
This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

<https://books.google.com>





AH 6SDJ 7

**HARVARD DEPOSITORY
SPECIAL COLLECTION
CIRCULATION RESTRICTED**

~~Placed in the Harvard Divinity School
Andover-Harvard Theological Library~~

HARVARD
DIVINITY
SCHOOL
*Andover-Harvard
Theological Library*

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY:

BY

JOHN GOODWIN, A.M.

SELECTED AND SYSTEMATICALLY ARRANGED:

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

BY SAMUEL DUNN.

Discarded by authority of the
Andover-Harvard Theological Library

“He had a clear head, a fluent tongue, a penetrating spirit, and a
marvellous faculty in descanting on Scripture.”

DR. CALAMY.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY THOMAS TEGG & SON, 73, CHEAPSIDE;
R. GRIFFIN & Co., GLASGOW; AND TEGG,
WISE, & Co., DUBLIN.

MDCCCXXXVI.

ANDOVER-HARVARD
THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

H 66, 979

May 24, 1943

629
Goodwin

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

LONDON :—Printed by James Nichols, 46, Hoxton-Square.

PREFACE.

IN the constellation of eminent men that appeared in the time of the civil wars and the interregnum, John Goodwin shone with peculiar lustre. During that stormy and eventful period he took a prominent part in most of the subjects that were discussed. The volumes which he sent forth into the world, though not bulky, were rather numerous. When they were first published they excited considerable attention; but perhaps there have been few instances in which works of so much intrinsic worth have been so unpopular. Like his great contemporary, Milton, he "fell on evil tongues and evil times." And if the writings of the great Bard could scarcely stem the torrent of opposition with which they had to contend, it is not surprising, that the sober productions of our author sunk under the numerous and gross misrepresentations of his political and his doctrinal foes. His works were discarded by the Calvinists, because he was an Arminian; and they were neglected by the Arminians, who were chiefly Royalists, in consequence of his having taken part against the unfortunate Charles I.

Warm admirers as we profess to be of the man, and of his writings, in general, his political aberration is a part of his character that we wish to "cast discreetly into shade." The republication of any thing that he has written on politics we should deeply regret, especially in an age when the rights of God and of Cæsar are equally threatened by a spirit of reckless innovation and of subtle policy.

Most of his other pieces are controversial ; and, from the nature of the subjects discussed, and of the style in which they are written, cannot be very attractive to general readers. They are not, therefore, likely soon, if ever, to be republished. Numerous, however, are their excellencies. They contain much rich and sound theology, and many passages of great force and beauty. These, in all probability, would be irrecoverably lost,—as the volumes are becoming extremely scarce,—unless selected and presented in some other form. This I have endeavoured to accomplish. The choicest portions of his works, illustrative of Christian doctrines, duties, and privileges, (after the lapse of nearly two hundred years since they were written,) will be found, in systematic arrangement, in this volume. Thus “he, being dead, yet speaketh.”

The following testimonies from individuals of different denominations to Goodwin’s extraordinary powers may be interesting to the reader :—

DR. JOHN OWEN.

“HE is a person whom his worth, pains, diligence, and opinions, and the contests wherein, on their account, he hath publicly engaged, have delivered him from being the object of any ordinary thoughts or expressions. Nothing not great, not considerable, not some way eminent, is by any spoken of him, either consenting with him, or dissenting from him.”

DR. BARLOW, BISHOP OF LINCOLN.

“I ALWAYS find, in the prosecution of his arguments, that perspicuity and acuteness which I often seek, but seldom find, in the writings of others.”

DR. CALAMY.

“HE had a clear head, a fluent tongue, a penetrating spirit, and a marvellous faculty in descanting on Scripture.”

THE REV. JOB ORTON.

“His great learning, good sense, and extraordinary style for that day, render his works worth reading.”

WALTER WILSON, ESQ.

“THAT Goodwin was a man of considerable learning, is evident from his writings, as well as from the testimony of learned men; and he seems to have possessed a remarkable talent for disputation.”

THE REV. WILLIAM ORME.

“JOHN GOODWIN was one of the most extraordinary men of his age and profession, whose opinions, talents, and contests rendered him an object of no ordinary attention, and whose controversial powers were of the highest order.”

THE REV JOHN HANNAH.

“GOODWIN often pours forth a stream of sacred eloquence which could flow only from a fountain of truth and piety, opened by Divine mercy in his own breast. His style is rich, copious, and forceful; it is crowded with thought, adorned with well-selected metaphors and allusions, and removed to the greatest possible distance from the puerile inanity which disgraces much modern composition.”

THE REV. THOMAS JACKSON.

“JOHN GOODWIN, the learned author of the following tracts, lived in a stirring and eventful age. The principles of government, both civil and ecclesiastical, the subjects and mode of baptism, religious toleration, the decrees of God, and the extent of human redemption, the personality and work of the Holy Spirit, were then subjects of eager controversy; and he took a distinguished part in the discussion of all these interesting topics. As a reasoner, few men have ever excelled him in clearness and strength, and in command of temper.

—The singular ingenuity and talent displayed in his writings on this and other topics, and his magnanimity when assailed by numerous and powerful opponents, and exposed to the most irritating provocations and unjust treatment, have often been the subjects of admiration and panegyric. It is also highly honourable to him, though the fact is little known, that he was the first of our countrymen who excited general attention by writing distinctly and explicitly in defence of universal liberty of conscience, as one of the most sacred rights of human nature.”

MY cordial acknowledgments are here presented to the Rev. Thomas Jackson, for his great kindness in furnishing me with several scarce volumes of Goodwin, which I had sought in vain elsewhere. And I take this opportunity of recommending most heartily to all my readers, who wish to become more fully acquainted with our author, that gentleman's admirable *Life of Goodwin*, which is written with his accustomed accuracy, judgment, and moderation; and to which I have been greatly indebted for most valuable materials in preparing the subjoined brief account of Goodwin. He has also written a Preface to an interesting volume, lately published, containing Goodwin's very satisfactory Exposition of Romans ix.; “The Banner of Justification;” and “The Agreement and Distance of Brethren.”

TADCASTER,
June 13th, 1836.

CONTENTS.

	Page:
LIFE OF GOODWIN	9
I.—THE SCRIPTURES	47
II.—GOD	100
III.—MAN	118
IV.—CHRIST	125
V.—GENERAL REDEMPTION	131
VI.—REPENTANCE	185
VII.—FAITH	187
VIII.—JUSTIFICATION	207
IX.—REGENERATION	234
X.—THE HOLY SPIRIT	239
XI.—SANCTIFICATION	263
XII.—PRACTICAL PIETY	309
XIII.—PRAYER	324

	Page.
XIV.—PARENTS AND CHILDREN	337
XV.—MINISTERS AND PEOPLE.....	339
XVI.—GOOD AND BAD ANGELS	361
XVII.—AFFLICTIONS	369
XVIII.—APOSTASY	394
XIX.—DEATH	429
XX.—JUDGMENT.....	432
XXI.—HELL	435
XXII.—HEAVEN.....	440

THE LIFE
OF
JOHN GOODWIN, A.M.

Among the master spirits of the seventeenth century, John Goodwin holds a distinguished rank. Respecting the condition of his parents, and the circumstances of his early life, we are unacquainted with any particulars. He was a native of Norfolk, and was born in the year 1593. His academical education he received at Cambridge, where he took the degree of M.A., and was elected Fellow of Queen's College, November 10th, 1617. On his leaving the college he was admitted into orders, and became much admired for the erudition and elegance which distinguished his pulpit compositions.

After preaching some time at Raynum, Lynn, Yarmouth, and Norwich, he went to London in 1632; and, on December 18th, 1633, was presented to the vicarage of St. Stephen's, Coleman-street. He had not been long here, before he was called to endure a portion of those troubles which awaited such ministers as could not satisfy themselves with a rigorous conformity. At this time Laud, archbishop of Canterbury, ruled the king's subjects with a rod of iron. Many useful ministers who exhibited any scruples concerning the superstitious observances which he introduced, were, at his pleasure, admonished, suspended, or deprived of their livings. In the account which his grace presented to the king concerning the state of his province, after his visitation in the summer of 1637, among other ministers who had been convened for breach of canons, mention is made of Goodwin; but as he and his fellow-

delinquents "promised amendment for the future," it is said, that "my lord very moderately forbore farther proceedings against them."

Goodwin had not been long in the metropolis before the sentiments which he had publicly advanced on the doctrine of justification created no small opposition ; and, in 1638, he and his opponents were cited to appear before the diocesan ; and charged, on pain of episcopal censure, to desist from all further discussions, in the pulpit, of the points at issue between them. The following account of the matter was presented by the archbishop to the king :—"In the diocese and city of London, there was like to be some distraction, both among the ministers and the people ; occasioned at first by some over-nice curiosities, preached by one Mr. Goodwin, vicar of St. Stephen's, Coleman-street, concerning the imputation of Christ's righteousness in the justification of a sinner. But the differences arising about it were timely prevented by convention of the parties dissenting. And so, God be thanked, that business is at peace."

Goodwin, about this time, published, with a commendatory preface, a volume of sermons by "that faithful, vigilant, and painful minister of the word, the Rev. William Fenner, B. D., sometime Fellow of Pembroke Hall in Cambridge, and late Parson of Rochford in Essex." "True worth," he modestly observes, "especially when it overcomes, and breaks out of the cloud of obscurity, always returns more than what it receives from any man's testimony ; neither is there any method or trade so proper and certain, whereby to raise an estate of honour and reputation to a man's self, as the bestowing honour and reputation upon others, so he be careful and dexterous in the choice of his subject. John Baptist, by giving testimony only to one, Jesus Christ, outgrew the common stature of those that are born of women, in true greatness. And yet there was

little or nothing, in effect, added to Christ himself by his testimony. It is an ingenuous and inoffensive way to serve ourselves out of other men's excellencies, by advancing them; neither do the generality of men in their practice more generally consent upon any principle of reason and equity than this,—to recompense such men with terms of honour who are impartial and free in subscribing and acknowledging the worth and eminence of others. And as many that are but of mean condition in the world otherwise, yet maintain themselves comfortably by trimming and dressing the gardens, and orchards, and vineyards of the rich; nay, men that want other personal abilities and excellencies of their own, subsist upon terms of convenient reputation, only by vindicating, adorning, and setting forth the endowments and graceful parts of others."

