaches? Have they nothing else to exercise their wit and vent their jests upon, but that which is the most noble and excellent thing in the world? What design can they propose to themselves by this kind of impiety? Would they have religion banished from the face of the earth, and forced to retire for shame? What a goodly world should we then have of it! What a fine harmony and order of things! Certainly the earth would then become a kind of hell with tumults and seditions, rapines and murders, secret malice and open frauds, by every vice and every calamity.

It is only some little remainders of piety and virtue in the world that keep it in any tolerable condition, or make it possible to be inhabited. And must not these be wretched persons, and enemies to mankind, who do what they can to reduce the world to such a miserable condition? But let them do what they will, they but “kick against the pricks.” Religion hath so much native lustre and beauty, that notwithstanding all the dirt they study to cast upon it, all the melancholy and deformed shapes they dress it in, it will attract the eyes and admiration of all sober and ingenuous persons; and while these men study to make it ridiculous, they shall but make themselves so. And O that they would consider how dear they are to pay for those dull and insipid jests, wherewith they persecute religion, and those who practise or recommend it! What thoughts they are likely to have of them, when sickness shall arrest, or death threaten them; when the Physicians have forsaken them, and the poor despised Minister is called in; and they expect comfort from him they were wont to mock; and perhaps it is little he can afford them. “O that they were wise, and understood this; that they would consider their latter end!”

There are others who have not yet arrived to this height of profaneness, to laugh at all religion, but vent their malice at those who are more conscientious and severe than themselves, under presumption they are hypocrites and dissemblers. But, besides that in this they may be

guilty of a great deal of uncharitableness, it is to be suspected that they bear some secret dislike to piety itself, and hate hypocrisy more for its resemblance of that, than for its own viciousness; otherwise, whence comes it that they do not express the same animosity against other vices?

Hither also may we refer those expressions which sometimes drop from persons not utterly debauched, but which yet are blasphemous and profane: That this man is too holy, and that man too religious; as if it were possible to exceed in these things. What! can a man approach too near to God? Can he be too like his Maker? Is it possible to be over-perfect, or over-happy? I confess a man may over-act some part of his religion, and be too much in some particular exercises of it, neglecting other as necessary duties. But this is not an excess of piety, but a defect of discretion; and reason would teach us rather to pardon men's infirmities for their pious inclinations, than to blame piety for their infirmities.

Let me therefore entreat you all, especially those whose birth and fortune render them more conspicuous in the world, to countenance holiness, which you see is so excellent; and beware that you do not contribute to that deluge of wickedness that overfloweth the earth, by scoffing at the most serious things in the world. And if I obtain this, I shall make bold to beg one thing more; but it is in your own favours: That you would abandon every kind of impiety in your practice, since in it every vile ruffian may vie and contend with you. In other cases you forsake modes and customs when they become common: wickedness is now the most vulgar thing in the world. Shift, I beseech you, the fashion, and embrace piety and virtue, wherein none but excellent persons shall rival you. Learn to adore your Maker, and think it not below you to stand in awe of Him who can rend the heavens, and make the foundations of the earth shake; who needs but to withdraw his mercies to make you

miserable, or his assistance to reduce you to nothing. Study to ennoble your souls with knowledge and true wisdom; with an eminent greatness of mind and contempt of the world, a great liberty and freedom of spirit, an undaunted magnanimity and courage, an extensive charity and goodness, a venerable temperance and purity, an amiable meekness and humility; so shall you render yourselves honourable, “and more excellent than your neighbour” in this world, and be “partakers of immortal honour and glory” in the world to come. Amen.

## SERMON II.

---

---

THE INDISPENSABLE DUTY OF LOVING OUR ENEMIES.

---

---

LUKE vi. 27.

*But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies.*

WHILE we travel through the wilderness of this world, much of the comfort of our pilgrimage depends on the good correspondence and mutual services and endearments of our fellow-travellers: therefore our blessed SAVIOUR, whose precepts are all intended for perfection and felicity, fitted to procure to us both the good things of this world, and that which is to come, has taken especial care to unite the minds of men in the strictest bonds of friendship and love: he hath been at great pains by his precepts, and by his example, by earnest persuasions and powerful motives, to smooth our rugged humours, and calm our passions, and take off the roughness from our natures, which hinders us from joining together. Now were we to converse with none but such as are Christians in earnest, we should find it no hard matter to live in concord and love; we should meet with no occasion of quarrel and contention, and should only be obliged to love our friends, because all men would be such. But well did our SAVIOUR know, that his part was to be but small in the world, that many would oppose the profession, and many more would neglect the practice of that religion which he taught; and that his followers, besides common injuries incident to others, were to meet with much enmity and hatred for their Master's sake: and therefore, that amidst all these storms, they might maintain that constant serene tranquillity, that amiable sweetness and benignity of spirit,

without which they could neither be like him, nor happy in themselves; he was pleased to enjoin such an ardent affection towards all men, as no neglect can cool, no injury can extinguish. To love those who have obliged us, is that which nature might teach, and wicked men practise; to favour those who have never wronged us, is but a piece of common humanity: but our religion requires us to extend our kindness even to those who have injured and abused us, and who continue to do and wish us mischief, and that we never design any other revenge against our most bitter and inveterate enemies, than to wish them well, and do them all the good we can, whether they will or not; for unto "those that hear him," our SAVIOUR saith, "Love your enemies."

But, alas! how little is this minded by the greater part of those who call themselves Christians: other precepts are broken and slighted, but this industriously baffled and discredited by us. In other cases we acknowledge our fault, but study to excuse it by the frailty of our nature, or violence of a temptation: (We are all sinners, it is a fault indeed, but who can help it?) Now though these excusès, GOD knows, are very frivolous, and will be of no force in the great day of accounts, yet they imply something of modesty, and men may repent and forsake what they already condemn; but in the instance of loving enemies, many are so bold, that instead of obeying, they quarrel with the law as impossible or unjust, passing sentence upon that by which themselves must be judged. How unreasonable is it (say they) that we should "love those that hate us?" Can cold snow produce heat, or enmity beget affection? Must we be insensible of the injuries we meet with? Or reward him that offers them? Must we dissolve the principles of our nature, and cease to be men, that we may become Christians?

These, and such like, are either the expressions or thoughts of too many among us, and either CHRIST must come down in his offers, and remit somewhat of the rigour of his laws, or else all the promises of the Gospel, all the

pleasures of the other world shall not engage him to his obedience. They will rather choose to burn in eternal flames of discord, than live at peace with those that have wronged them.

It can, therefore, never be unseasonable to press a duty so very necessary, yet so much neglected : the text I have chosen for this purpose is very plain and clear : “ Love your enemies : ” But because many strain the precept to some such sense as may suit with their own practice, we shall first search into the importance of it, and then persuade you to perform it. The full meaning of the precept will appear, if we consider,—

1. Who they are whom we are commanded to love. And,
2. Wherein the love we owe them does consist.

The persons whom we are commanded to love are called our “ enemies ; ” and lest we should mistake them, they are clearly described in the following words : the fountain of their enmity is within ; they are those “ who hate us,” who envy our happiness, who wish our misery, and abhor our persons and society. But were this fire kept within their breast, though it might scorch themselves, it could not prejudice us ; but “ out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh : ” their malice sharpens their tongues. They are farther described, as those that “ curse us ; ” they vent their wrath in oaths and imprecations, secret calumnies and open reproaches : nor are their hands always bound up, they “ use us despitefully,” and procure us mischief.

Now, if our love be extended to all these, we shall hardly find any whom we dare exclude. Of our private enemies there can be no question, but what shall be said of the enemies of our country, and of our religion ?

First, for the enemies of our country, I see no warrant to exclude them from our charity : we may indeed lawfully oppose their violent invasion, and defend our rights with the sword, under the banner of the public magistrate ; but all this may be done with as little malice and hatred, as a Judge may punish a malefactor : the General may be as

void of passion as a Lord Chief Justice, and the soldier as the executioner. But charity will oblige a Prince never to have recourse to the sword, till all other remedies fail; to blunt the edge of war by sparing as much as may be the shedding of innocent blood, with all other barbarities that use to accompany it, and to accept of any reasonable capitulation.

We come, next, to the enemies of our religion: and indeed there are many who are so far from thinking them to be among the number of those whom they are obliged to love, that they look upon it as a part of their duty to hate them: their zeal is continually venting itself in fierce invectives against Antichrist, and every thing they are pleased to call Antichristian: and they are ready to apply all the prophecies and imprecations of the Old Testament in their very prayers against those that differ from them; and ordinarily the animosities are greatest where the differences are least; and one party of a reformed Church shall be more incensed against another, than either against the superstition and tyranny of Rome, or the carnality of the Mahometan faith: yea, perhaps, you may find some who agree in, and only differ in several ways of expressing, the same thing, and yet can scarce look on one another without displeasure and aversion. But, alas! how much do these men disparage that religion for which they appear so zealous! How much do they mistake the spirit of Christianity! Are the persons whom they hate, greater enemies to religion, than those who persecuted the Apostles and martyrs for professing it? And yet these were the persons whom our SAVIOUR commanded his disciples to love, and himself did pray for those that crucified him: and severely checked the disciples, when, by a precedent brought from the Old Testament, they would have called for fire from heaven on those that would not receive them, telling them, "they knew not what spirit they were of;" *i. e.*, they did not consider by what spirit they were prompted to such cruel inclinations; or, as others explain it, they did not yet understand the temper and genius of Christianity;

which is "pure and peaceable, gentle and meek, full of sweetness, and full of love." If men would impartially examine their hatred and animosities against the enemies of their religion, I fear they would find them proceed from a principle which themselves would not willingly own: Pride and self-conceit will make a man disdain those of a different persuasion, and think it a disparagement to his judgment, that any should differ from it. Mere nature and self-love will make a man hate those who oppose the interest of that party which himself has espoused. Hence men are many times more displeas'd at some small mistakes in judgment, than the greatest immoralities in practice; yea, perhaps they will find a secret pleasure in hearing or reporting the faults or scandals of their adversaries. Certainly the power of religion rightly prevailing in the soul, would mould us into another temper: it would teach us to love, and pity, and pray for the person, as well as hate and condemn the errors they are supposed to espouse: it would make us wish their conversion, rather than their confusion, and be more desirous that God would fit them for another world, than that he would take them out of this. We may indeed wish the disappointment of their wicked purposes; for this is charity to them, to keep them from being the unhappy instruments of mischief in the world; but he that can wish plagues and ruin to their persons, and delights in their sins, or in their misery, hath more of the devil than the Christian.

Thus you have seen who those enemies are to whom our charity must be extended. It follows to be considered what is the nature of the love we owe them. I shall not now spend your time in any nice or curious speculations about the nature of this master-passion. It is the prime affection of the soul, which gives measures to all the rest; every man's hatred, grief, and joy, depending upon and flowing from his love. I shall now only observe, that there is a sensible kind of love, a certain tenderness and melting affection implanted in us by nature towards our nearest relations, on purpose to engage us to those peculiar services

we owe them; and there is an intimacy and delightful union betwixt friends, arising from especial sympathy of humours: these are not always at our command, nor are we obliged to love either strangers or enemies at this rate. It is not to be expected, that at first sight of a person, who hath nothing singularly taking, we should find such a special kindness and tenderness for him in our hearts; much less can fondness and passionate affection proceed from the sense of any harm received from him. The command in the text does not amount to this; (though there be a great advantage in a tender and affectionate disposition, both to secure and facilitate our duty;) but we are certainly obliged to such a sincere and cordial good-will to all men, as will incline us to perform all the good offices we can even to those who have offended us. But the nature and measures of this love will more fully appear, if we consider what it does exclude, and what it does imply.

First, then, it excludes all harsh thoughts and groundless suspicions. The Apostle telleth us, "that charity thinketh no evil; that it hopeth all things, believeth all things." To entertain with pleasure every bad report of those who have offended us, and to put the worst construction on their doubtful actions, is both a clear evidence of our hatred, and an unhappy method to continue it. Were once the love we recommend seated in the soul, it would soon cast out those restless jealousies, sour suspicions, harsh surmises, and imbittered thoughts; and display itself in a more candid and gentle disposition, in fair glosses, and friendly censures, in a favourable extenuation of greater faults, and covering of lesser: it would make a man interpret all things in the best meaning they are capable of, and choose rather to be mistaken to his prejudice by a too favourable opinion, than to his neighbour's by a groundless jealousy; and even in this sense it may be, that "charity covereth a multitude of sins."

Again: The love which we owe to enemies excludes all immoderate anger: it "suffereth long, and is not easily provoked; endureth all things." Our SAVIOUR tells us, that

“whoso is angry with his brother, without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment;” and if his anger exceed the cause, he is equally guilty. All anger is not vicious: we may be angry, and yet not sin. This passion, as all others implanted in us by God, is innocent when kept within its due bounds: it has its proper office in the mind, as the spleen in the body; but its excess swells into a disease. To make it allowable, it must not exceed the value of the cause, nor the proportion of the circumstances: it must be toward the sin, not toward the sinner; and further, it must not be lasting; we must not let the sun set upon our anger. The same passion which was innocent in its first rise, may become vicious and criminal by its continuance. “Anger” may kindle in the breast of a wise man, but “rests” only “in the bosom of a fool;” and this will lead us to a third thing, which the precept in our text condemns.

The love of enemies here commanded excludes all malice and rancour proceeding from the memory and resentment of injuries. Certainly there is nothing more contrary to charity, than a peevish ruminating and poring on the offences we have met with; and their memories are very ill employed, who seldom remember a courtesy, or forget a wrong. It is ordinary for some, who dare not profess intentions of revenge, to express their resentment in some such threatening as this: That they will forgive an injury, but never forget it. I hope they do not mean they will pass it at this time, and revenge it afterward: this would but make the sin the greater by being more deliberate. Is it then, that they intend them no harm, but will cease to do them good? This is a lame and imperfect charity, expressly contradictory to the precept in the text, enjoining us “to bless them that curse us, to do good to them that hate us, and to pray for them that despitefully use us.” Nor must we expect the blessing of God, if this be all we allow to others: “for with what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again.” There is but one way we may lawfully remember an injury; and that is, so as to be more cautious in trusting one who hath

deceived us, or exposing ourselves to the power of him who has wronged us: in this case religion does allow and direct us to join the serpent's wisdom with the dove's innocency. But then, I am sure, it is neither necessary nor fit, to threaten those who have wronged us, with our resolutions to remember the injury: we may be as cautious as we please without it; and those threats do nothing but rankle and displease our adversary, which ought to be no part of a Christian's design. A meek and charitable person will be loath to have his memory infested, and his thoughts soured with resentment of wrongs; and if they occur to his mind, he will make no other use of them, than to put himself on his guard; unless from thence he take occasion to benefit and oblige the person who has offended him, and, as our text expressly directs, to "do him good, to bless and pray for him."

Again: This precept excludes the taking or procuring any revenge. By revenge, we mean such an evil done to our adversary, as brings no real reparation to ourselves: for certainly it is not unlawful to seek the reparation of our own right by an authorized judge; nor yet to provide for the public security by the punishment of offenders, unless some special circumstance makes it so. This may many times be done without prejudice or hatred, yea, with great kindness and compassion towards the offender. But if we have any love to our adversaries, we shall be really afflicted with the evil that befalls them, and therefore will never willingly procure ourselves that trouble by inflicting it on them. It is an evidence of a wicked and malicious humour, to please ourselves in the misery of another. Whatever latitude the Jews either had or pretended to, it is not lawful for us to desire "eye for eye, or tooth for tooth;" unless we could say, that his eye would serve our head, or his hand fit our arm.