He also wrote prefaces to FENNER'S "*Divine Message to the Elect Soul*;" RAMSDEN'S "*Gleaning of God's Harvest*;" and "*Satan's Stratagems*, by JACOBUS ACONTIUS."

In 1640, he published a small volume entitled, "The Saint's Interest in God opened, in several Sermons preached anniversarily upon the fifth, of November." We cannot but admire the views and feelings which he entertained on appearing for the first time as an author. He remarks, "I am not conscious either of forwardness or backwardness of being made public. The judgments of men, if they could agree, may easily overrule me either way. It argues some distemper of spirit, to be importune upon the world with a man's private conceptions; neither is it the best posture to put the world upon importunity with us, to purchase them, if they have a mind to them."

The king having allowed the convocation to continue its sittings after the dissolution of parliament in 1640, the clergy passed several articles, which asserted in the strongest manner the divine right of kings, and the

absolute unlawfulness of resistance, even in self-defence. All "sectaries" who persisted in their non-attendance at church, were threatened with excommunication; and all schoolmasters, lawyers, physicians, and the clergy in general, were peremptorily required to declare, upon oath, their entire approbation of the doctrines and government of the church as by law established, and their determination never to consent to any alteration of either. Of these arbitrary proceedings, Goodwin was not an indifferent spectator. He, and others of the London clergy, drew up a petition against them to the privy council; and, to give it the more weight, they procured a large number of signatures. Many in the country followed their example, and so great was the outcry against the conduct of the bishops, that the king saw it necessary to issue an order to Laud to relax his severity.

Goodwin published two other small volumes in 1641, entitled, "God a good Master and Protector;" and "The Return of Mercies; or, the Saints' Advantage by Losses." The former of these was dedicated to "Mrs. Elizabeth Hampden," the mother of the celebrated John Hampden; and the latter to "Lady Clark, of Reading." To both of these distinguished ladies, Goodwin appears to have been under considerable personal obligations.

A few months after, he published "The Christian's Engagement for the Gospel," which he dedicated to the "worshipful and much honoured John Pymme, Esq.;" who, it seems, had been previously known to Goodwin by "some particular acquaintance;" the discontinuance and decrease of which, he imputed only to his own unworthiness and negligence in addressing himself to Pymme. The same volume contained, "Christ's Approbation of Mary's Choice; or a Sermon preached at the Funeral of Mrs. Abbot;" "the daughter," says Goodwin, "of my very loving and much-respected friend, Mr. John Lamot, merchant, of London." The

character of this interesting lady is admirably drawn :—
“The zeal of heaven, and of the salvation of her soul, had even eaten her up. The delights and contentments of the world, which are wont deeply to engage the affections of the daughters of men, (especially of her rank and years, being but about twenty-six at her death,) and to steal away their hearts from God, and from the noble and blessed contentments of heaven, had little or no power over her ; they intermeddled little with her spirit ; she trod and trampled upon them with a foot of heavenly disdain ; her heart was soft and tender upwards ; but downwards towards the world, hard as the nether mill-stone. When God spake, he wounded her ; the world cried and she regarded not. Those cages of unclean birds, the common theatres and playhouses,—the shame and reproach of the glorious profession of Jesus Christ amongst us, so much haunted by unclean spirits, both of men and women ; to whom modesty and sobriety, surely, are a burden, and thither they go for ease and deliverance,—places where, if a man sought for company in the way to hell, he may find choice of all sorts ; where, I had almost said, a man may read whole pages of God’s book of reprobation ;—these, I say, with all their execrable appurtenances, the soul of this religious gentlewoman loathed and abhorred. They were the first-born of abominations unto her. So for the costly vanity of apparel ; though she sat by a fountain where she might have drank her fill of these waters, she regarded it not. Her usual saying was, that she did not love to be talked of for her fine clothes. But especially that great goddess of her sex, worshipped with so much devotion, both by young and old, I mean fancy or fashion in apparel, she blasphemed. For richness of furniture in her house, another solemn temptation for her sex, to add drunkenness to thirst, superfluity to necessity, she did not so much contemn as neglect it. She did not affect or desire to have her face

seen by others in the glass of any such glory. She was taken up with working out her salvation, and making robes of immortality for her soul. And those that could speak the language of Canaan, and discourse the ways of life unto her, and minister in any way to her spiritual necessities, though the gold ring were wanting, and the costly apparel appeared not, were they persons of never so mean rank and condition in the world; yet were they a joy and rejoicing of heart unto her. As, on the other hand, no earthly privilege, no greatness in the world, no accomplishments of nature, could make an atonement with her for light and loose and unsavoury spirits, to cause her to take pleasure in them. As long as she had any being, though never so feeble, her resolutions remained as strong as ever to praise the Lord. The very night before her death; she presented this sacrifice of prayer upon her knees. And, by the blessing of God upon her diligent labours in searching the Scriptures, she had attained a marvellous readiness in them, and was able ordinarily to supply the defect of a concordance, and to assign any clause or passage of Scripture mentioned to her, to its proper place, both for book and chapter. The house of God, and a golden shower from heaven in the ministry of the Gospel, were the strength of her life, and the great consolation of her pilgrimage. Her attention to the words of eternal life in the mouths of God's messengers, was constantly so reverent, serious, and undistracted, that it was the observation, together with the rejoicing, of some that had communion with her in that ordinance,—these spiritual clouds could never drop fatness, but she was ready, if she knew when the time of their dropping was, with the vessel of her soul to receive it."

In the same year he published "Animadversions upon some of the looser and fouler passages of Mr. Walker's Discourse." This Mr. Walker was Rector of St. John the Evangelist, Watling-street, London. In his unpro-

voked attack upon our author, on the subject of justification, he did not hesitate to apply to him the following epithets :—" Socinian, liar, lying sophister, impudent fellow, heretic, blasphemer," &c. The reply of Goodwin is a noble display of true dignity and of Christian meekness :—" The great God," says he, " by whom I must be judged, as well concerning my carriage in this business, as the other acts of my life, knoweth that I stand clear and free in my spirit to the man, notwithstanding his sevenfold provocation, wishing him no more evil than I do to myself, and am ready at an hour, upon the acknowledgment of his oversight, to give him the right hand of fellowship."

During the long and unhappy contest between Charles and the parliament, finding, perhaps, that it was impossible, from his public situation, to maintain strict neutrality, Goodwin employed his influence, and apparently with great sincerity, for the parliamentary interest ; and, in 1642, published two tracts, which he entitled, " The Butcher's Blessing ; or, The Bloody Intentions of Romish Cavaliers, against the City of London, demonstrated by five arguments ;" and " Anti-Cavalierism ; or, Truth pleading as well the Necessity as the Lawfulness of the present War." Williams, bishop of Ossory, warmly controverted several passages in the latter of these publications, which soon brought forth from the pen of Goodwin " Os Ossorianum : Or, a Bone for a Bishop to pick." Whatever arguments these pamphlets may contain, in favour of what he calls " the benefit and sweetness of this blessing of liberty," for the active and prominent part which he, as a minister of Christ, took in the contest between his sovereign and the parliament, he cannot, perhaps, be justified ; and it is with pleasure that the mind turns from his tracts on secular politics, to survey his pastoral labours, his patient sufferings, and his theological discussions.

Notwithstanding the unmeaning noise of popular

clamour which was raised against the sentiments which he had avowed concerning the imputation of faith for righteousness, Goodwin found that a good conscience was a constant paradise; he enjoyed the firm attachment and support of the pious among his parishioners, and was the honoured instrument of delivering some of them from destructive error. One instance is worthy of being recorded. Mr. William Allen, "a gentleman," says Baxter, "of extraordinary sincerity and understanding," gives, in a letter which bears the date of 1672, the following statement:—"I was taken in the snare of antinomianism, about thirty-seven or thirty-eight years ago, not being able to withstand the insinuations of it, and yet to retain the opinion of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, in that notion of it in which I had been instructed; and never recovered myself till I heard Mr. John Goodwin. The experience of what I suffered myself, and occasioned others to suffer, by my running into those errors, hath put me upon doing more to warn others against them, or recover them out of them, than otherwise I should have thought fit for me to have done." It was in the year 1642, that Goodwin published his "*Imputatio Fidei: Or, a Treatise of Justification; wherein the Imputation of Faith for Righteousness (mentioned Rom. iv. 3-5) is explained, and also the great Question largely handled, whether the active Obedience of Christ, performed to the moral Law, be imputed in Justification, or no, or how it is imputed: wherein, likewise, many other Difficulties and Questions, touching the great business of Justification, namely, the Matter and Form thereof, &c., are opened and cleared; together with the Explication of divers Scriptures, which partly speak, partly seem to speak, to the Matter herein discussed.*" The Rev. John Wesley, in the year 1763, abridged this invaluable treatise with his accustomed skill; and in one of his publications says, "I desire no one will condemn that

treatise, before he has read it over, and that seriously and carefully ; for it can hardly be understood by a slight and cursory reading. And let whoever has read it declare whether the author has not proved every article he asserts, not only by plain express scripture, but by the authority of the most eminent Reformers." It should certainly be attentively read by every individual who wishes thoroughly to understand one of the most important doctrines within the whole compass of Christian theology.

The parliament having the year before abolished episcopacy in England, Goodwin, in 1644, defended Independency against Dr. Adam Stewart, in a pamphlet entitled, "A Reply of two of the Brethren to A. S., &c. ; with a Plea for Liberty of Conscience ;" in which he unhesitatingly avows his conviction, that all descriptions of people who conduct themselves in a peaceable and orderly manner are entitled to the full protection of the civil power, whatever may be the peculiarities of their creed. Shortly after, he published a tract under the title of "The grand Imprudence of Men running the Hazard of Fighting against God, in suppressing, any Way, Doctrine, or Practice ; concerning which they know not certainly whether it be from God or no." This pamphlet provoked the wrath of the notorious Prynne, who, contending for the divine right of Presbyterianism, and unwilling that any who refused to bow to its authority should be tolerated, attempted to refute Goodwin's arguments ; and, that he might appear odious to the secular power, and be exposed to a state-prosecution, most unfairly attacked his personal character. Goodwin defended his own conduct in a tract entitled "Innocency's Triumph ;" and vindicated his principles in his "Innocency and Truth triumphing together." In his address to the reader, he nobly says : "Of any wrong done to myself I will not complain ; but I know a man who hath been forsaken of his

friends ; found those of his own house to be his enemies ; who hath been reviled, traduced, reproached ; waylaid by tongues, by pens, by practices ; reported to have lost his wits, abilities, parts ; suffered loss of his due and necessary subsistence, wrongfully detained from him, and for which he hath laboured faithfully ; brought before rulers and magistrates ; represented to sovereign authority as a wilful and presumptuous underminer of their undoubted privileges, and that diametrically contrary to his vows and covenant ; besides twenty more hard sayings and practices of men against him ; and all this for no other cause, upon none other ground or exception, but only because he holds forth such a truth, as in all his heart and all his soul he is verily persuaded, which, if entertained, is like to bless the world, though it be as by fire ; I mean, by casting down the present thoughts, and crossing the present desires and designs of many in it. Of the injuries and indignities offered to such a man, I have cause, with many others, to complain : But for any sufferings or evil entreaties of mine own from men, I count it beneath my engagements to Him who strengthened me to do and to suffer all things, to stoop to take up any lamentation or complaint." Prynne attempted a refutation in a most intemperate pamphlet ; this shortly brought from Goodwin, "Calumny arraigned and cast ; or, a brief Answer to some extravagant and rank Passages lately fallen from the Pen of William Prynne, Esquire." He was also assailed at this time by the noted John Vicars, a great admirer of Prynne. Of this opponent he took no notice ; but Mr. Daniel Taylor, a highly respectable member of Goodwin's church, sent him a spirited reply. "Concerning Mr. John Goodwin," he remarks, "over whom you shake the rod of your reproof, as if he were one of your scholars, I could speak as high and excellent encomiums, as you have spoken of your 'precious gentleman.'—I could compare him even with Mr.

Prynne himself; but such a comparison as this would be to me most odious.—I could tell you what he hath done, what he hath writ, how deeply he hath suffered from unreasonable men; yea, I could give you such a lively and bright description of him, as would dazzle your eyes to look upon, and make you blush for shame, to have grappled with such a person as he is, upon such rude and unmannerly terms as you have done.”

Having, in 1645, undergone several examinations before the “Committee for plundered Ministers,” because he had refused to administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper promiscuously to his parishioners, he was unrighteously expelled from his vicarage with a wife and seven children dependent upon him. The reason why he was treated with such harshness and severity was simply because he differed in some points of doctrine and discipline from the Presbyterians, who had then the government in their own hands. He displayed on this trying occasion his characteristic nobleness, and took joyfully the spoiling of his goods. In the esteem and affection of the pious members of his congregation he occupied an elevated place; and these being unwilling to be deprived of his valuable ministry and pastoral care, he, with their concurrence, rented some buildings in Coleman-street, which he converted into a meeting-house, and opened for public worship. The attachment of the flock to their deeply-injured pastor they expressed in the following language:—“We cannot but bless the hand of that Providence which planted us by the waters of his ministry, the streams whereof refresh our souls with the refreshings of the Almighty. As for his life, we have seen ‘**HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD**’ written in fair and convincing characters upon the forehead of it. Verily the signs of a true minister of Christ, and of an elder indeed of his church, hath he wrought upon us, in all wisdom, temperance, gravity, humbleness,

patience, faithfulness, and love. In the presence of angels and men, we call God for a record upon our souls, that we know nothing by him which deserves the lightest censure of a church ; all his deportments among us calling for love, reverence, honour, and imitation. And our prayer to God is, that He would, by the influence of his doctrine and example, make us so abundantly fruitful in well-doing ; that as he is our glory and rejoicing for the present, so we may be his glory and the crown of his rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Shortly after his ejection two of his children were torn from his embraces by an epidemical disease then prevalent in London. About the same time he was treated by Edwards in his infamous "Gangræna," with the greatest scurrility and abuse. By the grace of God he was, however, enabled to say, "I am not conscious of the least ill-will towards the man, but am perfectly free, in my spirit, to lick the dust of his feet for his good. I had rather meet with an opportunity of showing Christian love and respects to him, than of very good accommodation to myself." In the same year in which he replied to Edwards in two pamphlets, entitled, "A Brief Answer to an ulcerous Treatise ;" and "The Inexcusableness of that grand Accusation of the Brethren, called, *Antapologia* ;" he put forth three others, the titles of which were, "Some modest and humble Queries concerning a late printed Paper ;" "The Scourge of the Saints displayed in his Colours of Ignorance and Blood ;" and, "Twelve serious Cautions necessary to be observed in a Reformation according to the Word of God." From these pamphlets it is obvious, that Goodwin was among the first who advocated the doctrine of religious liberty, and who established it on scriptural and rational principles. So early, indeed, as 1644, in his reply to Dr. Stewart, he had spoken thus :—"If by a toleration, the argument

means, a non-suppression of such religious sects and schisms, by fining, imprisoning, disfranchising, banishment, death, or the like, my answer is, THAT THEY OUGHT TO BE TOLERATED ; *only upon this supposition*, THAT THE PROFESSORS OF THEM BE OTHERWISE PEACEABLE IN THE STATE, AND EVERY WAY SUBJECT TO THE LAWS AND LAWFUL POWER OF THE MAGISTRATE." Such was the cause in which he now employed his commanding talents. "If he caused considerable vexation to the governing party," says Wilson, in his History of Dissenting Churches, "it must be confessed, that he received no small provocation ; and when openly attacked, he thought it perfectly justifiable to defend himself. When episcopacy ceased to domineer, it was natural for him to look for some respite from his troubles. But the Presbyterians proved to him more formidable enemies than the Bishops. Not contented with depriving him of his living, they continued to heap upon him plenty of abuse, and enacted laws that were designed to prohibit him from preaching."

An anonymous writer who attempted to vindicate the parliamentary "Ordinance for the Punishing of Heresies and Blasphemies," had the audacity solemnly to abjure Goodwin's church, in the name of the Holy Trinity, to deliver their pastor up to the devil ; as having not only pleaded for universal liberty of conscience, but published the following Query, which, according to his apprehension, "contained a complication of blasphemy :"—"Whether it be agreeable to the mind of Christ, for men to inflict the heavy censure of death upon their brethren, for holding forth such doctrines or opinions in religion, suppose contrary to admonition, which, for ought the said inflictors know, unless they make themselves infallible, may be the sacred truths of God." This was the occasion of "An Apologetical Account of some Brethren in the Church whereof Mr. John Goodwin is Pastor, why they cannot execute that

passionate and unchristian Charge of delivering up their Pastor to Satan, which is imposed upon them in a late printed Book, 1647." In this defence of their minister they say, "If to vindicate the truths of God, from the false imaginations of men,—to maintain the royalties of Christ, and the privileges of his subjects, against the encroachments and tyranny of the world,—to stand in the gap, and endeavour to keep out the horned beast of persecution from the societies of the saints,—if this be blasphemy, we confess him to be one of the greatest blasphemers under heaven. But though such practices as these are arraigned and condemned under the names of *heresy*, *blasphemy*, and the like, in the consistories of men, where carnal interests sit as judges, the sentence shall be reversed in the court of heaven, and all engagements of this nature shall be rewarded as royalty to the king that rules there."

Goodwin in early life held the doctrine of the absolute predestination of some men, personally considered, to eternal life, and of others to endless misery. "But the truth is," says he, "I found it ever and anon gravelly in my mouth, and corroding and fretting to my bowels. Notwithstanding, the high esteem I had of many of those who prepared it, and fed upon it themselves, together with a raw and ill-digested conceit that there was no better bread to be had, prevailed upon me to content myself therewith for a long time, though not without some regret of discontentment." It is not, therefore, very marvellous, that, as he advanced in years, and his judgment became more matured, he abandoned what he had found so indigestible. What led him more particularly to take this step is worthy of attention. While delivering, on April 12th, 1644, in St. Stephen's church, the last of a series of discourses on the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism, he was understood to have advanced a principle favourable to Arminianism. This circumstance roused the feelings of one

of his hearers, a young man, lately returned from the army, of the name of Samuel Lane; who, in a small pamphlet, violently attacked him. Goodwin was now prompted to examine more carefully the "five points," until he was induced publicly to renounce his former opinions, though they were still regarded by most of his puritanical brethren as truths of Divine revelation. Had he done this when Archbishop Laud patronized Arminianism, he might have been suspected of having changed for the sake of preferment. "But he made no avowal of the Arminian system, till its adherents were left without a patron, and those of them who had enjoyed benefices in the church were driven from their pulpits, and persecuted with relentless severity. Free from every bias of secular interest, his conversion to Arminianism can be viewed in no other light, than as the result of deliberate inquiry, and an act of obedience to the high authority of conscience." The magnanimity and integrity which he displayed ought to have excited the admiration of all; but from many of his contemporaries he only received torrents of abuse; they attributed the change in his sentiments, if not to imbecility of mind, to the greatest instability of character. To such charges he nobly replied, "The grace of God assisting me, if the changing of my judgment upon such terms as I have done, in the controversies mentioned, rendereth me or my judgment contemptible, I am resolved, upon the like occasion, to make both it and myself more contemptible, by cutting off from my soul error after error, as fast as they shall be discovered, and by changing my judgment as oft as I shall thoroughly understand that my spiritual interest doth require it. It shall be one of my chief exercises to diminish daily the number of my errors, by making a frequent and diligent survey of my judgment, and by separating the vile from the precious, till no misprision

at all of God, or any of his things, if it be possible, be found in me."