From hence we may judge what is to be thought of those, who are ready to revenge the smallest injury, even an uncivil expression, with the death of the offender; never being satisfied till they have ventured two lives, and

as many souls in the combat : a thing which should not be named amongst Christians, but with the same detestation we have against the vilest actions ; for whatever colours it may be painted with, it is really nothing else than a more specious kind of murder. Nor does it differ from the basest assassination, save only in this, with the wickedness of attempting another's life, it joins the rashness and folly of exposing our own.

*Lastly*, The love which we owe our enemies, excludes all scornful contempt and neglect of them ; which I mark the rather, because some think they have sufficiently obeyed the precept, if they overlooked an injury, as thinking the person below their revenge. Meanwhile, their corrupt nature relishes as much pleasure in the scorn and disdain of their enemies, as it could in the revenge of the injury ; their wicked humours are not starved, but only change their diet. Of this nature was the answer of the Philosopher, to some who provoked him to revenge, ‘ if an ass kick me, shall I kick him again ? ’ This is but a lame and mis-shapen charity ; it hath more of pride than goodness : we should learn of the holy JESUS, who was not only “ meek but lowly : ” we should condemn the injury, and pity the weakness, but should not disdain or despise the persons of our enemies. “ Charity vaunteth not herself, is not puffed up, doth not behave herself unseemly.”

Having thus discovered those things which are inconsistent with charity, and excluded by the love of enemies, it remains that we show what it does import and require.

*First*, then, it imports an inward kindness and affection, which if it does not amount to that tenderness which we have for our near relations and intimate friends, yet it implies a good-will towards them, and friendly concernment in their interest ; if we love an enemy, we shall wish his welfare, and rejoice in it, and be unfeignedly sorry for any disaster that befalls him, so far shall we be from rejoicing in his misfortunes. And certainly had we a right sense of things, we should be more troubled for the harm

which our enemy does to his own soul by wronging us, than for the prejudice we sustain by him. Our compassion towards him would diminish, if not altogether swallow up, the resentment of what we suffer from him.

But our kindness and good-will towards our enemies, must not rest in empty wishes, but express itself in kind words and friendly actions. When we speak to our enemy, it must be in such smooth, discreet, and obliging terms, as are most like to mollify and gain him; that by soft answers we may turn away his wrath; and shun all grievous words which stir up anger. When we speak of him, it should be as advantageously as we can with truth, concealing or qualifying his faults, and praising whatever is good in him; and sure he must be singularly bad, in whom we can find nothing to commend.

Again, we must perform for them all those good offices, which their necessities call for, and our power can reach. "Do good to them that hate you; if our enemy hunger, we must feed him; if he thirst, we must give him drink; so shall we heap coals of fire upon his head," to mollify his obdurate temper, and overcome his evil by our good: but not to aggravate his guilt and punishment, as some mistake the words: for though that be many times the issue, yet ought it not to be any part of our design.

*Lastly,* Because all that we can do for the good of enemies, signifies little; we must employ our interest in the court of heaven in their behalf, begging of God that he would turn their hearts to himself, and to us, and bless them with the pardon of their sins, particularly the wrongs they have done to ourselves, and with all things necessary for their present welfare, or future happiness. "Pray for them that despitefully use you; and this is the surest evidence of our charity to them: mild words may be designed as a snare to entrap them, and courtesy may be done them to serve our vanity, or a generous kind of pride, which may make us delight to have our enemy indebted to us, as knowing that it is more glorious in the eyes of the world to raise a fallen adversary, than to trample on him.

But it must be only obedience to God's commands, and sincere love to our enemy, that can make us take him into our closet, and into our heart, to share our prayers with him, and make him partake of the fruits of our devotion, and to have that same concern for his interests, as for our own; at once recommending them both to our heavenly FATHER.

By this time I hope you understand the importance of this precept: it remains that we exhort you to the performance. And I shall begin with an argument, which may be of force to give the first assault to our rebellious inclinations, and make way for further persuasions; and it shall be the indispensable necessity of this duty. We must not look upon this as a matter which we may do, or omit, at pleasure; nor yet as a counsel highly commendable, but not absolutely necessary to salvation: it is as indispensably required as any other duty of our religion, and he who resolves not to obey in this instance, may renounce his baptism, and abandon Christianity. None can escape the obligation of the precept, unless he be so rarely happy as to have no enemies; nor must any think to redeem themselves from this by some other performance. Let our opinions be never so orthodox, and our zeal in maintaining them never so fervent; let our prayers be never so frequent, and all our discourses ravishing; let our other attainments be never so great, and our confidence of our salvation never so strong; yet if we refuse to obey this precept, we are none of CHRIST'S disciples; or in the words of the Apostle we may say, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, yea, though I give my body to be burned, and have not this charity" and love, even to mine enemies, "it profiteth me nothing." And our SAVIOUR himself tells us in express terms, that "unless we forgive others their trespasses, neither will God forgive us ours." Yea, he hath taught

us to pray for pardon in such terms, as imports a dreadful curse upon ourselves, if we are malicious and revengeful, while we beg that **GOD** would pardon us, in the same manner that we pardon those who sin against us; subscribing as it were with our own hands, and confirming out of our own mouths, that sentence which shall be pronounced against us; for even so will **GOD** forgive us, *i. e.*, he will take vengeance on us, if we have dealt so with others. And as those who do not love their enemies, do beg their own condemnation in prayer; so also "they eat and drink" it in the holy sacrament; and men are commonly so far convinced of this, that many choose to keep back from the table of the **LORD**, that they may more freely entertain their animosities: but, alas! what a folly and madness is this! Think they to excuse a sin by the neglect of a duty? Or can they put off death as they do the participation of the sacrament? Or can they hope to be admitted into the eternal enjoyment of **GOD**, if they should die in that malice, which renders them unfit to approach him in that holy ordinance? Do not deceive yourselves; never shall any enter into those blessed mansions, those regions of peace and love, whose heart is not first inspired with charity, and softened into a compliance with this very precept: and it were as absurd to think, that a man may be malicious and revengeful all his days, and yet go to heaven, there to learn meekness and charity, as to think that a man may be luxurious and dishonest in this world, and become temperate and honest in the other. In a word, whatever shifts we may make to deceive ourselves, the command is clear and express, the sanction severe and peremptory; we have but our choice of these two, **Love** of enemies, or damnation.

Nor can this seem unreasonable to any who considers that **GOD** is the Author of our natures, the Creator of all our faculties, and therefore may justly rule our inclinations, and dispose of our love and affection; and yet he is content (if I may so speak) to bargain with us, and to buy

off our resentments, offering us his own mercy and favour, freedom from hell, and everlasting happiness, on this condition, amongst others, that we “love our enemies.”

Nay farther, the duty is in itself so reasonable, that the more sober of the Heathens have acknowledged it as highly becoming, and an eminent instance of a virtuous and generous mind. PLATO could say, that ‘Injury is by no means to be done, nor to be repaid to him that has done it.’ And when a malicious person said to ZENO, ‘Let me perish if I don’t do you a mischief:’ his answer was, ‘Let me perish if I don’t reconcile thee to me.’ ANTONINUS tells us frequently, ‘That all reasonable creatures are born for one another, and that it is the part of justice to bear with others: That it is through ignorance they offend us, as not knowing the right way to their own happiness, and therefore we should rather instruct them better, than hate them: That the best kind of revenge, is not to become like them in wickedness and malice:’ and many other excellent arguments does that royal Philosopher bring to the same purpose. And PLUTARCH gives this as one of the reasons why GOD is so slow in punishing wicked persons, that we may ‘learn meekness and patience by his example;’ adding that excellent observation, that ‘Our greatest happiness and perfection consist in the imitation of our Maker.’

But to leave the testimonies of Heathens, the obligation of this precept may be deduced from another, which every man will acknowledge to be highly reasonable; the “doing to others what we would have done to ourselves.” Every one of us desires to be loved and cherished by others, to have our faults pardoned, our failings overlooked, and our necessities supplied: or if any be so haughty and stubborn, that they disdain a courtesy from an enemy; yet I hope there is none so mad, but he desires the favour of GOD, whose hatred he deserves infinitely more than his most bitter enemy can deserve his; how then can we think it unreasonable to allow that to others, which ourselves expect and desire? Can we look that

our master should "forgive us ten thousand talents," if we take "our fellow-servant by the throat, and hale him to prison for one hundred pence?" Or with what confidence can we say, "Pardon our sins," unless we be willing to add, that "we pardon those who sin against us." Certainly if it is reasonable to seek pardon, it is just and equitable to give it; and nothing but blind selfishness and extravagant partiality, can teach us to make so unreasonable a difference betwixt ourselves and others.

Again: The reasonableness of this duty will further appear, if we compare it with that malice and revenge which it opposes. Can there be any thing more against reason, than to delight in an evil which can bring no benefit to us? Yet this is the very nature of revenge; for if the damage we sustain can be repaired, it is no revenge to seek it: and if it cannot, it does not alleviate the evil, that we draw him that caused it into as great a misery: nay, unless we are unnatural, and without bowels, it will augment our trouble to see any evil befall him. And he is a miserable person indeed, whose delight is in mischief, whose good is the evil of his neighbour; yea, I may say, that he who returns an injury, is many times more unreasonable, than he who offered it: for he who first wrongs another, hath commonly some temptation of advantage by it, which revenge cannot pretend to; but if he has done it out of mere malice, yet he is not worse than the other who returns it; there being as much fantastic pleasure in spite, as in revenge; both are alike miserable and extravagant.

And who are they against whom we bend our malice and revenge? Are they not men, partakers of the same nature, descended from the same stock with ourselves, fellow-citizens with us in this world, and with whom we should hope to live for ever in a better? And should we not bear with those who are so nearly related to us? Nay, more, they are the workmanship of God's hands, and for any thing we know, either are, or may become his children and friends: and dare we pretend any love to God, if we

do not spare them for his sake? And, lastly, if they have done us any real wrong, they are so far foolish and destitute of reason, and who would quarrel with a madman? Certainly an injurious person knows not what he is doing, for he can never wound his neighbour but through his own sides, nor prejudice another in a trifling interest, without hazarding his own eternal concern, and therefore he deserves our pity rather than our hatred.

Much more might be brought to demonstrate the reasonableness of what our SAVIOUR calls for in the text, but I hope what has been already said may suffice to stop the mouths of malicious and revengeful men, who are ready to quarrel with it: and if this, or any other duty seem absurd or unreasonable to us, we may learn the cause from the Apostle: "The carnal man receiveth not the things of the SPIRIT of GOD, for they are foolishness unto him." It is the carnality of our heart that makes it seem so, and therefore, instead of disputing the duty, let us endeavour to purify our souls, and open the eyes of our mind, and we shall find it to be true, which wisdom saith of her doctrines, "They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge."

But in the third place, the love of enemies is not only necessary and reasonable, but also amiable and delightful: it hath a great deal of pleasure and sweetness in it. Of this, I confess, the greatest evidence must be had from the experience and practice of it; the nature even of earthly pleasures being such, that only the enjoyment can make a man know them: but though the full knowledge hereof require a nearer acquaintance, yet even those who look at a distance, may perceive something of amiableness in it, especially comparing it with the uneasiness of that vice it would deliver us from. Malice and revenge are the most tormenting passions that can possess the mind; they gnaw a man's heart with anguish and vexation, and embitter all his enjoyments; they mar the pleasures of the day, and interrupt the repose of the night. SOLOMON describes these men: "They sleep not except they have done

mischief, and their sleep is taken away except they cause some to fall.”

On the other hand, the meek and peaceable man, whose mind is brought to a compliance with this precept, is above the malice of his enemies : it is not in their power to vex him, amidst all the assaults of injuries and affronts : he is firm as a rock, which no winds can shake, no waves remove. He is happy in the calmness and serenity of his spirit, and is sure either to convert or shame his adversary by his patience and friendly behaviour. And then the consciousness of performing his duty, and assurance of future reward, afford him infinitely more pure and solid pleasure, than any expect by indulging their revengeful humour.

The advantages of this duty will more clearly appear, when we take a view of those prejudices, which commonly are entertained against it ; which shall be our next work.

First then, some cry out upon this precept as enjoining impossibilities, doing violence to the very constitution of nature, and obliging men to a debt that no man is able to pay. They will tell you, that it is as easy to hate ourselves, as to love our enemies ; to love pain, as to bear an injury meekly. Flesh and blood cannot endure it. What arrogance and presumption is this, thus to impeach the divine laws ? It is impossible ; therefore, God should not have commanded it : such is their reasoning. Were it not far more rational to argue thus : It is indispensably commanded, therefore it must needs be possible. And so it hath been to all good men that ever lived, and so it will be, by God’s assistance, to all that make it their study.

Flesh and blood cannot do it. True enough ; but then take this into the account : “Flesh and blood shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven.” It is indeed against the propension of our corrupt nature ; but it is the work of Christians to mortify their corruptions ; and if we think it impossible at the command of God, to love an enemy and pardon an injury ; how would we bear those hard

trials which Christians have suffered by the cruelty of persecutors? Whether is it easier to suffer a wrong, or to give our body to be burned? Certainly when we have obeyed this precept, we have not yet “resisted unto blood,” and therefore that obedience can never be impossible, since harder things may be expected from us. Therefore, seriously set about the work, and endeavour to bring your minds to a compliance with it, and then your own experience shall confute these idle pretences, and evince the possibility of the performance.

Another prejudice against this precept is, that it seems to encourage injuries, by hopes of impunity and reward, giving the delinquent occasion to expect kindness and love, instead of the punishment which he deserves; and so we should draw upon ourselves a second injury by not requiting the first.

But we have already told you, that this precept does not forbid the exercise of justice by those to whom the sword is committed, when the public security calls for it; as a parent may at once love and correct his child, so may a judge be in charity with the person he punishes: and though it should be granted, that by pardoning injuries, we expose ourselves to new ones; yet would this amount to no more, but that we may suffer hardships by our obedience to **GOD**, which I hope is not enough to dispense with our duty. But truly the matter goes not commonly thus, for if we consult either our own observation, or the experience of others, we shall find, that meek and charitable persons are most seldom exposed to injuries, or engaged in troubles. He must needs be a desperately wicked person, who will offer a second injury to one who hath requited the first with tenderness and love. Such a sweet disposition will mollify the hardest hearts, and charm the most froward humours; especially if we carry ourselves with such discretion, as may testify that we are actuated by a generous charity, and not by a stupid insensibility.

How often does “a soft answer turn away wrath?”

And the overlooking of an injury, prevent farther trouble, throwing water upon the spark, before it break forth into a flame? Hence, if we look upon meek and quiet persons, we shall ordinarily find them happy in the peace of their families, and favour and kindness of their neighbours. Whereas the angry, quarrelsome, and malicious person is an eye-sore to all about him; his servants dread him, and all abhor and avoid him. And therefore the observation of this precept is so far from exposing us to new injuries, that, by the mercy of GOD, it will prove the best means to secure our tranquillity. Peace shall be the reward of a peaceable temper.