At this time the Presbyterian ministers in London held weekly meetings, to consult about church affairs; at one of which it was agreed, *since they could do no more*, to bear their testimony against what they conceived the errors of the times. In the tract which they published, Goodwin is treated with the greatest injustice; he was charged with some principles which he strenuously disavowed; and with others which, though termed heresies, they were unable to refute. Goodwin replied in a tract, entitled, "Sion College visited." William Jenkyn, one of their fraternity, renewed the attack, which soon brought from the pen of our author, "The Novice-Presbyter instructed." About the same time he published a small quarto, entitled, "The Divine Authority of the Scriptures asserted;" which Baxter, with great truth, calls an "excellent book." In the same year he wrote a pamphlet, entitled, "Right and Might well met," the design of which was, to justify the restraint which was put by Cromwell upon the parliament. He sent forth another, not long after, under the title, "The Unrighteous Judge;" and in 1649 he published a piece, entitled, "The Obstructors of Justice; or, a Defence of the honourable Sentence passed upon the late King." Though we regard the writing of this pamphlet, whatever may be said to justify his conduct, as a dark shadow cast over his otherwise bright disk; yet we are satisfied that those who pronounce it "an absurd, execrable, and even impious publication, a piece of savage republicanism," know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

Goodwin held, on December 31st, 1649, a public disputation in Coleman-street, with Vavasor Powell, a Baptist minister, on the question, whether Christ died for the redemption of all mankind, or only for the elect. And on January 14th, and February 11th,

1650, disputations were held between him and John Simpson, who, like his friend Powell, was a Baptist, and a Fifth-Monarchy man. The subjects of dispute were some of the leading points in the Calvinistic controversy. The combatants appear to have parted as they met, each retaining his own opinions. Goodwin shortly after gave the substance of the speech which he had intended to deliver at the last meeting, in a pamphlet, which he entitled, "The Remedy of Unreasonableness." In the preface he observes, "When I desired leave, over and over, and that with much earnestness, to have given some brief account to the people of my judgment touching the things unjustly charged upon me, he (Simpson) peremptorily denied it; and as oft as I made offer to speak upon this account, he, in a very unseemly manner, and with much clamour, interrupted me, and suffered me not."

Goodwin published, in 1651, a folio volume of five hundred and seventy pages, to which he gave the significant title of "REDEMPTION REDEEMED." With great elegance and dignity, it is dedicated to "Dr. Benjamin Whichcote, Provost of King's College, and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge; together with the rest of the Heads of Colleges and Students in Divinity, in that famous University." The chief design of this masterly and unanswerable work is, to vindicate that interesting truth,—that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man. It is divided into twenty chapters; but the ninth and six following are a digression, containing numerous arguments to prove that it is possible for a believer so to apostatize from God as to perish eternally.

Scarcely had this able work made its appearance, before it was denounced from the pulpits of the metropolis as dreadfully heretical. Dr. Thomas Hill, in a sermon which he preached at St. Paul's, before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, represented it as a volume

full of deadly errors, and even made some severe reflections on the author's character. As this accusation was so public, Goodwin addressed a letter to the Doctor, complaining of his conduct, and proposing an interview with him, either alone, or in the presence of their friends. As the Doctor declined to have an interview, and even to make an apology for the injustice he had done, Goodwin sent his epistle to the press under the title of "Moses made Angry: a Letter written and sent to Dr. Hill, upon Occasion of some hard Passages that fell from him in a Sermon preached at St. Paul's, May 4th, 1651."

About the same time, Goodwin sent a letter to Joseph Caryl, who had been cautioning his friends against a passage in the "Redemption Redeemed;" and he also published, in reply to a letter from Dr. Thomas Barlow, afterwards bishop of Lincoln, a tract, entitled, "The Pagan's Debt and Dowry; or, a Brief Discussion of these Questions: Whether, how far, and in what Sense, such Persons of Mankind, amongst whom the Letter of the Gospel never came, are, notwithstanding, said to believe in Jesus Christ." To another assailant he replied in a pamphlet entitled, "Confidence Dismounted; or, a Letter to Mr. Richard Resbury, of Oundle, in Northamptonshire." In reply to that part of Goodwin's large work on the "Perseverance of the Saints," Dr. Owen, who was now in the height of his popularity, being vice-chancellor of the university of Oxford, under the patronage of Cromwell, wrote a folio volume. But the divine who was most distinguished by his writings against Goodwin's volume, was Mr. George Kendall, Rector of Blisland, near Bodmin in Cornwall. He wrote a folio volume of five hundred and thirty-two pages against the universal redemption of mankind; and another folio of four hundred and thirty-nine pages, in which he attempts to prove the impossibility of the saints falling from grace,

do what they may. The levity with which he writes is highly reprehensible. The following is only a specimen of the language he employs towards his opponent, and of his mode of reasoning: "That must be strange dirt which Mr. Goodwin cannot wash as white as snow; there is no filth about the city of London, yea, of Paris, which he cannot perfume so as to make it smell as sweet powder and civet." His object in using the following language at that critical period, cannot be misunderstood: "The state, I humbly conceive, is concerned in this, and, in order to its own settlement, is bound to look to it, that religion be not unsettled." And again: "The Lord make the great men on earth jealous, how they suffer his name to be profaned who alone can protect them!" He attempts to prove the horrible doctrine of the destruction of little children thus: "If we," says he, "kill toads and serpents for the venom of their nature, without inquiring whether ever they poisoned or hurt any thing, why may not God condemn infants for that pravity which is in their nature, albeit it have not yet exerted itself to the actual violation of any of his laws?" In the work on the "Perseverance of the Saints," though he seems to regret that he lived in an apostate age; yet he consoles himself with the conviction, "that many of those who are now too deep in the bogs did once stand upon firm ground, and, accordingly, will not sink full down into the bottomless pit, but be mercifully rescued in due time by the hand of God, as desperately as they plunge themselves at present into the depths of Satan." Kendall possessed talents, and was remarkably industrious, but the spirit in which he wrote was particularly objectionable; while, as a logician and a biblical scholar, he was greatly Goodwin's inferior.

In conjunction with his church, Goodwin published an invaluable little work in 1652, under the title of "The Agreement and Distance of Brethren: Or, a

brief Survey of the Judgment of Mr. John Goodwin, and of the Church of God walking with him, touching these important Heads of Doctrine: Election and Reprobation; the Death of Christ; the Grace of God in and about Conversion; the Liberty of the Will; the Perseverance of the Saints: declaring the Particulars, as well agreed upon as dissented in, between them and their Christian Brethren of opposite Judgment."

In 1653 he published an "Exposition of the Ninth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans; wherein, by the Tenour of the said Chapter, from first to last, is proved, that the Apostle's Scope is to maintain his great Doctrine of Justification by Faith; and that he discourseth Nothing at all concerning any personal Election or Reprobation of Men from Eternity." This volume, which is as beautifully luminous, as it is deeply argumentative, is dedicated "to the right honourable John Fouk, Lord Mayor of the City of London, together with his worshipful Brethren, the Aldermen of this City;" and in his address to the reader, he says, "I find old age coming upon me like an armed man, attended with his accustomed retinue of infirmities, weaknesses, and disablings from service many ways, as well in the labour and travail of the mind as of the outer man." And again: "The truth is, that my reproaches are my best riches; and my mortality is much more endeared unto me by my sufferings for the truth, than by any thing I have done, or am in a capacity of doing, otherwise for it. My brethren need not fear that I shall ever reciprocate either hard sayings or doings with them: nature itself teacheth me not to reproach my benefactors."

After the overthrow of episcopacy, the approbation of individuals for the ministry was reserved to the several Presbyteries in the metropolis, and in the country. But Cromwell not willing to intrust the examination of all candidates for the sacred office to Presbyterians only,

who might admit none but those of their own persuasion, he and the parliament meditated the appointment of a certain number of commissioners of each denomination, who should have authority to prevent whom they pleased from entering into the church, or at least from possessing any of its revenues. The "Triers," as they were called, were persons of reputation; but as they all thought nearly alike on doctrinal subjects, their constitution was considered very imperfect, and loud complaints were raised against them. Goodwin was not silent; he published an able pamphlet under the title of "Thirty Queries, modestly propounded, in Order to a Discovery of the Truth and Mind of God, in that Question, or Case of Conscience: Whether the civil Magistrate stands bound, by Way of Duty, to interpose his Power or Authority in Matters of Religion and Worship of God." Replies to these Queries were attempted by two anonymous individuals; which brought from Goodwin's pen, "The Apologist Condemned: Or, a Vindication of the thirty Queries, together with their Author, &c.; by Way of Answer to a scurrilous Pamphlet, published, as it seems, by a Proposalist, under the mock Title of an Apology for Mr. John Goodwin; together with a brief Touch upon another Pamphlet, entitled, *Mr. J. Goodwin's Queries Questioned.*"

The Rev. Thomas Jackson justly remarks, that "on the abolition of the regal power in England, and the transfer of the supreme authority to the Protector, many classes of people were inclined to insubordination and revolt. The royalists were vexed to see the sceptre in the hands of a usurper, and longed to place the Prince of Wales on the throne of his ancestors. The republicans hated Cromwell for seizing a power which they thought no individual ought to possess, and for disappointing all those hopes of civil liberty which he himself had induced them to cherish; while others were

impatient of all restraint, and desirous of bringing back in civil society 'the reign of chaos and old night,' as preparatory to the formation of one grand monarchy under the personal government of the Son of God." To soften the asperities of these disaffected persons, Goodwin published his "Dissatisfaction Satisfied; in seventeen sober and serious Queries, tending to allay the Discontents and satisfy the Scruples of Persons dissatisfied about the late Revolution in Government, &c. ; and to guide every Man's Feet in the Way of his Duty, and the public P \acute{e} ace." This was assailed by one of the democratic levellers of that age, when Goodwin published another pamphlet, which is entitled, "Peace protected, and Discontent disarmed." In the same year a small tract was formally presented to Cromwell and to the parliament, accompanied by a petition for some legislative enactment to restrain the liberty of the press, and prevent the publication of such works as were not Calvinistically orthodox. As it contained a quotation from the "Redemption Redeemed," but so falsified in the transcription, as to bear a sense totally different from that which the author designed it to express, this dishonourable transaction, in which six London booksellers had been the tools of a party, was exposed by Goodwin, in "A fresh Discovery of the High Presbyterian Spirit : Or, the Quenching of the second Beacon fired."