But, *lastly*, some will tell us, that the love of enemies, and the pardoning injuries, is inconsistent with the principles of honour, and will expose us to contempt and derision. Alas! to what a sad pass are we come, if neither reason nor religion may prescribe the rules of honour; if our notions of it must be taken from the language of the sons of Belial, of strife and violence; if to imitate the Deity in his most glorious attribute of mercy, and become "perfect, as our FATHER which is in heaven is perfect," be accounted a base and dishonourable thing; and if for this vain fantastic shadow of reputation, we will violate all laws human and divine, and forfeit eternal happiness. But who are they that will think the worse of you for your patience? Some vain empty fools, some profane atheistical wretches, whose judgments are not valuable, nor their praise worth the having. Or what can they say of you, but that you are meek and lowly, imitators of that blessed Master, whom we profess to serve? And why do we own the name of Christians, if we be ashamed of the spirit and life of Christianity? Why do we not call ourselves after the name of CAIN, NIMROD, or some other revengeful destroyer, if we esteem those qualities more glorious and excellent? But if we have any deference for so wise a man, and great a King as SOLOMON, he will tell us, "That it is the honour of a man to cease from strife," and that

“he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he who ruleth his spirit, better than he who taketh a city.”

Thus you see how unreasonable those prejudices are, which keep men from the practice of this necessary duty; it remains now, that we hint at some helps for the performance of it.

The Heathens were ingenious in devising motives of patience; they would tell us, That if we were newly offended, it was too soon to resent it; if long time since, it was too late. If the offender be too strong for us, it were folly to contend; if he were too weak, it were a shame. Are we offended by a friend? let us remember our old friendship; if by an enemy, let us do him a kindness, and he will do so no more.

But Christianity will direct us to better means for composing the soul into the meekness and charity which it requires.

The first I shall recommend, is humility. Let us learn to have low thoughts of ourselves, and then we both shall have fewer enemies, and be more inclined to love them. Pride makes us over-rate every petty injury, and inclines us to revenge; but if we consider what poor contemptible things we are ourselves, and what we have deserved, if not from men, yet from God, whose instruments they are for our correction, we shall be little concerned at what the world calls affronts, and easily reconciled to those who have wronged us.

*Secondly*, Let us learn to have a low esteem of the present world, and all things therein; and this will cut off the occasions of our animosities; men may wrong us in our fortune or reputation, but they cannot rob us of piety and virtue, of the favour of God, and eternal happiness. And therefore, if our minds be once raised above these transitory vanities, we cannot meet with injuries worth the resenting: if we aim at heaven, and the glory of another world, we shall not stand to quarrel about any trifling interest in our way thither.

*Thirdly*, The frequent and serious thoughts of death, would conduce much to allay our hatred, and dispose us to meekness and charity. Naturalists tell us, 'that when swarms of bees fight in the air, they are dispersed by throwing dust among them.' Did we in our thoughts, often reflect upon that dust whereunto we must all shortly return, we should more easily lay down our quarrels and animosities. While we contend about small things, little do we consider that death is coming on apace, and will swallow up the victor and the vanquished, him that is in the right, and him that is in the wrong. Look back upon the private contentions, or public commotions, which infested the world a hundred years ago: Where are they who managed them? They are all gone down into the dark and silent grave. Death hath decided their controversies, and within a few days, it will do so with ours, and send us all to plead our cause before our great Judge, and it will go ill with us, if we appear there in malice. Therefore, why should our hatred be long, since our life is so short? One would think we should find better employment for the short time we have to spend here.

But *Lastly*, and above all, let us propose to ourselves the blessed example of the holy JESUS, "who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

Let us frequently remember what great things he hath done and suffered for us poor sinful wretches, even while we were enemies and rebels to him. How that in all the passages of his life, and all the bloody scene of his sufferings, he was acted by the same "love to his enemies," which he calls for at our hands. It was this which moved him to descend from heaven, and clothe himself with the frailties of our nature, and endure the troubles of a calamitous life, and the pains of a bitter death, to deliver us from that eternal misery whereinto we had plunged ourselves. And may not his goodness to us, mollify our hearts, and overpower the corruption of our revengeful nature, and

inspire us with earnest desires and resolutions to imitate his blessed example? After all that he hath done and suffered for us, can we be guilty of such a shameful ingratitude, as to deny him this poor satisfaction and acknowledgment, to pardon an enemy for his sake? Has "he died for us" when we were "his enemies," and shall we refuse to live at peace with ours? Remember with what patience he endured "the contradiction of sinners against himself;" with what humility he did condescend to wash the feet of that wicked miscreant, who was at the same time resolved to betray him! With what mildness he bore the supine negligence and stupidity of his disciples, who slept in the time of his agony! What meekness did he evince toward those who sought his life! He could have called for legions of angels to destroy them, or made the earth open her mouth and swallow them up; but he would not employ his miraculous power, save only for their good, restoring a servant's ear, and reproving the preposterous zeal of him who cut it off. Yea, while he hung upon the cross, and was approaching to the gates of death, all the cruel pains of body, and far more intolerable pressure of spirit which he then sustained, did not lessen his wonderful tenderness and affection for his bloody murderers: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Let us be frequent and serious in the meditation of these things, and if we have any veneration for the example of our SAVIOUR, and any sense of his infinite mercy, this will dispose us to the practice of his precepts, and particularly of this necessary, this reasonable, and delightful duty,—that we "love our enemies."

## SERMON III.

---

THAT THERE ARE BUT A SMALL NUMBER SAVED.

---

LUKE xiii. 23.

*Then said one unto him, LORD, Are there few that be saved?*

THOSE who have so much goodness as to be nearly touched with the interest of mankind; cannot but be more especially concerned about their everlasting condition, and anxious to know what shall become of poor mortals when this scene is over, and they cease to appear on the stage of the world, being called to give an account of their deportment in it. Seeing we are assured that there are different states of departed souls, some being admitted into happiness, and others doomed to misery, beyond any thing we conceive, this may put them upon farther inquiry, how mankind is like to be divided, whether heaven or hell shall have the greater share. Such a laudable curiosity as this it was, that put one of our blessed SAVIOUR'S followers to propose the question in the text: "LORD, are there few that be saved?" Our SAVIOUR had been lately foretelling the great success the Gospel should have; how, like a little leaven, that fermenteth the whole lump it is put into, Christianity should propagate itself through the world, and many nations embrace the profession of it; this disciple, it seems, was desirous to know whether the efficacy should be answerable to the extent; whether it should take as deep root in the hearts of those that owned it, as it was to spread itself wide on the face of the earth; in a word, whether the greatest part of men were to be saved by it? I called this a laudable curiosity, and there

is reason to think it so, since our SAVIOUR himself doth not check but satisfy the inquiry, which he was not wont to do when the questions were useless or blameable. Those who inquired into the time of the general judgment, received no other account but that it was among those secrets which GOD reserved for himself; and again, when they asked “of the time that the kingdom should be restored unto Israel,” he tells them roundly, it was not for them, it concerned them not at all to know such things as these. But here, as the question seems to have proceeded from a zeal to the honour of GOD, and concern in the happiness of mankind, so the resolution of it might be very useful; and accordingly it is improved by our SAVIOUR, who at once resolves the doubt, and presseth a very weighty exhortation in the words of the text. We are not at the verse; we shall only consider the answer which is implied in it to the foregoing question.

It is on this point we design to fix our meditation at this time; and indeed there is scarce any doctrine that needeth to be more inculcated; for amongst all the stratagems whereby the great enemy of mankind contrives their ruin, few are more unhappily successful than the fond persuasion he hath filled them with, That heaven and everlasting happiness are easily attainable. What one saith of wisdom,—*Multi ad sapientiam pervenissent nisi putassent se pervenisse*; we may, with a little alteration, apply unto this purpose: ‘That many might have reached heaven, if they had not been so confident of it.’ The doors of the Christian Church are now very wide, and men have access unto them upon easy terms; nay, this privilege descends unto men by their birth, and they are reckoned among Christians before they come well to know what it means. The ordinances of our religion are common to all, save those whom gross ignorance or notorious crimes exclude; there are no marks on the foreheads of men whereby we can judge of their future condition; they die, and are laid in their graves, and none cometh back to tell us how it fareth with them, and we desire to

think the best of every particular person. But whatever charity be in this, there is little prudence in the inference that many draw from it, who think they may live as their neighbours do, and die as happily as they; and since the greatest part of men are such as themselves, heaven must be a very empty place if all of them be debarred. Thus perhaps you have seen a flock of sheep upon a bridge, and the first leapeth over, and the rest not knowing what is become of those that went before, all of them follow their companions into that hazard of ruin. Interest and self-love so strongly blind the minds of men, that they can hardly be put from the belief of that which they would fain have true. Hence it is that, notwithstanding all we are told to the contrary, the opinion of the broadness of the way that leads to heaven, is still the most epidemic, and I think the most dangerous heresy. Many are so ignorant as to avow it, and the strange security of more knowing persons as loudly proclaim it. I know he undertakes an unwelcome errand, who goes about to dispossess the minds of men of such a pleasant and flattering error; but what shall we do? Shall we suffer them to sleep on and take their rest, until the everlasting flames awake them? Shall we draw their blood on our heads, and involve ourselves in their ruin, by neglecting to advertise them of their hazard? No, my friends; duty doth oblige us, and the Holy Scriptures will warrant us to assure you, that there are very "few that shall be saved;" that "the whole world lieth in wickedness;" and that "they are a little flock to whom the FATHER will give the kingdom."

That this certain though lamentable truth may take the deeper impression on our minds, we shall first propose some considerations for the better understanding what things are required in those who look for everlasting happiness, and then reflect on the actions and ways of men; that comparing the one with the other, we may see how little ground of hope there is for the greatest part to build on.

First then, consider the nature of that Divine Majesty,

whose presence and enjoyment it is that makes heaven itself desirable ; and think how inconsistent it is with his infinite holiness, to admit impure and impertinent sinners into the habitation of his glory. Certainly "he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity. He is not a GOD that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with him. The foolish shall not stand in his sight." It is strange what conceptions foolish men must entertain of Almighty GOD, who can imagine that those who have been all their days wallowing in sin, shall be admitted into an everlasting fellowship with him. Sooner shall light and darkness dwell together, and heat and cold in their greatest violence combine, and all the contrarieties of nature be reconciled. Can two walk together, except they be agreed ? Can there be any converse betwixt those whose natures suit so ill together ? Sure they who think to come so easily by happiness, must imagine GOD altogether such an one as themselves, else they could never hope that he would choose them, and cause them to approach unto him. But O how widely shall they find themselves mistaken, when he shall "reprove them, and set their sins in order before them," and they shall find, to their confusion, that he is "a consuming fire to all the workers of iniquity." Men are apt to form a notion of GOD according to their own wishing, as if he were all made up of mercy, and justice were but an empty name ; and this is the common shelter against every convincing reproof. But this rashness shall sufficiently confute itself, and feel that justice which it will not believe. There is no strife among the attributes of GOD, that one of them should swallow up another ; mercy is open unto all that forsake their sins, but justice shall seize on those who continue in them. That compassion which made GOD give his dearest SON for the redemption of mankind, will never prevail for the pardon of any impenitent sinner. Abused goodness will certainly turn into fury, and infinite mercy being despised, shall bring down upon sinners all the dreadful effects of omnipotent vengeance.

Consider, secondly, What that happiness is which every body doth so confidently promise to themselves, and see whether it be likely that it should be so easily attained. Glorious things are every where spoken of that heavenly Jerusalem, and all that is excellent and desirable in this world is borrowed to shadow it forth in the Holy Scriptures. We are told of crowns, and kingdoms, and treasures, and rivers of pleasure, and fountains of living waters, and of an exceeding eternal weight of glory.

But all these do not suffice to convey into our minds any full apprehension of the happiness we expect, and after all that can be said, it doth not yet appear what we shall be. These metaphors serve but to assist our minds a little, and give us some confused apprehensions of the things "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for them that love him." Can we then expect that so glorious a prize should be gained without any labour? Shall such a recompence be bestowed on those who never take any pains about it? What toil and travail doth it cost a man, to gather together that white and yellow earth, which they call money! With what care and pains do others ascend to any degree of preferment! What industry and study do men employ to reach a little knowledge, and be reckoned amongst the learned! And shall heaven and everlasting happiness slide into our arms when we are asleep? No, certainly. God will never disparage the glories of that place, to bestow them on those who have not thought them worthy their most serious endeavours. But as the greatness of that happiness may justly discourage all the lazy pretenders to it, so the nature of it leaves small ground of hope to the greatest part of the world. I wonder what most men expect to meet with in heaven, who dream of coming thither? Think they to feast and revel there, and to spend eternity in foolish mirth and vain talk, in sport, and drollery, and sensual pleasure; which are all the exercises they are capable of, or find any relish or satisfaction in? Away with all those Turkish

notions, whereby we disparage the happiness we pretend to; the joys of that place are pure and spiritual, and no unclean thing shall enter there. The felicity of blessed spirits standeth in beholding and admiring the divine perfections, and finding the images shining in themselves, in a perfect conformity to the will and nature of God, and an infinite and delightful society and communion with him. And shall such souls be blessed in seeing and partaking of the divine likeness, who never loved it, and would choose any thing rather than to converse with him? A little reflection on the common temper of men's minds, may assure us that they are very far from that meetness "for the inheritance of the saints in light," which the Apostle speaks of. The nature of blessedness must surely be changed, or else the temper of their spirits. Either they must have new hearts, or a new heaven created for them, before they can be happy. It is a strange infatuation of self-love, that men in the gall of bitterness should think it is well with their souls, and fancy themselves in a case good enough for the enjoyment of divine pleasures.

In the third place, let us reflect on the attempts and endeavours of those who have gone to heaven before us; how they did fight and strive, wrestle and run for obtaining that glorious prize; and we shall see how improbable it is that the greatest part of men should come by it with so little pains. NOAH, ABRAHAM, JACOB, MOSES, DAVID, and all those ancient worthies recorded in Holy Writ, have either done or suffered so great things, as gave ground to expect that country they looked after, "accounting themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth;" as you may see in the 11th chapter of Hebrews, where, after a large catalogue of their excellent performances, the author tells us of others, "who were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep-

skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth." Such also was that violence, wherewith the Christians of the first ages did force open the gates of heaven, and took possession of it. The ardent affection wherewith these blessed souls were inflamed towards their Maker and Redeemer, made them willingly give up their bodies to be burned for the glory of God, and the propagation of the Christian faith. Their constancy in their sufferings did amaze their bloody persecutors, did outweary the cruelty of their tormentors, and they rejoiced in nothing more "than that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for the name of JESUS." And what shall we say of their universal love, which reached their very enemies? Of their humility and meekness, justice and temperance, and all those other virtues, which many of the heathens themselves did observe and admire? 'Behold,' saith one, 'how the Christians love one another!' 'These are the men,' saith another, 'who speak as they think, and do as they speak.' PLINY, after an exact inquiry, writeth to TRAJAN, the Emperor, 'That he could not find any other guilt in the Christians, but that they met together before day-break to sing a hymn to CHRIST, as if he were God, and then to bind themselves with a sacrament or oath not to do any mischief; but, on the contrary, that they shall not rob, steal, or commit adultery, or falsify their words, or deny their trust.' This was the crime of Christians in those first ages, to engage themselves not to commit any crime; and if it fell out that any of them were guilty of drunkenness, or uncleanness, or any other of those sins, which, alas, are so lightly censured in our days, they were severely punished; nay, how bitterly did themselves lament it! They needed not in those days to be pursued by tedious processes, or dragged, against their will, to the profession of their repentance; they would sue for it with tears, and stand many years at the door of the Church, begging to be received. The censures

of the Church were then looked upon as very serious and dreadful things; and they who would encounter death in the most terrible form, would tremble if threatened with excommunication. Now tell me, I pray you, what you think of these men? Did they go beyond their duty, or were they fools in doing these things, when half the pains might have served the turn? Did heaven and happiness cost them so much labour, and think you to be carried fast asleep, or rather, while you are bending your forces another way? If you cannot look so far back, or if you imagine these but romances, like the poetic accounts of the golden age; I desire you to take notice of a few persons, whom the divine goodness hath rescued from that deluge of wickedness which overfloweth the world. There are, perhaps, two or three in a city, or in a country, who live beyond the common rate of men, and may be accounted angels upon earth if compared with them: they have escaped the pollution that is in the world, and have learned to despise all the vanities of it; their affections are above, and their greatest business is to please and serve their Maker; their thoughts and affections are holy and pure, their converse innocent and useful, and in their whole deportment they observe such strict holiness and virtue, as others may think needless and superstitious; and yet these very persons are deeply sensible of their own imperfections, and afraid enough to come short of heaven. I speak not now of those scrupulous persons, whom melancholy doth expose unto perpetual and unaccountable fears, much less of others who make a trade of complaining, and would be much better thought of for speaking evil of themselves, and would be not very well pleased if you should believe them. I speak of rational and sober men, whose fears arise from their due consideration of things; from the right apprehensions they have of the holiness of God, and the meaning of the Gospel precepts. And certainly such holy jealousies over themselves ought not to be judged needless; since St PAUL himself, who had been rapt up into the third heaven, and thereby received

into eternal happiness, found it necessary to take care, "lest that by any means, while he preached to others, himself should be cast away." I know it is ordinary for men to laugh at those who are more serious and conscientious than themselves; to wonder what they aim at, and to hope to be as sure of heaven as they. But ere long, they shall discover their mistake, and say with those spoken of in the Book of Wisdom: "This was he whom we had sometime in derision, and a proverb of reproach. We fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour; how is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints! Therefore have we erred from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness hath not shined unto us, and the Sun of righteousness rose not upon us."