While he was thus employed in repelling the calumnious attacks from those who were without, he had the pain of witnessing a division among the members of his church. Thomas Lamb and William Allen, men of exemplary piety and strong sense, and about twenty others, who had imbibed the sentiments of the anti-p \acute{e} dobaptists, withdrew from their old pastor, and formed themselves into a separate church. Goodwin was thus drawn into the baptismal controversy, on which he wrote three tracts, with the following titles : "Phil-

adelphia : Or, forty Queries peaceably and inoffensively propounded, for the Discovery of Truth in this Case of Conscience : Whether Persons baptized, (as themselves call Baptism,) after a Profession of Faith, may, or may not, lawfully hold Communion with Churches who judge themselves truly baptized, though in Infancy, and before such Profession." The second, "Water-dipping no firm Footing for Church Communion : Or, Considerations proving it not simply lawful, but necessary also in point of Duty, for Persons baptized after the new Mode of dipping, to continue Communion with those Churches, or embodied Societies of Saints, of which they were Members before the said Dipping." And the third, which is much larger, is entitled, "Cata-Baptism : Or, new Baptism waxing old, and ready to vanish away." In these works he displays his accustomed command of temper, and powers of argumentation.

Lamb and Allen both renounced the principles of anti-pædobaptism, and after the Restoration conformed to the episcopal church.

In 1655 Goodwin published "Mercy in her Exaltation : Or, a sovereign Antidote against the Fear of the second Death : A Sermon preached at the Funeral of Daniel Taylor, Esq. ; in St. Stephen's, Coleman-street, London, on the twentieth Day of April." Of his "dear friend," our author says, "He was religious, not of custom, but of conscience ; nobly disdaining to prostitute his judgment to any vulgar opinion in matters appertaining to God, simply upon the credit of other men's faith ; and withal studiously scrupulous of receiving any tenet until he had caused it to pass through the fire of a strict examination, and found that it would not burn. He put no difference between persons either for their concurrence with him, or dissent from him, in matters of opinion, or form of worship. That which commended any person to him was, his own opinion of

his integrity, justness, and clearness in dealings, as we in the administration of the trust committed to him, and in his private occasions, are freely testified by all that had to do with him in either kind. The greatness of his estate made no breach at all upon the goodness of his disposition. He observed no distance made between himself and the meanest of his brethren, by his abundance : Persons even of the lowest degree, by his affableness and humility, found access to him upon all occasions ; and few, if any, came from him discontented. His carriage was composed and grave, yet without affectation ; his discourse seasonable and savoury, without offence. His native temper seemed to incline him to much reservedness ; but by judgment and conscience he reduced that which was less desirable in his inclination. His habit and garb every way comely ; suitable rather to his profession than estate. Whatever savoured of ostentation or vanity, he left to be taken up by persons of looser and lighter spirits. The full cup which God gave unto him, he carried with an even and steady hand, without spilling ; yet freely gave to every man that was athirst, and came in his way to drink. His intellectual endowments were given him by the largest measure, which God in these days is wont to mete unto men. His understanding was large, and very comprehensive ; his apprehension quick and piercing ; his judgment solid and mature ; his memory fast and faithful ; his elocution distinct and clear, elegant and fluent, yet not luxuriant and pedantic. He was more than of ordinary abilities to argue the most thorny and abstruse points in divinity ; ready of discerning where the quick of the controversy lay ; very expert in the word of righteousness ; able to draw waters of life out of such wells of salvation, from whence many men of good understanding and learning had not wherewith to draw because of the depth of them. He had a singular dexterity to make the rough things of business smooth, to untie knots,

and disentangle intricacies, in all manner of affairs that were brought unto him. I scarce know any man amongst those he hath left behind, of like felicity with him in giving advice in cases of difficulty and doubtful consideration. In sum, as well for parts of nature as of grace, he was a highly accomplished man, adorned and set forth by God, for a pattern for others."

Goodwin next sent forth a pamphlet, entitled, "The Triers, or Tormentors, tried and cast, by the Laws both of God and Men: Or, Arguments and Grounds, as well in Reason as Religion, evincing the Unlawfulness of those Communions by which the Courts of Triers and Ejectors are established; together with the unwarrantableness of the Acceptation and Exercise of the Powers delegated by any Man or Company of Men whatsoever, 1657." He was quite aware, that, by such a spirited attack, he might incur personal danger; but this did not move him. "For myself," he remarks, "what trouble I shall gain, I think it not worth putting to the account; being so near the line beyond which there are no sufferings to them that love God." He was soon summoned before Cromwell's ministers of state; but as the Triers failed in their attempt to substantiate against our author the charge of hostility to the government, he was at liberty to proceed in the defence of his theological tenets. He therefore, in the following year, published his "Triumviri: Or, the Genius, Spirit, and Deportment of Mr. Richard Resbury, Mr. John Pawson, and Mr. George Kendall, in their late Writings, &c. Together with some brief Touches in the Preface upon Dr. John Owen, Mr. Thomas Lamb, Mr. Henry Jeanes, Mr. Obadiah Howe, and Mr. Marchamont Nedham, in their late Writings against the Author." His attachment to the genuine doctrines of Arminianism became stronger as he advanced in years. He says in the preface to his *Triumviri*, "Out of unfeigned love to all that are partakers of flesh and blood, I wish

them from my heart communion with me in those great truths. I know them by those express characters of spirit and life that are in them, to be the truths of God ; nor have I met with any thing in the writings of all the three men of my present contest, which hath in the least shaken my confidence in this kind, or that for the least space of time put me to any stand."

He published "The Banner of Justification displayed : Or, a Discourse concerning the deep and important Mystery of the Justification of a Sinner," in 1659. In his address to the reader, he says, "The evil genius of these times worketh so effectually, acteth so imperiously, yea, tyrannically, in the minds and fancies of many, that it permits them not the use of their right hand in receiving any thing from another, which is not already an ingredient in the composition or body of their faith. But persons of this character seem not so much to desire to be free from error, as to presume themselves so to be. The cross of Arminius is grown so heavy amongst us, and the generality of professors so weak, that the greater part of them are not able to take it up, though truth be tied fast to it, and the burden of it made hereby much more easy and light." And in the conclusion of this admirable address, he says, "If thou meetest with any thing which at first sight doth not approve itself unto thee, lay it aside ; but do not cast it away until thou hast considerably reviewed it a third time. I have read of a statuary whose workmanship looked better and gave better contentment by time. It may be, now and then I have taken a step or two out of the common road ; but it still hath been for thy profit, not for any pleasure I take in this kind of digression. For in matter of doctrine I never leave the way that is most occupied by pious, sober, and learned men, as far as I know it, unless it be either to carry some stumbling-stone out of it, or else to fetch in somewhat to make it more smooth and pleasant.

And I believe it would soon double or treble my accommodations and comforts in the world, if I could make a covenant with my judgment and conscience to say Amen to all that is sung for orthodox."

In May, 1660, Charles II., having been in a state of exile from the death of his father, was restored to the throne of his ancestors; and in June the House of Commons ordered that his Majesty be humbly moved to call in Goodwin's book, entitled the "Obstructors of Justice;" together with two works of Milton on the same subject, and order them to be burned by the hands of the common hangman; and that the Attorney-General do proceed against them. The books were burned accordingly, at the Sessions-house in the Old Bailey, on the 27th of August; but the authors absconded for a time, and no further proceedings were taken against them. The debate in the House of Commons concerning our author lasted for several hours, when it was finally determined that his life should not be touched; but that he should be incapable of holding "any office, ecclesiastical, civil, or military, or any other public employment within this kingdom." He was therefore compelled a second time to retire from his vicarage. In 1662 when he saw about two thousand of his brethren driven from their livings and pulpits, by the operation of the Act of Uniformity, he wrote a pamphlet, entitled, "Prelatic Preachers none of Christ's Teachers." This was his last production, and was published without either a name or a date. He continued to preach at his private meeting in Coleman-street till his death, which took place in 1665, when he was seventy-two years of age.

We have no means of ascertaining the state of his mind in the immediate prospect of dissolution, nor even of the chamber where he met his fate. This is not surprising, when it is recollected, that, at the very time, the plague was raging most terrifically throughout the

metropolis. In the register at St. Stephen's, Coleman-street, there is an entry of one John Goodwin, who was buried September 3rd, 1665; but whether this refers to our author we know not. It was during this month that the dreadful distemper was at its very height. In the first week there died of it 6988; in the second week, 6544; and in the third week, no less than 7165. But let us not suppose that there is any thing remarkably punitive or ominous in the obscurity of his closing days—that he died “as a fool dieth.” If Providence so closed the curtains that posterity cannot view the dying veteran, such a circumstance implies no more dishonour than does the silence of Scripture and of history respecting the final moments of some of the most faithful apostles and ministers of the Christian church. Desirable as it ever is to listen to the testimony of the righteous in the solemn hour of mortality, yet, when the noisome pestilence walketh in darkness over the putrid bodies of the dead, and breathes the poisonous blast through every dwelling of the living, a thousand cases might occur of triumph over the grave without one friendly survivor to record them.

In 1670 there appeared a quarto volume, with the following title: “A being filled with the Spirit; wherein is proved, that it is a Duty incumbent upon all Men, especially of Believers, that they be filled with the Spirit of God. All heretofore delivered in several Sermons from Eph. v. 18, by that pious, learned, and laborious Servant of God, Mr. John Goodwin, sometime Minister of the Gospel in Coleman-street, London; and published after his Death, for the common Good of all.” This volume is thoroughly Goodwinian; it carries the author's likeness on every page. The publishers, in their address to the reader, remark: “The author himself, now at rest, having finished the work which God judged meet for him, and for which he was sent into the world, was a man whose heart was set within him

to serve his generation with all faithfulness in the great work of the ministry ; not much valuing the approbation or displeasure of men, when the interest of his Lord and Master, and the present peace and everlasting welfare of men, were concerned ; being indeed very faithful and laborious in that great work. We may, without vanity, say of him, as our blessed Saviour said of John the Baptist, ‘ He was a burning and a shining light,’ and many did much rejoice, at least for a season, in his light ; although at some times, in the faithful discharge of his duty, he met with the same measure that his great Lord and Master had measured unto him in the days of his flesh.” And the Rev. Ralph Venning, in the epistle dedicatory, says, “ Though I confess myself not to be of the same opinion with the learned author in some other controverted points, yet I cannot but give my testimony concerning this piece, that I find an excellent spirit moving on the face of it, and acting in the heart of it, to promote the glory of God, the power of godliness, and consequently the good of men.”

The leading events of Godwin’s life having been narrated in chronological order, we shall now proceed to give a brief description of his person, and an analysis of his character.

We are indebted for what we know of his external appearance to his portrait, by Glover ; and yet from this we find it difficult to determine as to his precise figure, stature, and habitual carriage. He is taken in the attitude of preaching ; and, like some other divines of that day, he has on a caul, which appears to be a sort of net-work. But when we look at the countenance, we are at once satisfied of its faithfulness ; it is expressive of serenity, humour, and benevolence, as well as of profound thought and self-possession, which is also indicated by the bend of the fingers of the right hand, and by the left, in which he holds a small Bible, as if ready for reference, reposing on the

cushion of the pulpit. His neat and silvery beard contrasts finely with the arched and bushy eye-brows, and the expanded forehead. The noblest qualities of Luther and Arminius are combined in the firmness and intelligence discoverable in his harmonized features : The dauntlessness of the one is blended with the prudence of the other,—Lutheran zeal is under the influence of Arminian charity, and is regulated by great wisdom and sobriety. But the testimonies regarding his mind and heart vastly transcend the brief and typical information which we possess concerning his “bodily presence.”

The intellectual powers of Goodwin, if not of the very first order, were certainly of no ordinary kind. He had not the fervour and energy of Baxter, the imaginative splendour of Jeremy Taylor, nor the wonderful comprehensiveness of Howe ; but in clearness of mental vision, and in logical acuteness, he was not inferior to either of those master-spirits. He never dazzled his readers by his brilliance, though he was not destitute of imagination ; (for many beautiful passages are to be found in his writings ;) but this faculty he rather restrained than cultivated : He was more remarkable for a clear, powerful, and searching understanding. Few men have been able with greater ease to apprehend and investigate the important truths of revelation. He could also, with great facility, analyze a sophism, and expose its fallacy. He knew the limits of his own powers, “the depth of his line,” and seems never to have been satisfied unless he felt the ground as he went on ; and hence it is that, in the examination of subjects vast and complex, he so seldom lost himself in a misty region. His sound and discriminating judgment preserved his mental powers from being debased by irregularities and eccentricities : His mind was also as active as it was vigorous. There are many individuals who possess intellectual ability, but

who accomplish nothing, because they attempt nothing ; and there are others who occasionally arouse themselves to great mental effort, but who soon sink again into indolent contemplation or animal enjoyment : Goodwin, however, was a laborious thinker ; he grappled with the difficulties that came in his way, and was unwearied in his diligence and application to show himself a workman that needed not to be ashamed.

He was also characterized by a decision of mind which would have enabled him, had he been called to it, to suffer the death of a martyr. He did not ebb and flow with circumstances, like the tides with the phases of the moon. Of any thing like artifice or disguise he was incapable ; and from the path of duty nothing could turn him aside : His integrity was uncompromising. He knew not "to give flattering titles ;" and was preserved by "a peculiar antipathy of genius" from an unworthy compliance with the great ones of the earth. He was equally free from the servility of the time-server, and the blind zeal of the partisan. He published his views of what he conceived to be verities of Divine revelation, when he had every reason to believe, that the cry of "Heresy," would be raised against him. If he took part with the army and the parliament against the king, it was perfectly gratuitous ; and when they, in their turn, encroached on the rights of conscience, he firmly and nobly exposed their unrighteous conduct. "Upon this account," he observes, "I cannot but presume it was, that I was so frowned upon and smitten by this authority ; that I was, time after time, summoned before the Consistory, surnamed 'the Committee for Plundered Ministers,' and this by the procurement of some of the members of the authority I speak of ; that here I was coarsely handled, disgracefully entreated ; my accusers, though but few and less considerable, countenanced ; my friends, who appeared with me and

for me, neglected; and that, at last, I was compelled to drink the cup prepared only for malignant ministers, being not only sequestered from my living, but denied the liberty of preaching in my wonted place. So that, if I am a time-server, I have served very hard masters, from whom I never received any thing for my work but in such coin wherein Paul five times received forty save one. Nor have I ever known, unless by hearsay, that the great men of the times have so much as a ninth part of a farthing wherewith to reward those who have served them. But I know by experience, that they have scorpions to chastise their servants without a cause. Nor do I now write these things out of any querulous disposition, or desire that the masters of the present time should repair the breaches made upon me by their predecessors, but to stop the mouth of that unworthiness which is opened against me, as if I had thriven in the world so well by serving the times formerly, that I meant to follow the same occupation." Few men better understood the nature of religious liberty than Goodwin; he publicly and successfully advocated it before either Owen, or Milton, or Locke had written a line on the subject. He thought for himself, and avowed his sentiments; but he granted to others the same privilege. He was willing to agree to disagree. If his brethren did not receive from him the views which he saw it his duty to make public, it gave him no uneasiness of mind, much less did it mortify and sour him; for he considered, that, "as men's bodies must have competent time allowed them for removal from one place to another, so must their minds, also, for a regular and man-like quitting of a former opinion, held with any tolerable degree of probability, to take up another opposite to it."

As a preacher, whether we judge from his published discourses, or from the testimonies of his own contemporaries, Goodwin must have possessed very consider-

able powers. His manner was earnest and solemn. From quaint conceits, coarse allusions, and silly puns, which were so general, even among learned divines in that age, he was remarkably free; nor was he guilty, like too many of them, of an ostentatious display of his learning, of a pedantic introduction of scraps of Latin and Greek, of disfiguring his sermons, and bewildering his hearers, with propositions, divisions, sub-divisions, objections, solutions, inferences, and uses, almost without number. In declamation he dealt not; he endeavoured to unfold the meaning of his text, and then to apply the truths discovered to the understandings and consciences of his hearers. He was always argumentative, but took care to reason out of the Scriptures. He was decidedly evangelical, giving to the vital doctrines of Christianity the greatest prominence. With the writings of the fathers, of the schoolmen, and of Protestant divines he was intimately acquainted. When he availed himself of ancient philosophy, "he took care," as it has been beautifully said of one of his eminent contemporaries, "to wash the vessel, that it might be receptive of Divine communications." But his delight was in the "law of the Lord;" and frequently did he come forth "from his study in Coleman-street," as a scribe well instructed, to give to his hearers their portion of meat in due season.

"He 'stablished the strong, restor'd the weak,
 Reclaim'd the wanderer, bound the broken heart,
 And, arm'd himself in panoply complete
 Of heavenly temper, furnish'd with arms
 Bright as his own, and train'd, by every rule
 Of holy discipline, to glorious war
 The sacramental host of God's elect."

As a pastor, he was faithful and affectionate: The duties of his office were discharged with indefatigableness. By the members of his church he was most highly esteemed, and sincerely beloved; and let it be

remembered, that among these were individuals of great wealth, learning, and piety.

Goodwin particularly excelled as a controvertist. His powers of argumentation, learning, biblical knowledge, and great command of temper, peculiarly fitted him for the arena. He never employed his skill "to make the worse appear the better reason:" With truth he always appeared to be enamoured, and, therefore, contented for it, and not for victory. His good sense and genuine piety preserved him from all mean subterfuge and shuffling evasions, as well as from sarcastic and reproachful language. He evidently labours to understand, and fairly to exhibit, the arguments of his opponents. He has been termed, and not improperly, "the Great Polemic." But if any conclude that he was naturally of a contentious spirit, a perfect Ismaelite, or, as some of his enemies have represented him, "a man who delighted in blood," his character will be entirely mistaken. John Goodwin was a man of an amiable spirit: His polemical pieces were extorted from him by the misrepresentations and reproaches of those who differed from him on some theological points. "He expostulated with his ungenerous assailants, expressed a strong desire to live in peace, and for some time patiently endured the most outrageous treatment. Now and then he repelled unprovoked attack, but suffered many such to pass without any public notice. While he pursued these gentle measures, he had reason almost daily to complain, 'How are they increased that trouble me.' Weary, at length, of parrying the thrusts of his antagonists, and having been long dared to the field, buckled on his Arminian armour, carried the battle into the camp of the enemy, and maintained it with invincible magnanimity and surprising success during the remainder of his life." But though love of truth and consciousness of duty induced

thus to engage, it was not the work in which his generous spirit delighted. "The great Searcher of the reins," says he, "knoweth, that if himself would discharge me of the service of contradicting and opposing men, and dispose of me in a way of retirement, were it never so private and obscure, where I might only contest with mine own weakness and errors, he should give me one of the first-born desires of my soul. As for revenge, I have always, since I knew any thing of God, judged it not only an unchristian, but a most effeminate, base, and ignoble passion; yea, at this hour my thoughts hardly suffer me to conceive of it as consisting with those things that accompany salvation. Whoever burdens me with the crimes of ambition and revenge, certain I am that they are strangers to my spirit and converse. As for ambition, unless to shape a course for the dust and dunghill, for poverty, contempt, disgrace, loss of estate, of friends, of whatsoever is called great in the world, be ambition, the tenor of the course I have steered will be my compurgator in the consciences of all those to whom it hath been known."

Goodwin had not the pen of a ready writer: No huge folios are among his productions: He thought deeply, but composed slowly. He was not, however, employed in seeking out right words, and in polishing his sentences; he seemed indifferent to every elegance, and not unfrequently degraded his noble thoughts by very ordinary phraseology. In one of his earlier volumes he says, "Trimness of style, and quaintness of invention, I know where thou mayest find, but not here. The bent of my study is, to provide for the consciences of men, though their fancies starve. And the truth is, that effeminate and lightness of phrase doth but transmit the matter to the imagination; whereas a masculine and weighty expression carries it into the conscience, and makes it sink into the soul."

But while his faults and negligences, in this respect, are too apparent, his style is less rugged and unmusical, less involved and parenthetical, than that of most of his contemporaries; and in perspicuity, energy, and sublimity, he is inferior to few, if any, of them; while, at the same time, he is never either coarse or vulgar. He had a peculiar aptitude for discerning things which differ, and for giving clear and correct definitions of the important subjects which he handled. In the little work entitled, "Agreement and Distance of Brethren," he has given one of the finest specimens of this rare talent that we have in our language. As an expositor of the sacred Scriptures, he also particularly excelled. In his "Exposition of the Ninth Chapter of Romans," he brings the mind of God into a clear light out of the obscurity of a much-controverted portion of holy writ, "partly by a narrow searching into the scope and context from place to place; partly by a diligent examination of the different senses or significations of words, and choosing that which is most accommodate and proper for the place; partly, also, by considering the Scripture dialect and phrase; partly, again, by disencumbering the sense given of such objections and difficulties as seem to be against it; and, lastly, by establishing and avouching the sense given, by showing a perfect harmony between this and other passages of Scripture."