To come yet closer unto our present purpose: A serious consideration of the precepts of the Gospel, will fully convince us of the "straitness of the gate, and narrowness of the way that leads to eternal life:" we cannot name them all, nor insist upon any at length. Look through that excellent Sermon on the Mount, and see what our SAVIOUR doth require of his followers. You will find him enjoining such a profound humility, as shall make us think nothing of ourselves, and be content that others think nothing of us; a meekness which no injuries can overcome, no affronts nor indignities can exasperate; a chastity which restraineth the sight of the eyes, and the wandering of the desires; such an universal charity, as will make us tender other men's welfare as our own, and never take any revenge against our most bitter enemies, but to wish them well, and to do them all the good we can, whether they will or not. Whatever corrupt glosses men are bold to put on our SAVIOUR's words, "the offering the other cheek to him who smote the one, and the giving our coat to him who hath taken our cloak," doth oblige us to suffer injuries, and part with something of our right, for avoiding strife and contention. "The pulling out our right eye," and "cutting off our right hand that offends," doth import

the renouncing of the most gainful callings, or pleasant enjoyments, when they become a snare unto us, and the use of all those corporeal austerities that are necessary for the restraint of our corrupt affections. "The hating of father and mother for the sake of CHRIST," doth at least imply the loving him infinitely beyond our dearest relations, and the being ready to part with them when either our duty or his will doth call for it.

And we must not look upon these things as only counsels of perfection, commendable in themselves, but which may yet be neglected without any great hazard. No, certainly they are absolutely necessary; and it is a folly to expect happiness without the conscientious and sincere performance of them all. "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven;" that is, according to all interpreters, he shall have no interest in it. You see then, by what rules he must square his actions, who can with any ground hope to be saved.

But I must tell you further, that he must not be put to the performance of his duty, merely by the force and sanction of these laws. True religion is an inward, free, and self-moving principle; and those who have made a progress in it are not acted only by external motives, are not merely driven by threatenings, nor bribed by promises, nor constrained by laws, but are powerfully inclined to that which is good. Though holy and religious persons do much eye the law of GOD, yet it is not so much the authority and sanction of it, as its reasonableness, and purity, and goodness, that doth prevail with them. They account it excellent and desirable in itself, and that "in keeping of it there is great reward;" and that divine love, where-with they are acted, makes them become a law unto themselves. *Quis legem det amantibus? major est amor lex ipse sibi.* In a word, what our blessed SAVIOUR said of himself, is in some measure applicable to his followers; that it is their "meat and drink to do his FATHER'S will." And as the natural appetite is carried out towards food,

though we should not reflect on the necessity of it for the preservation of our lives; so are they carried with a natural and unforced propension towards that which is good and commendable.

Hitherto we have been speaking of those qualifications which are necessary for obtaining an entrance into heaven; it is high time we were casting our eyes upon the world, to see how the tempers and actions of men agree with them. And if we first look back upon the old world, we shall see how soon wickedness overspread the face of the earth, and all flesh had corrupted his way; and of all the multitudes that were then in the world, only NOAH and his family were found worthy to escape the general deluge; nay, even in it there was a cursed CHAM, the father of a wicked generation. After that the Church of GOD was confined unto a very narrow corner, and while darkness covered the face of the earth, only Pàlestine was enlightened with the knowledge of GOD. "He shewed his word unto JACOB, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel; but he dealt not so with every nation. As for his judgments, they have not known them; they were given up to the lusts of their own hearts, and worshipped the works of their own hands." Their devotions were performed unto devils, and their religious mysteries were full of the grossest impurities.

I shall not now enter on the debate, whether ever any Heathen might possibly have been saved: we are more concerned to secure our own salvation, than to dispute about theirs. Suppose something could be said for SOCRATES and PLATO, and two or three others, what is that to those huge multitudes, who, without all peradventure, ran headlong into everlasting destruction?

But let us leave these times, and look upon the present condition of the world: It is a sad account of it, that is given by BREERWOOD, in his *Inquiries*: 'That, dividing the whole world into thirty parts, nineteen are Pagan, six are Mahometan, and only five remain for Christians of all persuasions.' I shall not warrant the exactness of his reckoning; but certainly the number of Christians carries

but a very small proportion to the rest of mankind ; and of these again, how few are there orthodox in their religion ? I dare not condemn all those who live in the Romish communion ; but surely they lie under very great disadvantages, and besides the common difficulty of Christianity, their errors and superstitions are no small hinderances unto them.

But we may perhaps think ourselves little concerned in them ; let us consider those who live in communion with ourselves, and see what is to be thought of the generality of them. And first, we shall find a very great number of them so grossly ignorant, that they “know not the way that leads to life ;” and truly it is not so broad that people should keep it by guess ; and however they imagine their ignorance will not only be excusable in itself, but afford a cloak to their other wickedness, yet dreadful is that threatening of the Prophet ISAIAH : “It is a people of no understanding ; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them, will shew them no favour.”

But besides those many thousands that perish for lack of knowledge, how great are the number of vicious and scandalous persons ? Remove but our gluttons and drunkards, our thieves and deceivers, our oppressors and extortioners, our scolders and revilers, our fornicators and adulterers, and all that cursed crew that are guilty of such heinous crimes ; and how thin would our Churches be ! To what a small number should we quickly be reduced ! A little corner would hold us all. And think you these I have been speaking of, are fit to enter into the kingdom of heaven ? Perhaps you may think us rash to condemn so many of our neighbours ; but the Apostle hath done it to our hands : “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.” You see what a

heavy sentence is pronounced; and O, many are included under it!

I shall name one other vice, which I fear will drive in no small number of those who are yet behind; and that is the hellish and unaccountable customary sin of swearing, whereby men commonly throw away their souls, without any temptation, pleasure, or advantage. How often do men baffle the sacred name of God, by calling him to witness to such trifles, as they might be ashamed to attest before any grave or serious person? This they account an ornament of speech, and their words would never sound big enough without it. I cannot stand to reckon up all the aggravations of this sin; it is certainly inconsistent with a religious temper; and this alone, if there were no more, would damn the greatest part of the Christian world.

And what shall we say of all those other vices, which are so frequently practised, yea, and defended among us? For, alas! we are arrived at that height of impiety, that virtue and vice seem to have shifted places, evil and good to have changed their names. It is counted a gallant thing to despise all divine and human laws, and a childish scrupulosity to forbear any thing that may gratify our lusts. A strong faith is accounted an argument of weak judgment; dependance upon Providence is judged want of foresight, and that there is no wit but in deceiving others. No man is reckoned generous, unless he be ambitious; and it is want of courage to forgive an injury. O religion, whither art thou fled? In what corner of the world shall we find thee? Shall we search for thee in courts and palaces of great men? Pride and luxury have driven thee thence; and they are too much concerned in the business and pleasures of this world, to mind those of another. Shall we seek thee in the cottages of the poor? Envy and discontent lodge there; their outward want takes up all their thoughts, and they have little regard for their souls. Shall we go into the city? Cheating, extortion, and intemperance, are almost all we can meet with

there. And if we retire into the country, we shall find as little innocence in it. "We may look for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry."

After all that we have hitherto said, some may think themselves safe enough, being conscious of none of those vices which we have named: but, alas! what is all this? they may still be far from the kingdom of heaven. Religion stands not in negatives; and the being free from gross and scandalous vices, is a poor plea for heaven. Look how thy soul is furnished with those divine graces, which ought to qualify thee for it. I shall name but one, and it is the love of God; and every body pretendeth to it: but oh, how few are there in the world, that understand what it means; that feel the power and efficacy of it on their own spirits!

Love is that weight whereby a soul is carried towards the object which it loves, and resteth in it as its proper centre. Those who are acquainted with this noble passion, even in its wanderings and deviations from its proper object, when it is wholly fixed on some silly creature; these, I say, know what mighty effects it is wont to produce in the souls where it prevaieth; how it makes them almost forget their own interest, and only mind that of another; how careful they are of every thing that may please or advantage the person, and how afraid to offend them? What delight they have in their conversation, and how hardly they endure to be absent from them. See, therefore, if thou findest any thing answerable to these effects of love, in the affection thou pretendest unto God. Are his glory and honour the dearest of all things to thee? And wouldest thou rather hear thyself and all thy friends reviled, than his holy name blasphemed? Is it thy greatest care and business to please him, and art thou watchful against every sin? Is there nothing in the world so dear to thee, but thou wouldest part with it for his sake; and still desirest he should do his own will rather than thine? Is nothing so delightful as to converse with him? And doth every thing seem burthensome, which detains thee

long from him? If we would examine ourselves by these measures, I fear most of us would find our confidence built on a sandy foundation.

Perhaps you will tell me, that though things be not so well at present, though you have not yet attained these endowments, that are necessary to fit you for heaven, nor have indeed begun to endeavour after them; yet hereafter you hope all shall be well; you will repent and amend before you die. But consider, I beseech you, brethren, what it is you say: When do you think this promised reformation shall begin? Some two or three years after this, when you have pleased yourselves, and indulged your lusts a little more? But what assurance have you to live so long? Are not your neighbours dropping down every day about you, who expected death as little as you? And suppose you live, what greater probability is there of your reformation at that time than now? Had you not the same thoughts and resolutions several years ago, which yet have taken no effect at all? Will you not have the same temptations and snares? Will your lusts be more easily overcome, when strengthened by longer custom? Will it be more easy to return, after you have wandered farther out of your way? Belike, it is on a death-bed repentance you have grounded your hopes; you resolve to part with your lusts, when you can keep them no longer, and serve **GOD ALMIGHTY** with the dregs of your time.

I shall not stand to tell you what shrewd objections are proposed by some great and learned men, against the validity and acceptableness of such a repentance; some of them perhaps have been too peremptory and severe. True and unfeigned repentance, which includeth the sincere love of **GOD**, and resignation to him, will never come too late; the foundation of heaven is laid in those souls that have it. But if we consider, what a great matter true repentance is, the hinderances of a distempered body, and the ordinary relapses of men, who have promised fair on such occasions, and have outlived that sickness they thought had been mortal; we cannot but acknowledge

that a death-bed repentance is seldom sincere; and that it is unfit time to fight with principalities and powers, when perhaps we have not strength to turn ourselves on our beds: in a word, that of those who do thus delay and put off the business, very few shall be saved.

When we have said all that we can say, there are many who will never be persuaded of the truth of that which we have been proving; they cannot think it consistent with the goodness of God, that the greatest part of mankind should be damned; they cannot imagine that heaven should be such an empty and desolate place, and have so few to inhabit it. But, oh, what folly and madness is this, for sinful men to set rules to the divine goodness, and draw conclusions from it so expressly contrary to what himself hath revealed! Is it not enough that he has taught us the way to be happy, and given his own SON to the death to make it possible; that he hath waited so long, and invited us so earnestly, and so frequently told us our hazard? If all this cannot prevail; if we be obstinately resolved to continue wicked and miserable; if we despise his goodness, and turn all his grace unto wantonness; if we slight his threatenings, and will have none of his reproof; if we court damnation, and throw ourselves headlong into hell; how can we expect that he should interpose his omnipotency to pull us from thence, and place us in heaven against our will? Those blessed regions are not like our new plantations, which are sometimes peopled with the worst sort of persons, lest they should be altogether desolate. There are thousands of angels, and ten thousand times ten thousand, that stand about the throne: we know little of the extent of the universe, or what proportion of the wicked or miserable part of rational beings doth carry to those that are happy and good; but this we know, that God was infinitely happy before he made any creature, that he needeth not the society of the holy angels, and will never admit that of wicked and irreligious men. But that I may haste towards a close;—

The doctrine we have been insisting on, is sad and

lamentable, but the consideration of it may be very useful; it must needs touch any serious person with a great deal of grief and trouble, to behold a multitude of people convened together, and to think, that before thirty or forty years, a little more, or a great deal less, they shall all go down unto the dark and silent grave, and the greater, the far greater part of their souls shall be damned unto endless and unspeakable torments. But this may stir us up unto the greatest diligence and care, that we may do what we can towards the prevention of it.

Were the sense of this deeply engraven on all our minds, with what care and diligence, with what seriousness and zeal would Ministers deal with the people committed to their charge, that by any means they might save some! How would parents, and husbands, and wives, employ all their diligence and industry, and make use of the most useful methods for reclaiming their near relations, and pulling them from the brink of hell! Lastly, what holy violence would each of us use, for saving ourselves from this common ruin, and "making our calling and election sure!"

This, I say, is the use of what we have been speaking: and may ALMIGHTY GOD so accompany it with his blessing and power, that it may be happily effectual to so excellent a purpose.

## SERMON IV.

---

---

### THE DUTY AND PLEASURE OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING.

---

---

PSALM cvii. 15.

*O that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and  
for his wonderful works to the children of men.*

THERE is scarce any duty of religion more commonly neglected, or slightly performed, than that of praise and thanksgiving. The sense of our wants puts us upon begging favours from GOD; and the consciousness of our sins constrains us to deprecate his wrath; thus interest and self-love send us to our prayers. But, alas! how small a part hath an ingenuous gratitude in our devotion? How seldom are we serious and hearty in our acknowledgments of the divine bounty? The slender returns of this nature which we make, are many times a formal ceremony, a preface to usher in our petitions for what we want, rather than any sincere expression of our thankful resentment for what we have received. Far different was the temper of the holy Psalmist, whose affectionate acknowledgments of the goodness and bounty of GOD, in the cheerful celebration of his praise, make up a considerable part of his divine and ravishing songs. How often do we find him exciting and disposing himself to join voice, hand, and heart together, in this holy and delightful employment! “Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. My heart is fixed, O GOD, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. Awake up, my glory, awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake right early.” And being conscious of his own insufficiency for the work, he inviteth others unto it; calling in the whole creation to

assist him : “ O sing unto the LORD a new song : sing unto the LORD, all the earth. Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens : praise him in the heights. Praise him, ye sun and moon : praise him, all ye stars of light. Mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars. Beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowls. Bless the LORD, all his works, in all places of his dominion.” Many such figurative expressions occur, and allowance must be made for the poetical strain, but in the text we have a proper and passionate wish : “ O that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men ! ”

“ O that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.” Man is the greatest priest in this lower world, by whom all the homage and service of the other creatures are to be paid to their common Lord and Maker. “ God hath made him to have dominion over the works of his hand : he hath put all things under his feet. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beast of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.” And the divine bounty in maintaining of these poor creatures, redoundeth unto him, and therefore it is highly reasonable that he should pay the tribute of praise for them, who are not capable of knowing their dependance on God, or their obligations to him. “ The young lions ” are said to roar and “ seek their meat from God. The young ravens cry unto him.” But these are only the complaints of languishing nature, heard and relieved by the God of nature ; but not directly and particularly addressed to him. Man alone is capable of entertaining communion with God, of knowing his goodness, and of celebrating his praise.

“ O that men would praise the LORD.” Praise is the acknowledgment of the goodness and excellency of a person, and though the desire of it, in us who have nothing of our own but folly and sin, and whose best performances have a miserable alloy of corruption, be a blameable

vanity and presumption, yet certainly it is highly reasonable for God, who is the author and fountain of all good, to require and expect it from his creature. He hath made this great world as a temple for his honour, and it should continually resound with his praise. It is true, all the praises of men and angels can add nothing to his happiness and glory; yet there is a fitness in the thing, and it is our happiness, as well as our duty, to perform it: for, “it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely.” This is the blessed employment of the holy ones above; and if ever we taste the pleasures of heaven upon earth, it is then when our souls are ravished with an overflowing sense of the divine goodness, and our mouths are filled with his praise.

“O that men would praise the LORD for his goodness.” All the attributes of God deserve our highest praise; power, wisdom, and goodness, are all one in him: but, as we have different conceptions of these, goodness is that lovely attribute which doth peculiarly attract our affection, and excite our praise. Our love to God doth not so much flow from the consideration of his greatness, whereby he can do whatever he will, as from the consideration of his goodness; that he always willeth what is best, that his almighty power hath infinite wisdom to regulate it, and unspeakable bounty to actuate and exert it.

“O that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.” The divine goodness doth spread and extend itself over all the parts of the universe, and embraceth the whole creation in its arms: it not only displayeth itself most illustriously to the blessed inhabitants of the regions above, but reacheth also to the meanest worm that crawleth on the ground. The beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea, and the innumerable swarms of little insects which we can hardly discern with our eyes, are all subjects to that Almighty care: by him they are brought forth into the world, by him they are furnished with provision suitable for them: “These all

wait upon thee," saith the Psalmist, "that thou mayest give them their meat in due season; that thou givest them, they gather: thou openest thine hand; they are filled with good." But here, to excite us to thankfulness, he makes choice of an instance wherein we ourselves are more nearly concerned, and exhorteth "to praise the LORD for his wonderful works to the children of men." If the goodness of God to the holy angels be above our reach, and his bounty to the inferior creatures be below our notice, yet sure we must be infinitely dull if we do not observe his dealings with ourselves, and those of our kind. As our interest makes us more sensible of this, so gratitude doth oblige us to a more particular acknowledgment of it.

Thus you have the meaning of the text. I know not how we can better employ the rest of the time, than by suggesting to your meditations, particular instances "of this goodness, and of his wonderful works to the children of men."

Let us then reflect on the works both of Creation and Providence; let us consider in what a goodly and well furnished world he hath placed us, how "he hath stretched out the heavens as a curtain" over our heads, and therein "hath set a tabernacle for the sun," which, as a universal lamp, enlighteneth all the inhabitants of the earth. "His going forth is from the end of the heaven, his circuit to the ends thereof, and there is nothing hid from his heat:" in the morning he ariseth, and makes the darkness flee before him, and discovereth all the beauty and lustre of things; and truly "the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun." Nor is it less useful and advantageous for directing our ways, and ordering our several employments: "Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening. He maketh darkness, and it is night:" the curtains are drawn, and all things hushed into silence, that man may enjoy the more quiet repose; and yet to lessen the horror of darkness, and lighten such as are obliged to travel in the night, while the

sun is enlightening another part of the world, we have the moon and stars to supply his room. “O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever. To him that by wisdom made the heavens; the moon and stars to rule by night; for his mercy endureth for ever.”

Again: How wonderfully hath he furnished this lower world for our maintenance and accommodation! “The heaven, even the heaven of heavens are the LORD’s, but the earth hath he given to the children of men. He hath made us to have dominion over all the works of his hands: he hath put all things under our feet, all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea.” By the art and industry of man, the swiftest fowls are caught, the fiercest creatures are tamed, the strongest beasts are overcome, and all made serviceable unto him; the horse helpeth our journey both with speed and ease, the oxen labour the ground for us, sheep afford us meat and clothes; from the bowels of the earth we dig fuels, metals, and stones, which are still the more plentiful as they are useful and advantageous to us; those stones which serve for building are almost every where ready at hand, whereas rubies and diamonds, and other such glittering trifles, are found but in a few places of the world, and gotten with a great deal of toil; and to what hardship should all sorts of artificers be put, if iron were as scanty as gold? The surface of the earth yieldeth grass for the cattle, and herb for the service of man, “and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and bread which strengtheneth his heart:” these it affordeth unto us from time to time; and while we are spending the productions of one year, God is providing for us against another. There is no small variety of seasons and influences, which concur for the production of that corn which we murmur so much for when we want, and so little value when it doth abound. The winter cold must temper and prepare the earth; the gentle spring must cherish and foment the seed; vapours

must be raised and condensed into clouds; and then squeezed out and sifted into little drops, to water and refresh the ground; and then the summer-heat must ripen and digest the corn before it be fit to be cut down: "Thou visitest the earth," saith the Psalmist, "and waterest it; thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water; thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it: thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly; thou settlest the furrows thereof; thou makest it soft with showers; thou blessest the springing thereof; thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and all thy paths drop fatness; they drop upon the pastures of the wilderness, and the little hills rejoice on every side: the pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn, they shout for joy, they also sing."

"O LORD, how wonderful are thy works! In wisdom thou hast made them all: the earth is full of thy riches: so is the great and wide sea, wherein are creeping things innumerable, both small and great fishes; there go the ships;" those great engines of traffic and commerce, whereby every country is easily furnished with the productions of another. And indeed, it is a wonderful and astonishing contrivance of nature, that men should be easily transported to the remotest places in such floating houses, and carried (so to speak) upon the wings of the wind; that they should be able to find out their way in the widest ocean and darkest night, by the direction of a trembling needle, and the unaccountable influence of a sorry stone. "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof: they mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the deep: their soul is melted because of trouble; they reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses: he maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are

still. Then they are glad, because they are quiet : so he bringeth them to their desired haven. O that men would praise the LORD for his goodness ! ”

But now we are fallen unawares from the works of Creation to those of Providence. Indeed it is hard to keep to any exact method in a subject so copious, where one thing obtrudes itself upon us before we have done with another. Let us call back our thoughts to a more orderly consideration of that bountiful Providence which followeth us from time to time.

We are infinitely indebted to the divine goodness before we see the light of the world : “ He poureth us out like milk, and curdleth us like cheese. He clothes us with skin and flesh, and fenceth us with bones and sinews : he granteth us life and favour, and his visitation preserveth our spirit.” This is so entirely the work of God, that the parents do not so much as understand how it is performed ; for “ who knoweth the way of the spirit, (how it cometh to enliven a piece of matter,) or how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child ? ” “ I will praise thee,” saith the Psalmist, “ for I am fearfully and wonderfully made : marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well : my substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect ; and in thy book were all my members written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God ; how great is the sum of them ! ” Nine months ordinarily pass in the forming of this curious and wonderful piece before it be exposed to the view of the world ; and then the prisoner is released from that narrow confinement, and the mother and the child are delivered together. The mother “ forgetteth her anguish and pangs for joy that a man child is born into the world ; ” the poor infant is naked and weak, ready to expire for hunger and cold, unable to do any thing for itself but weep and cry : but He that brought it into the world hath already provided for its sustenance in it ; the mother’s breasts are

filled with a wholesome and delicious liquor, which faileth not from time to time, but is invisibly supplied, like the widow of Sarepta's oil, till the child become capable of stronger food.

But it was not enough that mothers should be enabled to sustain their infants, unless they had been also powerfully inclined unto it; and therefore God hath implanted those bowels of kindness and compassion, which prompt them to the most tender and affectionate care, and make them as ready to help their children's necessities, as their own; which though they do hardly deserve the name of a virtue, being common to them with the brutes, "for even the sea monsters draw out the breasts, and give suck to their young; yet certainly it is an effect of divine wisdom, that infants may not want those succours which would never have been so effectually secured to them by a law. Meanwhile the poor infant is so weak, and so unable to endure the least violence, and withal exposed to so innumerable dangers, that the mother's solicitude and care would be to little purpose, if it were not preserved by a higher and invisible power, which watcheth for its safety, when the mother and nurse are fast asleep, and keeps it from being overlaid.

As we grow in years, our necessities multiply, and dangers increase rather than diminish, and we are still more and more obliged to God for the supply of the one, and our preservation from the other. We think, perhaps, we have now set up for ourselves, and can provide what is necessary by our own industry, and keep ourselves out of harm's way; but there cannot be a more foolish thought; there needeth but a little consideration to undeceive us. All that we project and do for ourselves, dependeth on the integrity of our faculties, and the soundness of our reason, which is a happiness we can never secure to ourselves. I choose this instance, the rather, because it is a mercy invaluable in itself, and I fear, very seldom considered by us. O what an unspeakable blessing it is, that we are preserved in our right wits, that we are not roaring in some bedlam, or running furiously up and down the streets, nor have our

spirits sunk into that silliness, or stupidity, which would make every little child mock and deride us ! It is possible enough that this should befall the wisest, and most steadfast of us all. A stroke on the head, a few more degrees of heat in the blood, or agitation of the vital spirits, were enough to do the business : so weak and mutable creatures are we ; so small is the distance betwixt a wise man and a fool.

Next to the use of our reason, how much are we indebted to the divine goodness for our health and welfare ! These bodies of ours are made up of so various parts, and withal so nice and delicate, that the least thing in the world is enough to entangle and disorder them. A drop of humour, or a grain of sand, will sometimes occasion such anguish and pain, as render a man insensible of all the comforts he enjoyeth in the world : and they who understand any thing of the human body, justly wonder that all the parts are kept in order for an hour. What a mercy ought we therefore to account it, to find ourselves in health and vigour ; no aching in our head, no noisomeness in our stomach, no fever in the blood, none of the humours vitiated, none of those innumerable conduits broken, which convey them ; but all the organs performing their proper functions, and a sprightly vigour possessing every part ? How much are we indebted to that Providence which preserveth us from falls and bruises, and “ keepeth all our bones, so that none of them is broken ; ” which watcheth over us when we are asleep, and careth for us when we are not able to care for ourselves. What a blessing is it to enjoy the repose of the night ! That we are not wearied with endless tossings and rollings, nor “ scared with dreams, and terrified with visions,” whereof holy **JOB** complains ; that we are protected from fire and violence, from evil spirits and from evil men. “ I will both lay me down in peace and sleep ; for thou **LORD**, only, makest me to dwell in safety.”

And what shall we say of our food and raiment, of our houses and manifold accommodations, of the kindness of our neighbours, and the love of our friends, of all the means

of our subsistence, and all the comforts of our lives? We are made up (as it were) of a great many several pieces, have such a variety of interests and enjoyments concurring to our present happiness, that it is an unspeakable goodness which continueth them all with us from time to time; that when we awake in the morning we should find our minds clear, our bodies well, our houses safe, all our friends in health, and all our interests secure. He is "a wall of fire about us, and about all that we have by night and by day," and "his mercies are new every morning."

I cannot stand to speak of all those more public mercies, the peace and tranquillity of kingdoms, and all the happy effects of society and government: I shall only say, that it is a signal instance of the divine wisdom and goodness in the government of the world, that such a vast number of persons only acted by self-love, should all conspire for the public interest, and so eminently advance one another's welfare: that magistrates should so willingly undergo the trouble of government, and a heady and inconsiderate multitude should be commanded and overawed by a single man; certainly it can be no other but that same God "who stilleth the noise of the waves," that can prevent or compose "the tumult of the people."

Hitherto we have considered those instances of the divine bounty which relate to our temporal concerns; but sure we were made for a more excellent end, than to pass a few months or years in this world, to eat, drink, sleep, and die. God hath designed us for a more durable life, and hath accordingly made greater provisions for it: he taketh care of our very bodies, but hath an infinitely greater regard to those spiritual and immortal substances which he hath breathed into us. And here, in all reason, we ought to begin with that great and fundamental mercy, which is the root and spring of all his other mercies towards the souls of men; I mean, the incarnation and the death of his only-begotten SON. But, alas! where are those affections wherewith that should be spoken and heard? Our dulness makes me almost afraid to meddle with so high a theme;

that the eternal SON of GOD, the Wisdom of the FATHER, the Maker and LORD of all things, should clothe himself with the infirmities of the human nature, and come down from the habitation of his glory, and take up his abode among the wretched and rebellious children of men, to reclaim them from their wickedness and folly, and reduce them to their duty and their happiness; that he should have gone up and down in the world upwards of thirty years, in poverty, affliction, and contempt, doing good and suffering evil, scattering blessings, and enduring injuries, wherever he came, and at last should have yielded up his life in unspeakable anguish and torment, to be a propitiation for our sins! These are matters which ought never to be spoken or heard, without losing ourselves (as it were) in a rapture of admiration, gratitude, and love. "O the breadth, length, depth, and height, of that love which passeth knowledge;" which made GOD assume our nature, that we might become partakers of his! It is true, all that our blessed SAVIOUR hath done and suffered, proveth ineffectual to great part of mankind, but sure they have themselves to blame: GOD hath both "said and sworn, that he hath no pleasure in the death of sinners, but would have them repent and live; and indeed his way of dealing with them doth sufficiently declare the same: with what long-suffering doth he wait for their repentance, what pains doth he take to reclaim them!

It is an astonishing thing to consider what indignities and affronts are every day done unto that infinite Majesty by sinful dust and ashes, and that he doth not avenge himself by their total overthrow; that they should violate his laws, and despise his threatenings, and defy him (as it were) to his very face, and yet he should pity and spare them, and wait to be gracious unto them.

Were the government of the world committed to the meekest person on the face of the earth, he would never endure the outrages which are committed against heaven, but would presently lose all his patience, and turn the whole frame into ruin: but "GOD is love; his thoughts and ways are not like those of men; but as the heavens are

higher than the earth, so are his thoughts and ways higher than ours." And when the obstinate wickedness of sinful creatures doth (as it were) extort punishments from his hands, what reluctancy, what unwillingness, doth he express to this work! This strange work, as himself seems to term it: "How shall I give thee up, O EPHRAIM? How shall I give thee up? O that my people had hearkened unto me, that Israel had known my ways!"

Again, as GOD waiteth patiently for our reformation, so he doth make use of many means to bring us to it. He hath published the Gospel through the world, and brought down the knowledge of it to our days, in spite of all the opposition of devils and men; he hath established a Church, and appointed a whole order of men, whose peculiar calling and business in the world is, to take care of people's souls, to instruct them in the way to heaven; and, as "ambassadors in CHRIST'S stead, to beseech them to be reconciled to GOD."