In some of his minor pieces he is hortatory, fervent, and faithful. He writes in a strain of pure and exalted piety, has many beautiful illustrations, and is eminently practical. It is, however, when he feels that he is "set for a defence of the Gospel," as in his "Treatise on Justification," and his "Redemption Redeemed," that he appears as one that belongs to an athletic race. There is such a giant energy of conception, such a settled dignity of thought, such correct biblical learning, such a display of luminous, acute,

profound, powerful, and consecutive argumentation, as cannot fail to enlighten the understanding, and impress the heart of every impartial reader. He is not satisfied with brandishing his sword at a distance, he comes into close contact with his antagonist, grapples with him, pierces his vitals, and takes from him the armour in which he trusted. By a manifestation of the truth, he commends himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. He seems ever to have felt, that all rule and all authority and power should implicitly bow to the testimony of revelation.

His views of the various subjects in Christian theology were similar to those which were entertained and propagated by the learned and amiable James Arminius. From the Arian and Pelagian heresies he was perfectly free. The total depravity of human nature,—the supreme and eternal Godhead of Christ,—the expiatory and vicarious character of his death,—justification by faith in his blood,—the Divinity and Personality of the Spirit,—and the absolute necessity of his influence to the production of all holiness in heart and life, were doctrines which he cordially believed and constantly inculcated.

But he did believe that Jesus Christ gave himself a ransom for every human being; and if with Arminius he ascribed to Divine grace "the commencement, the continuance, and the consummation of all good," he thought with that excellent Divine, that it was possible for a believer so to do despite to the Spirit of grace as to perish everlastingly.

Among his contemporaries were Archbishop Usher, the ever-memorable Hales, of Eton, Dr. Jackson, Dr. Pierce, and many other celebrated divines, who believed in the universal redemption of mankind.

It does not appear that Goodwin kept any memoranda of the events which transpired either in his public or private life. Nor have any of his familiar

letters come down to us. From such sources, therefore, we are unable to ascertain the manner in which he discharged the relative duties, and of his piety towards God. But while we regret the want of such materials, we can have no doubt, as we peruse the writings and study the life of this extraordinary man, that he lived in habits of intimacy with his Maker. His piety was scriptural, deep, and uniform,—perfectly free from that sickly cant, those unintelligible rhapsodies and extravagant pretensions, which characterized many of the religionists of that day.

He lived in an “era of sects and schisms.” There were some “who would hear of nothing but an ‘inward light;’ others clung, with all the tenacity of the ancient Jews, to carnal ordinances and a worldly sanctuary; here were sects all rapture and ecstasy, and there, all austerity and decorum; while some, just rising into notice, united, by a peculiar affinity for absurdities, the profound nonsense of the mystic, with the solemn precision of the pharisee. There were some so spiritual, that the fine essence of their piety remained intact amidst the grossest immoralities; and there were others to whom cheerful looks and an innocent jest were as any of the deadly sins.” It was during this period of unparalleled excitement, and when the rankest fanaticism was encouraged in the “high places,” that Goodwin escaped its contagious influence, and showed, by his uniform serenity, that his spirit was sphered in another region.

Deep humility, unaffected modesty, the purest charity, the noblest magnanimity, adorned his character. Amidst the great fight of afflictions which he was called to endure, whilst he was made a gazing-stock by reproaches; he possessed his soul in patience, and even took joyfully the spoiling of his goods. But his sufferings are ended,—his “warfare is accomplished,”—he has “put off his harness,”—quitted the field,—and ascended to a more peaceful region.

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

I.—THE SCRIPTURES.

TRANSLATIONS of Scripture are great benefactors unto the world. They exhibit and represent the great things of God and of Jesus Christ, concerning the salvation of men, unto the minds and consciences of weak and unlearned men, whose education, condition, and course of life, have not afforded unto them so much clerkship, or scholar-like learning, as to be able to read with understanding any more tongues or languages than that wherein they were born ; by means of which representation by translations, they have opportunity, as oft as they shall desire, to exercise themselves with more advantage and facility, either in the meditation or further study of them.

Men who have been bowed down so near unto the earth in their education, that they are not able to read so much as their own native language, may yet have more and more frequent communion and converse with the great things of their peace, being brought into a language which they understand, than they could have had opportunity to enjoy, had they still been confined to the originals. Many can read the Scriptures unto them in their mother tongue who are not able to read, much less to interpret, the original languages.

A translation, if it suffers not either through the unskilfulness or unfaithfulness of the translators, doth not only convey the precise sense and import of the

original text to the reader's understanding, but serve instead of a brief commentary or explanation upon it.

When there is a famine of the word of God, in respect of the public teaching and ministry of it, or when men are deprived of liberty or opportunity to partake of it in that ordinance, the company of a faithful translation of the Scriptures may be improved to a comfortable supply of these spiritual inconveniences and defects, by the generality of men who are not capable of the originals.

A good and approved translation in the hand of a plain and yet considering man, (a frequent conjunction in these days,) serves him instead of a touchstone to try the doctrine of his teacher, whether it be gold and silver, or hay and stubble; and so may be a means, through the blessing of God, to deliver his precious soul out of the snare of those who corrupt, and make merchandise of, the word of God; a seed of men which satan of late hath sown very thick in the field of God.

Many ministers and teachers themselves stand in awe of translations in the hand of their hearers, and people committed unto them, lest they should be reprov'd and censured by them, in case they approve not themselves such workmen who need not be ashamed. The Bereans searched the Scriptures daily, whether things were so, or no, as Paul and Silas had taught them; which they could not have done, had they not had that precious advantage of the Scriptures in a language which they understood.

And lastly: Many thousands of souls who cannot fetch the waters of life from the fountains themselves, (I mean the originals,) nor drink here; may yet drink freely of them, and quench their thirst, when they are derived and brought from hence to their hearts and understandings, by the pipes and conveyances of sound translations; yea, and by acquainting themselves with the Scriptures privately and in their own houses, they

may be more apprehensive and capable of the public administration of them in the house of God.

The nature, quality, and manner of the style or phrase wherein the Scriptures are written, being so emphatically and signally different from the tenor of all human writings whatsoever that have yet come to light in the world, give a clear and pregnant testimony unto them that they come from God.

It is, I confess, very difficult and hard, or rather, indeed, impossible, for a man fully to explicate the differences between the Scripture phrase and expression, and the language and phrase used in other writings. But as the 'palate or sense of tasting in men clearly tastes and discerns the difference of tastes between meats and meats, of which difference, notwithstanding, at least in many particulars, they are not able to give an account in words; in like manner the intellectual principle of relishing in the soul is capable of discerning and distinguishing such differences between words and words, expression and expression, which the tongue of a man's understanding is not able to describe to the apprehension of another. And as the fruit of the vine, the grape, is easy to be discerned from the fruit of the thorn; and the fruit of the fig-tree from any thing that comes from the thistle; so, in reason, those words, that style and manner of speech, which are extraordinarily, and in reference to a very particular and special occasion, taught by that great Master, the Holy Ghost, must needs be conceived as easily distinguishable from the best and most refined phrase or style that can proceed from the wisdom of men.

The spirituality, the admirable workmanship, appearing upon a narrow and close inspection, in the joints of the Scriptures,—I mean in the connexions and dependencies which one passage hath with and upon another, and one sentence and period upon another,—leadeth us beyond all that is called "man," to find the

c

Author and Workman of them. There is no such aspect between the conjoined sentences in other authors or writings, which is in this. It is somewhat hard to express this difference also, as was said in the former point, to weak apprehensions ; especially to such as are not in some good measure acquainted with other writers, and have not taken knowledge how, or after what manner, their sayings and sentences hang upon another.

There is no such contexture or complication of sentences in other writings, as those that are found from place to place in the Scriptures ; I mean, of such an exquisite, close, and profound contrivance, or which strike and affect the apprehensions and understandings of men with that strength and delight of contentment when they are clearly seen and apprehended. As there is a great difference or variety in the skill and play of wrestlers, some close with and fasten upon their adversaries one way, take hold of one limb, and some on another ; so the sayings and sentences of the Scriptures take hold of their fellows, and fasten one upon another by an art or method peculiar to themselves, and which other writings know not. Not but that these latter are many times rational enough, and savour of those discursive principles which are the excellency of man above other creatures ; but they are nothing so spiritual ; that is, the reason which is in them doth not require so much consideration of things, so much contention and straining of the powers of the mind and understanding to come at it, nor yet the knowledge of so many things besides to reach and comprehend it, as that which lieth in the Scripture dependencies doth. Nor are they so comprehensive of wisdom as these ; that is, the content or proportion of matter in them is nothing so great and large as it is in these ; they are nothing so laden with treasure as these ; yea, they are light and empty in comparison. You have many times great secrets, and much mysteriousness of wisdom, laid

very close, and artificially couched, in the joints of the Scriptures ; whereas in other authors there is no such thing. It were easy to instance in particulars ; but how then should our design of brevity stand ?

Another particular relating to the manner and carriage of the Scriptures, which also evinceth their royal descent with an high hand, is a certain authoritative-ness or God-like speaking unto the creature from place to place ; a short, sharp, and severe turning off of things and persons ; characters and forms of speech not to be paralleled in other writers, and which cannot reasonably be looked upon but as the prints or footsteps of a Divine Majesty. Of this kind of expression is that of our Saviour, “He that hath ears to hear let him hear ;” and elsewhere again : “He that hath an ear to hear let him hear.” It is as a warning-piece from heaven, let off in thunder, to awaken and rouse the world out of their security ; even kings and princes, and the greatest monarchs and potentates of the earth, to attend with all their might and all their strength to the great things of the Gospel.