These are some of his common mercies; but who can express that favour and love which he showeth to his own, to those blessed persons whom he chooseth and causeth to approach unto himself, when he rescueth them from the vanity of their conversation, and "that pollution which is in the world through lust;" when he mouldeth their souls unto a conformity with himself, and stampeth his blessed image upon them; when he visiteth them with his HOLY SPIRIT, and filleth their hearts with those hidden pleasures, which none can understand but those that feel them? "A stranger intermeddleth not with their joy." And yet even these are but the earnest of that great felicity for which he hath designed us; "those joys that are at his right hand, those pleasures that endure for evermore." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive what GOD hath prepared for those that love him. And it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

Meanwhile those small and imperfect discoveries which are made to us in the Holy Scriptures, of that inconceivable

happiness, are enough to overwhelm us with wonder. To think that the blessed day is coming, when we shall be loosed from these dull and lumpish bodies, those sinks of corruption, diseases, and pains, those prisons and dungeons of our heaven-born souls; and being clothed with robes of light and glory, shall get above the clouds, and all these storms and tempests which are here below, and be carried into those blessed regions of calmness and serenity, of peace and joy, of happiness and security; when we shall come unto “the innumerable company of angels, and the general assembly of the church of the first-born, and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to JESUS, the Mediator of the new covenant;” there to behold the glory of GOD, and all the splendour of the court of heaven, to view and contemplate that infinite power which ordereth all things, that unspeakable goodness which exerteth both; nay, “so to see GOD, as to become like unto him: and beholding with open face the glory of the LORD, to be changed into the same image from glory to glory.” To receive the continual effusions of the divine goodness, and the constant expressions of his favour and love; and to have our own souls melted and dissolved into the flames of reciprocal affection, and that fire fed and nourished by uninterrupted enjoyments; in a word, to be continually transported into ecstasies and raptures, and swallowed up in the embraces of eternal sweetness, and to be lost (as it were) in the Source and Fountain of happiness! “LORD, what is man that thou takest knowledge of him? or the son of man, that thou makest such account of him? What is man, that thou shouldest thus magnify him? And that thou shouldest set thine heart so much upon him? O that men would therefore praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever. Blessed be the name of the LORD, from this time forth and for evermore!” Amen.

# SERMON V.

---

ON THE NATIVITY OF OUR SAVIOUR.

---

PSALM ii. 11.

*Rejoice with trembling.*

THE observation of festivals being one of those balls of contention which have been tossed so hotly in the religious debates of this unhappy age, it may perhaps be expected that we should begin with a vindication of this day's solemnity, from the exceptions that are wont to be taken against it, and that the one half of our sermon should be spent in apology for the other. But I hope we may well enough spare the pains, and employ the time to better purpose; for you who are assembled in this house are persuaded, I trust, of the lawfulness of your own practice, and we cannot direct our speech to those who are absent from it. And really it were to be wished that there were less noise and debate about matters of this nature; and that being agreed in the more substantial parts of religion, we did all charitably acquiesce in that excellent advice of the Apostle, which he giveth in a parallel instance: "Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth:" and then as we shall not abate any thing of that love and reverence, which we owe to the piety of those who differ from us in so small matters, so we might hope they would not be hasty to condemn us, if in compliance with the practice of the ancient Church, and the present constitution of our own, we take the occasion of this season, with thankfulness, to remember the greatest benefit that ever was con-

ferred on the children of men. However, I am confident it is both more hard and necessary to amend the abuses of this solemnity, than to justify the right observation of it ; to vindicate it from the dishonour of some of its pretended friends, than to defend it from all the assaults of aggressors ; and accordingly we shall make it our work to persuade you to such a deportment on this festival, as may best suit with the holy life of that Person, whose nativity we commemorate.

The text which we have chosen, may seem somewhat general, but yet it is easily applicable to the present occasion ; especially if we remember that it is an inference drawn from a prophecy, which though it had its literal completion in the establishment of **DAVID**'s throne, yet it was in a more sublime sense fulfilled in the incarnation and kingdom of the **MESSIAH**, as the Apostle in several places informeth us. " For to which of the angels hath he said at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee ? " Whence he infers, that the angels themselves are inferior to **CHRIST**, of whom this was spoken. The only difficulty of the words lieth in the strange conjunction of these passions, Joy and Fear, which trembling seems to import ; but this will be more fully cleared in the sequel. Meanwhile ye may observe, that both these words, Fear and Trembling, as used in the text, and in the Scripture phrase, usually import humility and diligence, solicitude and caution, and the fear of displeasing, as being the most proper qualifications of our obedience, either to **GOD** or man. Thus are we commanded to " work out our salvation with fear and trembling ; " and servants are commanded to " obey their masters with fear and trembling ; " so the Corinthians are said to have " received **TITUS**, being sent to them with fear and trembling ; " and **CHRYSOSTOM** saith of the angels, that they assist with " fear and trembling." All which places import such care and diligence, as are very reconcileable to cheerful service. Reverence, and fear to offend, will be happily joined with holy joy in the performance of our duty, there being nothing more pleasant than to serve

him diligently whom we reverence, and fear to displease. Thus much for explication. The text is too short to be divided into many parts, but doth naturally fall asunder in two; the former exciting and encouraging our joy, the latter qualifying and moderating the same. First, we are allowed, yea, and commanded, to rejoice, and then we are cautioned to do it with trembling; and accordingly, our discourse shall run in these two heads; first, to exhort you to cheerfulness and joy, then to set the right bounds to the same; and having done this in general, we shall endeavour to draw both these home to the present occasion.

To begin with the first. Joy and cheerfulness are so far from being inconsistent with religion, that we find them many times allowed and recommended in Scripture. Thus in the last verse of the thirty-second Psalm: "Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart." And in *ver.* 1 of the next Psalm: "Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous, for praise is comely for the upright." "Let the righteous be glad, let them rejoice before the LORD, yea, let them exceedingly rejoice." (*Psa.* xxxviii. 3.) "Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud in their beds." (*Psa.* cxlix. 5.) And that you may not think this a liberty proper only for the former dispensation, but that Christians are obliged to greater severity, the Apostle doth no less than three times give this admonition to the Philipians, "Rejoice in the LORD, rejoice always in the LORD, yea, I say, rejoice:" in relation to this, perhaps, it was, that the old Hermit HALLADIUS, having five hundred scholars, used never to dismiss them without this admonition: 'My friends, be cheerful! Forget not, I beseech you, to be cheerful!' This was the constant lecture he repeated, as often as ST. JOHN was wont to do these words: "My little children, love one another."

None of our natural inclinations were made in vain; and joy is neither a useless nor a small passion, but if rightly ordered, may become an eminent exercise of religion, as proper a concomitant of thankfulness, as sorrow of

repentance. Our devotion never soareth higher than when it is carried on the wings of joy and love, when our souls are filled with the sense of his goodness, and we heartily applaud the hallelujahs of the blessed spirits, and all the praises of the creatures ; and as joy is an excellent instrument of devotion, so a constant cheerfulness of spirit is a fit disposition for our other duties : I should be loath to countenance any levity ; and I hope before we have done, we shall leave no ground to suspect such a design : and yet I would not have you imagine, that innocence and severity are inseparable companions, or that a free and cheerful countenance is a certain sign of an ill mind, or that men ought always to be sad, under the notion of being serious ; for cheerfulness enlightens the mind, and encourages the heart, and raiseth the soul (as it were) to breathe in a purer air : it misbecomes none but the wicked, in whom it is commonly a light mirth, and foolish jollity, as a curious dress may set off a handsome face, which yet will render those who are ugly more ill-favoured ; so doth cheerfulness exceedingly become good souls, though in bad men it is most ridiculous.

On the other hand, a sad and solemn humour, a dumpish, morose, and melancholy disposition, is so far from being commendable, that at best it must be looked upon as an infirmity in the best of those in whom it resideth, and, if purposely affected, may deserve a severer censure, being dishonourable to God, injurious to our neighbours, prejudicial to ourselves, and a thing highly unreasonable. They who are strangers to religion, and observe them who pretend to it to be always sad and melancholy, are thereby deterred from the study of piety, as that which would embitter their lives, and deprive them of all their comforts ; and they are apt to imagine, that if once they should undertake a course of godliness, they should never after enjoy a pleasant hour. Whereas really, the spirit of religion is in itself most amiable, and most lovely, most cheerful, free, and ingenuous ; and it is only

men's weakness, and not their piety, that ought to be blamed for any such disorder in their minds.

Again; melancholy and sadness are prejudicial to ourselves, being an enemy to nature, and hurtful to bodily constitutions. But which is much worse, it doth exceedingly indispose for the duties of religion. The eyes are not more darkened with fumes and vapours, than the understanding is, when those sullen exhalations gather about us. Clogs are not a greater impediment to the feet, than this humour to the motions of the soul; it inclines not only to think worse of ourselves and our condition than we need, but to do worse than otherwise we should.

It represents those things as exceedingly difficult which may be done with ease, and those impossible which have a considerable difficulty. It quite dispirits us, and will not suffer us to attempt any thing, because we imagine we can do nothing: although perhaps in a heat it may push us forward, yet it suddenly stays us, and makes us think we cannot go; if it catcheth fire, it makes us wild, and when it hath spent that flame, it leaves us dead and dumpish.

But perhaps you will tell me, that the cheerful temper, which we recommend, is very improper for these bad times wherein we live; and though we had no trouble on account of our own interests, the miseries of others might oblige us to sadness, and damp all our joys; I answer, compassion is indeed a christian virtue, and a good man will be concerned in the miseries under which he sees his neighbour groan, and be ready to assist him with his counsel, his labour, or his purse, if that will relieve him; but he is not obliged to suffer the calamities of others to sink so deeply into his spirit, as to disturb the peace and harmony of his soul; else since the world is a great hospital of misery, and we see well nigh as many miserable persons as men, we must needs draw as much misery on ourselves, as all theirs doth amount to, and so deserve more compassion than any of them.

Again : If we partake of the miseries of others, so may we in their happiness ; if we ought to mourn with those that mourn, so we ought to rejoice with them that rejoice ; and though misery is far more frequent in the world than happiness, this can be no measure for the whole creation ; and for any thing we know, for one sinful wretch there may be ten thousand holy and happy spirits. However, all the misery in the world carries no proportion to the infinite happiness of Almighty GOD ; which ought to be the highest object of our joy, and may drown and swallow up all the pretences of excessive sadness. We ought to rejoice in GOD, not only that he is our GOD, but that he is GOD infinitely holy, and infinitely happy ; that he is self-blessed, glorious in all things, and that his enemies cannot reach nor unsettle his throne. This is the most certain and constant, the most pure and heavenly joy.

There remaineth yet one occasion of grief, which some may think enough to banish all joy from a Christian soul, and that is the multitude of sins whereof we and others are guilty ; and certainly contrition, and zeal for the honour of GOD, are very necessary duties ; yet we were not born only to mourn, nor is the lamenting of sin all we have to do in the world. We love to see a servant sensible of his fault, but would be ill content if on that account he did nothing but weep. Sadness in contrition are necessary to make our repentance serious, and sadness of zeal to testify our concern in GOD's interest ; but on neither of these accounts ought we to grieve without measure. As we ought to grieve that we have offended so gracious a GOD, so ought we to rejoice that the GOD whom we have offended is so gracious ; and since the greatness of GOD's mercy is as far above our sins, as the heavens are above the earth, our faith and joy in GOD's mercy ought to be far above our sadness for our sins. Whereas the blasphemies and oppositions of GOD's enemies, by his wisdom and power shall turn to his glory ; our sadness for these oppositions must end in joy, for that almighty power and sovereign glory, which the enmity of SATAN,

and the world, and the flesh, doth make more conspicuous by pulling against.

By this time I hope it doth appear, that joy and cheerfulness are more allowable in Christians, than some perhaps are ready to imagine. I shall add no more to this purpose, but that it is the privilege of a holy soul, that every thing he meets with may afford him occasion of joy. If he looks up to heaven, it puts him in mind of the mansions that are preparing for him; if on the earth, it rejoiceth him to think of his interest in Him who made and governs the same; if he considers the changes and revolutions of human affairs, it satisfies him to remember that an unerring Providence doth overrule all their seeming disorders, and makes them all serve to great and glorious designs; if he live long, he is glad of the large time he is allowed to do his work in; and if he die soon, he is glad that he is so soon come to the end and reward of his work; if he be richer than his neighbours, he rejoiceth in the opportunity of obliging them; and if they be richer than he, he rejoiceth that they have the plenty which riches afford, and that he wants the care and temptations that attend them. As many miseries as he seeth, so many arguments he hath to glorify God, and rejoice in his goodness, saying, Blessed be God that I am not maimed, like that begging soldier; nor frantic, like that bedlamite; nor in prison, like that bankrupt; nor like that thief in shackles; nor in perpetual trouble, like that Counsellor of State.

But joy is a passion so pleasing to nature, that most men are easily persuaded unto it, those especially who have the least ground for it; and what we have said hitherto may be mistaken or wrested by profane persons, for the defence of their jollity or frolicsome mirth. But it should be considered, that our exhortation to cheerfulness and joy, presupposeth men to be religious, and is addressed to them on that presumption; for we should never encourage men to rejoice and be cheerful, while they are at enmity with their Maker, whose least frown is enough to confound them. We would not have men to dance on the

brink of hell, nor wantonly exult in the way that leads to destruction; another temper would better become their unhappy condition, and they ought to be thinking how timely sorrow may lay a sure foundation for lasting joy.

Again: The joy which we commend is a quite different thing from that levity of spirit, which some persons would cover under that name. We allow not that light airy temper that is inconsistent with seriousness; we would not have a man's whole life become a sport; of such laughter we may say, with the Wise Man, "that it is mad; and of mirth, What doeth it?" The cheerfulness we have been speaking of, must spring from the sense of divine goodness, and the conscience of our sincerity in his service.

Finally, that our cheerfulness and joy may be allowable, it must be rightly tempered; which leads me to the second part of the text, which, if it do not check, it doth at least qualify our joy. Rejoice we may, but it must be with trembling. Trembling is a natural effect and sign of fear, and here is put for the thing signified. Now fear may seem to be the most unprofitable passion in the mind; it is that which presages mischief, and anticipates our miseries, giving them a being before they had any, and troubling us with the apprehension of those evils which may never befall us. The historian, speaking of the Persians, who in their flight flung away their weapons of defence, addeth this observation, *Adco timor ipse auxilia reformidat*; such is the nature of fear that it not only makes us flee from danger, but from those helps and succours which should keep it off. But as ALEXANDER said of his fierce and stately horse, 'What a brave horse is lost for want of skill to manage him;' so we may say of fear, That they who would discharge it, lose a useful passion, not knowing how to order it. Fear, doubtless, is an excellent instrument both of reason and of religion; and as all our passions, so especially fear, are as winds, which although they sometimes drive us upon rocks, yet, rightly improved, may swell our sails, and carry us unto the haven where we would be. Hence we find it so

frequently commanded in Scripture, and so profitably practised by holy persons. The question then is, What kind of fear and trembling is enjoined here in the text. And first, as for the object, certainly the wrath and displeasure of GOD is the most proper object of our fear; it is this that we ought to look on as the greatest evil, and to shun with the greatest care. And this fear, if rightly seated in our souls, will make us very watchful against the smallest sins, and heartily sorry for the offences of others. But though the fear of GOD's displeasure be more excellent and useful, yet the fear of our own misery is not to be condemned. It is useful, not only to wicked persons, whom, though it do not make good, yet it keeps from being worse; but also to holy persons, whom the fear of hell hath many times helped forward to heaven. Our SAVIOUR himself adviseth us "to fear Him who can cast both body and soul into hell;" and that we may not forget it, he drives it home with, "Yea, I say unto you, fear him;" where we are to observe, that the description of the person carrieth the reason for which we ought to fear him. It were indeed to be wished that our souls were knit unto GOD by the more noble passion of love; and "perfect love," as ST. JOHN tells us, "casteth out all fear;" but while our love is imperfect, it leaves room for some fear. Hell is certainly in our creed, as well as heaven; and as the fear of it is ordinarily the first step of conversion, so it may be of use to quicken us and push us forward all along through our journey towards heaven. But if a Christian's fear may have hell for its object, what kind of a fear may this be? It ought not to be such an anxious fear as may disturb our tranquillity; or extinguish our joy, or discourage our endeavours; but so rational and modest, as may make us reverend in our love, and modest in our confidence, and cautious in our joy, that it neither betray us to, nor vent itself in, any unseemly expressions.

And thus much of the duty recommended in the text. It is high time now to apply these generals to the present occasion. We are assembled this day to commemorate

the greatest blessing that ever was bestowed on the children of men; a blessing wherein the nations of the world are concerned, and yet whose fruits do entirely redound to every good man, as if it had been designed for him alone; a mercy that doth at once astonish and rejoice the angels, who in comparison of us are unconcerned in it. These mountains leap for joy, because the valleys were filled with a fruitful shower; for when these glorious spirits did behold **GOD** stooping to the condition of a man, and man raised above the lowliness of his state, and the happiness of all the angels, they were transported with admiration of the mystery and joy; for the felicity of their fellow-creatures, and did with the greatest cheerfulness perform the embassies they were sent upon in this great affair. For having before advertised the blessed virgin of her miraculous conception, lest her modesty should have been offended at so strange an accident, and having removed the suspicion of her betrothed husband, they rejoiced to bring the first news of that infinite mercy which we remember this day: for as "certain shepherds were feeding their flocks by night, an angel of the **LORD** appeared unto them, and the glory of the **LORD** shone round about them;" and when this glorious appearance had confounded their senses, and almost scattered their understanding, the angel said unto them, "Fear not; for behold **I** bring unto you tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of **DAVID**, a **SAVIOUR** which is **CHRIST** the **LORD**: and suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host," the whole choir of glorious spirits, who all joined in this heavenly anthem: "Glory to **GOD** on high, on earth peace, and good-will towards men." And may not that help to heighten and advance our joy and thankfulness? Can we be insensible of happiness, when angels so heartily congratulate it? It is a nativity which we celebrate, and any birth doth much rejoice persons interested; a woman forgets her pangs, when a man-child is born into the world.

But that our joy and thankfulness may be the more excited, we shall *First* consider the excellency of the person who was born.

*Secondly*, The design of his birth. And,

*Thirdly*, Glance a little at the circumstances of it.

*First*, then, He was no common person whose birth occasions our joy. If we but fix our eyes on his human nature, and consider those excellencies that were obvious to the eyes of the world, we shall yet acknowledge, that never such a person appeared on the face of the earth. It is He whose nativity was promised just after the fall, and so exactly pointed at by the Prophets, many hundred years before it happened, that the Jews could tell the place, and the very Heathens had some knowledge of the time; for the world was big with expectation, that the prophecies should then be fulfilled which foretold the birth of a great person.

*Secondly*, It is he whose very infancy not only startled a King, and made him fear his throne, but also affrighted the powers of darkness, and silenced the heathen oracles; whose childhood puzzled the knowledge of the aged, and confounded the Doctors of the Law; who ruled the course of nature, and made the strong winds obey him, and could walk on the billows of the seas as on a pavement; who fed multitudes by his word, and healed all manner of diseases without medicine; who could command them to leap that were cripple, and make them see the heavens and the day, who had been born blind; and who could cast devils out of their possessions, and restore the frantic to their wits; who could break the gates of death, and open the doors of the grave, and call back the spirits to the buried carcases.

*Lastly*, It is he who by the ministry of twelve fishermen, made his religion, though contrary to the corrupt affections and interests of men, quickly subdue the known world, and made it submit to a crucified King. The doctrine which he taught, mastered the understanding of the most valiant commanders, and outwitted the cunning

of the subtlest politicians ; it cancelled the ceremonies of the Jew, confounded the wisdom of the Greek, and instructed the rudeness of the barbarian ; and remains still in the world, a constant evidence of the Author's wisdom and power. And what shall we speak of the goodness of that divine nature, which was as miraculous as his power ? Nay, all his miracles were instances of one as well as the other. Should we speak of his ardent piety and devotion, his love to GOD, and his zeal for his honour, his amiable meekness and humility, his universal charity and compassion, even toward his bitter enemies, his venerable purity and temperance, that noble contempt of the world, and all those other virtues which shined so eminently in his whole conversation ; a sermon were too little for every particular. But this is not all ; he was not only far above other men, but infinitely above the angels, being personally united to the divine nature. He was GOD as well as man ; and by communication of properties it may be said, that he whom we now behold in a cradle, hath his throne in the heaven, and filleth all things by his immensity ; that he who is wrapped in swaddling clothes, is now clothed in infinite glory ; and he whom we find in a stable among beasts, is the same with him encircled with millions of angels ; in a word, that great Person, whose nativity we celebrate, is divinely embodied, GOD made flesh. This union of the divine and human nature is a mystery great enough to confound our understanding, but not to trouble or shake our faith, who know many things to be, which we cannot know how they are, and are not able to give any account of the union betwixt the soul and the body, or of the parts of nature among themselves, which yet we never call in question.

And thus much of the dignity of CHRIST's person, which is the first ground of our joy ; we proceed to the second, The design of his birth.

He was Lord of the world, but came not into it to exercise dominion, nor, as the Jews expected, to procure their temporal redemption, and restore the kingdom to

Israel. He came not for so mean a purpose, as to make his followers rich and honourable, fortunate or conspicuous in the world; nay, both by precept and example he taught them to contemn all such empty trifles. But he came to deliver his people from everlasting destruction, and from the captivity of sin, and to teach them how they might attain an endless happiness. He came not indeed to purchase us a liberty to sin without hazard, and then to cover all our iniquities with his righteousness; to let us live as we list, and assure us of pardon: nay, it had neither been consistent with his love to GOD, to have procured pardon for obstinate and incorrigible rebels; nor so great a benefit to us, to have obtained remission without sanctification. Had we been delivered from all other punishment, sin itself would have made us miserable. But CHRIST came into the world to save his people from their sins, as well as from the dismal consequences of them; and to procure for us, “that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him.” In a word, CHRIST came into the world to advance the glory of GOD, and the happiness of the earth, by restoring us to the favour of our Maker, and a conformity to him. And certainly if we have any sense of the evil of sin, or the misery of hell,—of the beauty of holiness, or the glory of heaven; it must needs be a matter of great joy to celebrate the birth of Him who doth deliver us from the one, and give us assurance of the other.

It remaineth that we yet speak of the nativity which we celebrate; and many things present themselves full of comfort and instruction. We shall only observe our SAVIOUR’S coming into the world after that manner which did best suit with his design. Indeed, when a man should hear of the SON of GOD’S coming down from heaven into the lower world, he would be apt to think that his appearance would be with the greatest splendour and magnificence, and that the glory of heaven should continually attend his person; at least, that all the Princes in the world should be summoned to attend his reception, and

that the heaven should bow at his presence, and the earth tremble at the approach of his Majesty, and that all the clouds should clap together in an universal thunder, to welcome his appearance: but instead of all this pomp and grandeur, he slips into the world, is born in a village, discovered by some poor shepherds, and found by them in a stable, and such a homely cradle as that afforded, only attended by his poor mother, who, though of royal blood, had nothing but goodness to make her eminent; and his education was answerable to his obscure birth, and his whole life a course of humility and self-denial. Now certainly this far best agrees with the design of his appearance, who came not on so mean an errand as to dazzle the eyes of mankind with the appearance of his glory, nor to amaze them with the terribleness of his majesty, much less to make a show of the riches and gallantry of the world among them, but to “bring life and immortality,” and lead men to eternal happiness. In order to which it was necessary, that by his example as well as doctrine, he should disparage the vanities of the world, and bring them out of that credit and esteem they had gotten among foolish men.

I shall proceed no further on this subject; I hope it doth appear that we have great reason to rejoice in the exaltation of the human nature, and the great salvation purchased for us by the incarnation of the SON of GOD. I shall add, that even this joy admits of holy fear; even on this occasion we must rejoice with trembling. Salvation is come into the world, but woe to them that neglect it! The Gospel is preached; but there is great danger in slighting it: let us therefore fear, lest “a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should come short of it.” Little cause have obstinate sinners to rejoice on this festival; the time is coming when they shall wish, that either CHRIST had never come into the world, or they had never heard of him. “Behold, this Child is set for the rise and fall of many;” and they that are not the better, shall be the worse for his coming. One way I must name,

that many men set this Child for their own fall, when they make this solemn anniversary, as if it were indeed a drunken Bacchus, and not a holy JESUS, whom they worshipped. What! because GOD became man, must we therefore become beasts? Or think we to honour that Child with dissoluteness, who came to the world on designs of holiness. This it is, no doubt, that gives many men a prejudice against the festival itself, and perhaps is their most specious argument. We know an answer; but you may and ought to afford another, by removing any ground for such a pretence. Indeed a forenoon's sermon will never compensate an afternoon's debauch; nor will your service in the Church justify your intemperance at home. But as hereby, at least, some time is redeemed from the too frequent courses of the day, so I wish the time we spend here may have some influence towards the right improvement of the rest; that our behaviour on this solemnity may be such, as suits with the infinite holiness of that Person whom we profess to honour; "that we may serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling."

# SERMON VI.

---

## ON THE PASSION OF OUR SAVIOUR.

---

### LAMENTATIONS i. 12.

*Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.*

WE are to-morrow, GOD willing, to be employed in one of the highest and most solemn offices of our religion; to commemorate the death and sufferings of the blessed JESUS, and to receive the sacred pledge of his dying. And how much may the everlasting interests of our souls depend upon the right performing of this work?

It is not time now to discourse of the nature and ends of that sacrament we are about to celebrate; we shall rather fix our thoughts on those things which may have a more immediate influence to dispose us for so near an address to GOD; and I know nothing more proper for this purpose, than the serious consideration of those sufferings of our SAVIOUR, which are to be represented unto us in that holy ordinance.

This passionate complaint of the Prophet JEREMIAH, which we have read, though in its first and literal sense it may refer to the sad condition of the Jewish nation, under the Babylonish captivity, yet certainly in its highest sense, it is only applicable to our blessed SAVIOUR; of him alone it could be said in propriety of speech, that "there was never sorrow like his sorrow."

Let us then consider the words as our SAVIOUR'S complaint of the dulness and stupidity of men, who go up and down in the world, who come and pass without regarding his sufferings, which were so grievous, wherein themselves

are so nearly concerned ; and from thence I would consider these three things :—

I. The greatness of our SAVIOUR'S sufferings expressed in these words ; “ See if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.”

II. Our interest and concern in them insinuated in that passionate interrogation, “ Is it nothing to you ? ”

III. That his sufferings ought not to be passed by, but seriously regarded and considered ; “ Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by ? ”

I. Let us reflect on our SAVIOUR'S sufferings : but O, where shall we begin to recount them ? His whole life, from the manger, his uneasy cradle, unto his cross and grave, was a continued tract of sufferings ; he did all along answer that character given of him by the Prophet, “ A man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs.”

To say nothing of the meanness of his birth, and the pains of circumcision, the persecutions of his infancy, his poverty and want, his travel and weariness, his fasting and watchings, his sweat and his tears, and all the other infirmities incident to human nature, and inconveniences attending a poor and straitened estate, he could not but lead a very afflicted life, considering that he lived in a perverse and wicked generation, and had the continual trouble of being witness to the follies and miscarriages of wicked men ; to hear and see dishonour done unto GOD, by the profaneness of some, and hypocrisy of others ; to observe the covetousness and injustice, the fraud and oppression, the malice and envy, and all the abominable lusts that abounded in the world. We are commonly little concerned in the interests of religion, and therefore apprehend but little trouble in these ; but if the soul of righteous LOT was grieved with the iniquities of the place where he lived, and if DAVID is put to cry out, “ Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar ; ” how deeply do we think the blessed soul of the holy JESUS must needs have been pierced, by every blasphemous word that he heard, by every wicked action he beheld ? Doubtless,

it was no small sorrow that made him cry out, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?" Nor was he a little moved, when his zeal did carry him to that severity, which, if we did not consider the cause, would seem very unlike to the wonted meekness of his spirit, in whipping the traders out of the temple. Add hereunto his tender compassion towards men, which could not but make him exceeding sorry, to see them frustrate the method of his mercy, and ruin themselves by their enmity against him; to hear them reproach the holy doctrine which he taught, and undervalue the miracles which he performed, or else condemn them as the unlawful effects of magic; that though "He came unto his own, yet his own received him not;" though he spake as never man spake, and did such works as would have converted Tyre and Sidon, yet did they baffle their own reason, and persist in their infidelity, because, forsooth, they knew the place and manner of his education; as though his being reputed the Carpenter's son, had been a sufficient answer to all that he could say or do!

This was the occasion of his tears over that wretched and ungrateful city: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes."

We have not time to reflect on all the sad passages which occur in the history of our SAVIOUR'S life; let us fix our eyes a little on some of the last scenes, and we shall find them the blackest that ever were acted on the human nature. At the approach of death, it is said, "He began to be sorrowful," as if he had never felt any grief before: his former afflictions were like scattered drops of rain, but in this great deluge, all the fountains beneath, and all the windows of heaven, were opened; the wrath of God against a sinful world, the malice and cruelty of men, the

rage and fury of devils, break out together against him. If we take the measure of his sufferings by the apprehensions which he had of them before, we shall find that when he is talking with his disciples about them, and encouraging himself and his followers with the assurance of the reward set before them, yet he doth not dissemble the fear and trouble wherewith he was seized: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? FATHER, save me from this hour!" Certainly, if there had been no more in his sufferings, than what is commonly incident to human nature, as to endure pain and death, he who had a perfect innocency, the freest and most entire resignation, the fullest assurance of the reward to come, would never have been so affrighted with the apprehensions of them. The view of that sad night's transaction, wherein he was delivered into the hands of sinners, presents us with a strange and amazing spectacle. Look into the garden, and behold the SON of GOD prostrate with his face upon the ground, in the saddest discomposure of spirit, that could possibly consist with his perfect innocency: he was sorrowful and very heavy, and tells his disciples, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" it seems, had he remained long in this condition, his own grief would have killed him.

Here it was, that he suffered that which the Evangelist calleth an agony; but what the nature and measures of it were, he alone can tell who did feel it: it is not possible for us to comprehend the mixture of that bitter cup; yet we may guess at some of the ingredients of it.

And first, without question, he had a clearer foresight of that painful and cursed death which he was so shortly after to undergo. This king of terrors did represent himself unto him in his greatest pomp, clothed with all the circumstances of horror, and even this could not but be very dreadful, perhaps more to him than it would have been to some other person. This is a sort of natural stoutness and courage, depending much on the constitution of the body, and which doth commonly accompany the

roughest and most stubborn natures, when those of a more sweet and benign disposition are many times obnoxious to deeper impressions of fear; and it will not derogate from the honour of our blessed SAVIOUR, though we should suppose, that amongst other infirmities, he might be liable to this natural and innocent passion. The true greatness of the soul doth not consist in the vigour of the natural spirits, nor the sturdy boldness of an undaunted humour; but in a holy steadfastness and resolution to undergo those things which are dreadful to nature.

But, certainly, the fear of death was neither the only, nor the greatest thing that troubled our SAVIOUR's spirit at that time; he had another sad and more dreadful prospect, the heinous and innumerable sins of mankind, whose nature he had taken, and whose iniquities he was to bear. He saw the whole world lying in wickedness, and ready to drop into eternal flames; he saw the anger of GOD kindled, and his hand lifted up, and he knew that the stroke would light upon himself, and that the chastisement of our peace was to be upon him.

And doubtless it added not a little unto his grief, that he knew that all that he had done, and all that he was about to suffer, would be despised by the greatest part of mankind. It grieved him to think, that many thousands, who were to be called by his name, would prove so base and unthankful, as to reject his love, and baffle his passion, and make a by-word of his blood and wounds; that one would prefer a strumpet, another his cups, a third his money, to the mercies of a gracious GOD, and the unspeakable kindness of a dying Saviour.

Briefly, in this agony, our SAVIOUR did struggle with the violent passion of fear and grief, which racked his joints, and stretched his sinews, till in that cold night, and in that open air, a sweat, and that of blood, did issue forth and moisten his garments, and tumbled down unto the ground. Now he came from "Bozrah with his garments dyed red; he had trodden the wine-press alone, and of the

people there was none with him." And now, behold, and see "if there was any sorrow like unto his sorrow."

But now he awaketh his drowsy disciples, and calls them to rise and be going, for "behold he is at hand that betrays him." And scarce had he spoken the word, when behold the traitor, and with him a great multitude from the Chief Priests and Elders of the people; they come out as against a thief, with swords and staves, for to take him. That monster of ingratitude gives them the signal, and with a horrid impudence dares approach his infamous and sacrilegious lips to that sacred and venerable face; which we may reckon the first wound he received from his enemies. O what an indignity, to be kissed by a traitor, an apostate, an enemy to God, possessed by the Devil, and who was to be lodged in hell ere twenty-four hours expired! And, O, the insuperable meekness of our blessed SAVIOUR, who suffers the indignity, and checks it with no harsher terms than this: "Friend, wherefore art thou come? JUDAS, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" Then he turneth unto the armed bands, and saith unto them, "Whom seek ye?" they answered him, JESUS of Nazareth. JESUS saith unto them, I am he." The meekness of this answer astonished the soldiers; and the power that accompanied it made them go back and fall to the ground. And why did they not fall into hell? The wicked enterprise they were presently about to do, did justly deserve it, and how easy was it for him to have done it? But his goodness restrained him: he meant them no harm, but intended this fall to help them to rise; that the consideration of it, and the other evidences of his divinity, might one day bring them to a sense of their sin: nor will he any farther employ his miraculous power, but only in the cure of an enemy, whom his too forward disciple had wounded. But this doth not abate their malice: they lay hold on him, and drag him away, in great hurry and uproar, through that city where he had done so much good, and into which he had been lately received with joy and triumph,

and loud acclamations, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD." They carry him from ANNAS to CAIAPHAS, from CAIAPHAS to PILATE, from PILATE to HEROD, from HEROD to PILATE again; treating him with all the indignities, all the instances of scorn and contempt that their malice could suggest.

Now though our extreme impatience of ignominies and affronts, does much proceed from the pride and haughtiness of our spirits, yet there is in them a contrariety even to the innocent constitution of human nature: shame and disgrace are troublesome to all ingenuous spirits, so that though they could not raise any immoderate passion in our blessed SAVIOUR, yet his blessed spirit had a great abhorrence and detestation of that base and unworthy usage, which was infinitely heightened by the excellency of the person who suffered it.

What loyal heart can read or hear of the indignities done by the rude soldiers to our late Sovereign, but with regret and abhorrence? But, alas! what are they, if compared with those that were put upon the King of Heaven, when they scoffed and reproached him, when they smote him on the cheek, and bound those hands which had cured so many diseases, and defiled that sacred face with spittle, which saints and angels delight to behold? All which he suffered with that meekness the Prophet had foretold: "He gave his back to the smiters, and his cheek to them that plucked off the hair; he did not hide his face from shame and spitting." They would needs be ingenuous in their scoffings, and mock him in all his offices; he was a Prophet, and they desire him to prophesy who it was that smote him; he was a Priest, and they bid him save himself as he did others; he was a King, and they crown him with thorns, and array him with scarlet, and put a reed in his hand, and in scorn salute him, "King of the Jews." Add unto this, the violence done unto his virgin modesty, when he was stripped naked in the view of the rude multitude.

But though it pleased their malice to have him exposed

to all indignities imaginable, yet nothing would satisfy it, but his torment and his death; he hath already had trial of cruel mockings, and now he must have scourgings too; they whip him with violent and unrelenting hands, tearing his tender flesh, and making long furrows in it. And now "Behold the man!" Behold him in that miserable plight wherein PILATE brought him forth, thinking to have appeased the malice of the Jews, his head pierced with briars, his face blue with strokes, his hands bound, that he could not so much as wipe off the blood which trickled down his eyes, his whole body discoloured with the marks of the scourge; from the top of his head to the sole of his foot, there was no soundness in him. "Was there ever any sorrow like unto his sorrow?"

There remaineth yet another scene, a very sad and dismal one: when nothing could prevail with the Jews, PILATE yieldeth, and delivereth our SAVIOUR to their hands: they carry him away so faint and weak with what he had already endured, that he could not bear the weight of his cross, but another must carry it for him; but now they nail him unto it, hang him up betwixt two thieves, as the most notorious of the three. It cannot be expressed how painful this kind of death was; the very stretching forth of the arms without any weight, can hardly be endured any considerable time; but when the weight of the body did hang upon them, and thereby they tear the wounds that were made in the hands; when this torment was continued till pain alone had overcome the power of nature, and forced the soul to dislodge without any hurt to the vital parts, scarce any could be invented more cruel; to say nothing of the shame that attended it, being only destined for the meanest slaves, and the greatest offenders; those, whom the lowness of their condition, or the greatness of their crimes, made unworthy of any respect. In this sad and painful posture, did our SAVIOUR hang, without any thing to cover him: the holy angels, who were accustomed to serve him upon other occasions, do now disappear, not one of them to strengthen or relieve

him: as for men, miserable comforters are they all; the soldiers scoff at him; those that pass by exult over him; a companion of his sufferings adds unto them by his reproaches; his disciples had forsaken him; one of them had betrayed him, another forsworn him, a third run away from him naked, that he might not be apprehended with him. Indeed, some devout women followed him out of the city, but their compassion did so little ease his grief, that he desired them to reserve their tears for the calamities that were to befall themselves: “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.”

He beheld the two persons that were the dearest to him in the world, his mother and his friend, sitting under the cross, but all that they could do was but to lament and mourn, and this but redoubled his sorrow: his blessed mother was bathed in tears, and felt the effects of old SIMEON’S prophecy, that “a sword should pierce through her soul;” and the beloved disciple, who was wont to lie in his bosom, lay still very near his heart; and it was a real suffering unto him, to see the anguish and sorrow whereinto his sufferings had cast them. Whither, then, could he look for comfort, but unto heaven? To whom could he flee, but to the arms of his Father? But, O what strange, what astonishing words do we hear: “My GOD, my GOD, why hast thou forsaken me?” Wonder, O earth; be astonished O ye heavens! At this, men and angels admire and stand amazed! Goodness and innocence itself forsaken by the Author and Fountain of goodness! The SON of GOD deserted by his heavenly Father! Certainly, the soul of our blessed SAVIOUR was still united to the divine nature, and was still as dear unto his Father, as before; only the joyful sense of the divine love was suspended for a while; the faculties of his soul were decomposed, and a veil as it were drawn before the eyes of his mind, which intercepted the light of his Father’s countenance, so that he felt not those refreshing emanations which in the course of his life the Deity conveyed

unto him ; and in that sad moment, his mind seems to have been so intent upon his sufferings, that he was diverted from the actual consideration of that glory which he purchased by them. Now to be thus suspended from the perfect vision of God, to be divorced as it were from himself, and to lose those inward comforts which were wont to sustain him in all his adversities ; how cutting must it needs be to his soul, so pure and holy, and which had so high a value for the divine love ? Consider then, and see, “ if ever there was any sorrow like unto his sorrow.”

Now it is finished, the sharp conflict is at a close, one cry more, and the blessed “ JESUS bowed down his head, and yielded up the ghost : ” no wonder then, if the powers of heaven and earth be moved ; the earth trembleth and shaketh, the rocks are rent, the graves are opened, the veil of the temple was rent in two, the sun himself shrunk in his beams, and darkness covered the face of the earth ; which a learned man of Greece is said to have observed at that time, and from thence to have concluded, that either the God of nature suffered violence, or that the frame of the world was about to dissolve : *aut Deus naturæ patitur, aut machina mundi solvitur*. Thus we have given you some rude, imperfect hints of his great and unspeakable sufferings, but, oh, how little of them do we understand to good purpose ! It was for this reason, the ancient Fathers of the Greek Church, in their Liturgy, after they have recounted all the particular pains as they are set down in his passion, and by all and every one of them called for mercy, after all shut up with this supplication : ‘ By thine unknown sorrows and sufferings felt by thee, but not distinctly known by us, have mercy upon us and save us.’

II. We proceed in the next place, to consider the interest that we have in the sufferings of our SAVIOUR. Is it nothing to you ? Have you no interest nor concern at all in them ? Much certainly, every way ; we were the occasion of his sufferings, and the benefits of them redound unto us. When we see a person undergo any sad and grievous punishment, we cannot choose but inquire into

the grounds and occasions of their sufferings; and the rather, if they have the reputation of innocence and integrity; and here, not only the most innocent, but the most excellent Person that ever was in the world, undergoes those dreadful sufferings which we mentioned before, who never had done any sin, "neither was guile found in mouth;" so that the judge who condemned him, first condemned himself by a solemn acknowledgment of his innocence; he had gone up and down all his days doing good, and scattering blessings where he came, healing the sick, restoring sight to the blind, and making the lame to walk, the dumb to speak, and the deaf to hear, feeding the hungry, and instructing all that would vouchsafe to hear him. For which of all these good works is he punished? Death is the wages of sin. The Prophet ISAIAH gives us this answer: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: Yet did we esteem him stricken, smitten of GOD, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. MESSIAH was cut off, but not for himself. He bare our sins in his own body on the tree, and gave his life a ransom for many." The race of mankind, by their apostasy from GOD, were become liable to his wrath, and all the dreadful effects of his vengeance; the eternal SON of GOD, the Wisdom of the FATHER, whose delights were always with the sons of men, resolveth to make up the breach, and restore us again unto his Father's love; but first, he must repair the honour of GOD, and secure the authority of the divine law, which could not be done, but by some signal evidence of GOD's displeasure against sin, and some valuable compensation of the punishment which had been denounced against it; and therefore, himself was pleased to take our nature upon him, appear in the similitude of sinful flesh, to lead a miserable and afflicted life in the world, and at last to offer it up as a

propitiation for us ; that “ mercy and truth might meet together, and righteousness and peace might kiss each other ; ” and that “ GOD might at once be just, and also the Justifier of him that believeth in JESUS. ” Thus then, the blessed JESUS endureth all these dreadful sufferings for us and for our sins ; in vain do we exclaim against the treason of JUDAS, the malice of the Jews, the injustice of PILATE, we have ourselves and our iniquities to blame : Our covetousness and ambition exposed him to poverty and contempt, our excess and intemperance made him hunger and thirst, our levity and foolish mirth were the occasion of the anguish and bitterness of his soul, our sensual and sinful pleasures were the occasion of all the pains and tortures which he endured ; and is it nothing unto us ? Shall we think ourselves unconcerned in these sad effects, whereof we were the unhappy cause ?

Again, we are concerned in our SAVIOUR'S sufferings, as the benefits of them redound unto us : “ by his stripes we are healed. We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins. ” GOD was in CHRIST reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ; we have access unto the throne of GOD, and “ boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of JESUS, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh. ” But this is not all : “ GOD hath not only set him forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood, for the remission of those sins that are past ; ” but doth also for his sake, bestow on us that grace, whereby we may be enabled to “ serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives. ” An amnesty or act of oblivion for past offences would never have served the turn, we should presently have run ourselves upon another score : nay, sin itself had been enough to make us miserable, though no other punishment had been inflicted upon us : and therefore he does not only cover our sins, but cures them ; he forgives all our iniquities, and healeth all our diseases ; as we are justified by his sufferings, so we are “ sanctified too,

through the offering of the body of **JESUS CHRIST** once for all." In a word, by the merits of our **SAVIOUR** we are both reconciled to **GOD**, and made partakers of the divine nature; and we are both delivered from everlasting darkness, "and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light: And now is it nothing to us? Can we think ourselves unconcerned in these sufferings, from which we reap so great, so unspeakable advantages?"

III. Having spoken of the greatness of our **SAVIOUR'S** sufferings, and the interest which we have in them, we need to say little of the third particular which we proposed; you cannot but be convinced that we ought to regard and consider them. Were it nothing to us, the very strangeness of the thing would deserve our notice: the holy angels desire to pry into this mystery; they will contemplate and admire it to all eternity; and surely we are far more nearly concerned. What an unaccountable dulness and negligence is it, then, for men to go up and down the world, amusing themselves with every trifle, hearing and telling of news, about matters of the smallest importance, and never to consider the stupendous sufferings of their dying **SAVIOUR**! They walk to and fro, they come and pass, and scarce vouchsafe to look upon him; or if they chance to cast their eyes that way, it is a very short view, they presently turn them away; and this occasions the complaint of the text: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" But sure I am, we can no where behold an object so worthy of our most serious and solemn regards. The whole world does not afford so useful and edifying a prospect; here it is that we may best learn the heinous nature of sin, which could not be pardoned at a smaller rate; here it is that we may discover most of the divine bounty and goodness to mankind, and the inexpressible love of our blessed **SAVIOUR** and **REDEEMER**, which are the most important lessons that we can learn. This made the blessed Apostle to determine to "know nothing but **CHRIST** and him crucified; to count all things but loss for the excellency of **CHRIST JESUS** his Lord."

Let me therefore exhort you to fix the eyes of your mind, and call up your most serious attention ; reach hither the hand of your faith, and thrust it into the hole of our SAVIOUR'S side ; put your fingers into the print of his nails ; lay to heart all the passages of his lamentable story : and this cannot choose but melt your hearts, unless they be harder than rocks, and deafer than the bodies in the grave. Let us fix our eyes, I say, on this astonishing object, until our eyes affect our heart ; that while we are musing the fire may burn. Let us mourn for those sins wherewith we have crucified the LORD of glory, and be grieved that ever we should have put him to so much anguish and pain ; and let us vow a perpetual enmity against our lusts and corrupt affections, which would crucify him afresh, and put him to an open shame. Let us consider and admire the wonderful love of our dying SAVIOUR, that our souls may be kindled with reciprocal flames, wherein we may offer up ourselves as a living and acceptable sacrifice unto him ; that thus, "CHRIST dwelling in our hearts by faith, we may be rooted and grounded in love ; comprehending with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ; and knowing the love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge, that so we may be filled with all the fulness of GOD." Such meditations and exercises as these will purify and raise our souls, and best dispose us for approaching to the table of the LORD ; and the LORD pour out upon us "the spirit of grace and supplication, that we may look upon him whom we have pierced, and mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born."

END OF VOL. XXIII.