For, let the tenor, weight, and importance of such awakenings and addressments unto the world as this, “Let him that hath ears to hear, hear,” be but seriously considered, and they will be found to hold a due and full proportion with things of the most glorious and transcendent importance, such as is the subject-matter handled in the Scriptures ; he that shall engage the world to hearken and attend at such a rate, as this trumpet, “Let him that hath ears to hear, hear,” sounds distinctly in his ears, had need have matters of everlasting concernment and import to speak unto the world ; and such we know he speaketh, whoever he be that speaketh in or out of the Scriptures, unto the children of men. But the arguments and things handled and managed in other authors who pretend not to build upon the Scriptures, being but either things

appertaining to this present life, and so of inferior consequence ; or if they pretend reference to another life, being but fabulous and irrational, and not believed by the authors themselves, as some of them have confessed, if the authors should summon in all the world to hearken upon terms of that deep and solemn engagement which the Scriptures do from place to place, they would render themselves, and that which they have to say, but as ridiculous and weak to all knowing and considering men. If a great king or monarch should send forth his herald at arms, or other officer of state, to summon in his princes and nobles and persons of quality from all parts of his dominions, with delegates from all his subjects, to attend his pleasure at his court against such a day ; and, having thus drawn them together, and raised their expectation concerning what he had to say and impart unto them, should only discourse to them of mint, anise, and cumin, or some such inconsiderable subject ; would not this render him very unsavoury and contemptibly weak in the eyes of all men ? whereas in this case, if he had had any thing to communicate unto them, which nearly concerned the peace and safety of the whole state and kingdom, the solemnity of the preparations hereunto mentioned had been comely enough, and no ways disparaging. In like manner, for God to amuse and alarm the world with the dreadful sound of such a trumpet as this, “ Let him that hath an ear to hear, hear,” having the great things of Jesus Christ, and of eternity, to entertain their attentions and expectations with, when he hath thus raised them, is nothing but what becomes the wisdom and goodness of a God : But for men to make such an “ O yes,” in the midst of the world,—having nothing to say to men and to inform them of, but only matters of light consequence, as how to live a few days on earth with some carnal contentment, or the like,—would be of an apparent inconsistency with all rules of reason and common understanding.

And upon this ground it is probable, that no man hath ever attempted to engage the world at any such rate.

There is another vein of expression in the Scriptures, which, by the sharpness and piercingness of it, differing from any thing that is found in other writers, declares them to be a writing by themselves, and that framed by such an Author, who is God and not man. Of this kind are these sayings: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: And he that is filthy, let him be filthy still." To which we may add that of the apostle: "If any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." And that of the prophet: "Ephraim is joined unto idols: Let him alone." And that of our Saviour also: "Let them alone: They are blind leaders of the blind." These and such like are terrible and high sayings, vials full of the wrath and indignation of God; sayings, which as they are not fit for, so neither are they lightly to be found in, the mouths or writings of men, who have not spoke or wrote in the name of God, and as from his mouth.

The strange composition or constitution of the Scriptures, being made up of depths and shallows, of things near at hand and things afar off, of things mysterious and profound, and things obvious and plain. That this is the true composition and frame of the body of the Scriptures, needs little proof of clearing, it being nothing, I conceive, but what we all acknowledge, and that upon sufficient evidence of truth. There are some things in them which the strongest are not able to understand; and some things, again, whereof the weakest cannot lightly be ignorant. God may be said to dwell in the Scriptures themselves, as in the Scriptures he is said to dwell. Sometimes He is said to dwell in light; elsewhere He is said to dwell in darkness: "The Lord said he would dwell in the thick darkness;" and, "He hath made darkness his secret place." So, in some places and passages of Scripture,

God comes forth, and shows himself in clear and perfect beauty unto the world, as in a vision of the noon-day: Otherwise he retires and hides himself behind the dark clouds of obscure and difficult expressions, where we may seek him long, and not be able to find him; as Christ said unto the Jews: "Ye shall seek me, and not find me: And where I am can ye not come." The mind of God in many places of the Scripture hath been in seeking, and that by diligent and able inquisitors now for many generations; and yet no man can say, so as to give any reasonable account thereof unto others, if to himself, that he hath found it. "There is a path," saith Job, "which no fowl hath known: Neither hath the vulture's or kite's eye seen it." So there is a path of reason and understanding which leadeth to the discovery of God, and of the mind of God, even where it is most retired, and hid at the greatest distance from the thoughts and apprehensions of men. But, as the same author speaks, "it is," as yet, "hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air:" Even from men that fly the highest pitch of reason, wisdom, and labour to discover it. On the other hand, in many other places, God sits, as it were, on the very superficies and face of the letter; where even he that runs may discern him; he speaks plainly unto men, and speaketh no parable at all.

Now, such a composition and frame of the Scriptures as this, the ingredients and parts whereof, being mountains and valleys, high things and low things, things obvious and things inaccessible, things earthly and things heavenly, as our Saviour distinguisheth them, so exactly answer the temper and model of the universe, or great body of the creature, is a great argument, that one and the same workman was the Architect and Contriver of them both. If we look into the constitution and frame of the universe, we shall see the like checker-

work, as we may call it, here ; that is, things of different, yea, of opposite, natures and properties set, as it were, one against the other, yet all sweetly, peaceably, and beautifully conspiring to render this great fabric one entire piece, worthy the great Workman that made it, and suitable to his wisdom. Here, first, we have the heavens, a lucid, shining, and active piece, eminent in situation and place ; again, we have the earth, a sad, dark, and heavy element, answering the heavens by way of opposition, both in nature, property, and place. We have the element of fire, hot and dry, on the one hand ; and the element of water, cold and moist, on the other. In the body of the earth, we have high mountains in one place, and valleys and plains in another ; and again, hard rocks and stony grounds in one place, and soft and fruitful soil in another. In the sea, we have flats and shallows, as well as great depths ; yea, in this element we have as well small as great, and great as well as small, beasts ; a disposition of Divine Providence which David taketh notice of : “ Therein,” saith he, speaking of the sea, “ are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.” The like composition we have on earth also ; gnats as well as camels ; flies as well as elephants or lions. It were easy to instance in more particulars, in the frame of the universe, thus matched and paired, as it were, by way of opposition and contrariety the one with the other.

The like constitution is observable in the providence of God, and tenor of his administrations in the world. These consist likewise of dispositions, dispensations, passages and events, one answering another by way of opposition and contrariety. “ Consider the work of God,” saith the wise man, “ for who can make that straight which he hath made crooked ? ” implying, that God, in his providence, (for he speaks of his work in this,) makes some things crooked ; that is, cross or contrary to men’s desires, as well as other things straight, that is, commensurable

thereunto, and complying with them. Job gives another instance of the like contexture in the same work. "One," saith he, "dieth in his full strength, being in all ease and prosperity; his breasts are full of milk, and his bones run full of marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure." And Solomon yet another: "The rich and the poor meet together: The Lord is the maker of them all:" That is, in his providence disposeth of riches and poverty as he pleaseth; and so is the Maker both of all the rich and all the poor in the world, not materially only, as they are men, but formally also, namely, as they are either rich or poor.

Again: If we look upon the natural part of his providence, as we may call it, here we shall see the same contexture and composition also. The natural day, so called, is compounded of light and darkness, according to the wise pleasure of God in a regular tempering and disposal of them. It is he likewise that makes both the summer and the winter, as David takes, and gives knowledge, and the year is compounded of these. So he makes foul and fair weather, storms and calms, and intermixeth them as he pleaseth.

Now, then, inasmuch as the structure, frame, and constitution of the Scriptures, being such as hath been declared, resemble, as ye see, to the life, the respective tempers, constitutions, and complexions of those other great pieces, which are confessedly and without all controversy God's; I mean, the workmanship of his hands, the one answering the other as face answereth face in the waters; they cannot in reason but be looked upon as arguments of much conviction and strength to prove, that they also come from the hand of the same workman with the other.

Besides this correspondency which the Scriptures hold with those other great works of God we spake of, in their constitution and frame, which amounts, as hath

been said, to a testimony of much value, that the one is his as well as the other, the Scriptures his as well as the creation or government of the world his ; the composition we described doth yet in another consideration and respect plead their original and descent from God. Height of majesty and depth of condescension, found in conjunction, make as perfect a character or lineament of the face of God, as well can be imagined. "Who is like unto the Lord God?" said David, "who dwelleth on high ;" or, as in the margin, "who exalteth himself to dwell on high ;" "who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth?" that is, condescendeth to interpose graciously, not only in the affairs of the angels, who in the order and rank of creatures are high, and next unto himself and his Son Jesus Christ in honour and excellency of being to maintain and better their condition unto them, which, notwithstanding, is a great condescension unto him ; but also in the affairs of the poorest, and most contemptible and weak amongst men, who are far beneath the angels, to help, and comfort, and advance them, as appears in the following verses. Now this interrogation, "Who is like unto the Lord our God?" who being so high, looks so low, seems to imply that this is a composition proper and peculiar unto God, and that there is little or nothing of it to be found amongst those that are exalted and "dwell on high" upon the earth. They seldom or never humble themselves to look beneath them ; do not interest themselves in the affairs of poor and mean men, to make their conditions better or more comfortable ; no, they commonly behold the poor, as God doth the proud, "afar off ;" they despise them and look upon their sorrows, and troubles, and necessities, as impertinences unto them. And as it is thus with men, great in place and power in the world, in respect of those who are beneath them in both ; so it is commonly also with men that are great in parts, learning, and under-

standing, in respect of those who are but low and weak in their abilities : They seldom humble themselves to treat with them, according to that which they are able to conceive or understand, for their increase in wisdom. If they can come up to their line of knowledge and understanding, and keep pace with them in their notions and expressions, they may receive benefit by them ; but otherwise the men we speak of have no inclination to come down from the throne of their excellency, to minister to the necessities of weak and ignorant men.

Another particular relating to the penning of the Scriptures, of like tendency and import with the former, is their antiquity ; especially in those parts of them which bear the most ancient date, and were first laid as a foundation of that entire fabric which hath since been raised and built to it. The gray hairs which are upon the head of the Scriptures show them to be the offspring of the Ancient of days. The writing we speak of hath the pre-eminency of all other writings in this point ; it is the first-born amongst all its brethren : I mean, amongst all other books and writings in the world ; and may without boasting compare with them all in the honour of ancients, as the Lord Christ did with Abraham, when he said, “ Before Abraham was, I am.” So may the Scriptures say, “ Before the writings of Hesiod, or Homer, or Orpheus, or Linus, Trismegistus, or Berosus, or any other author that is named under the heavens, were, we are ; and that not only in respect of our original copy, which was written without hands, and that from eternity in the mind and counsel of God, but in respect of such a material writing also as that wherein we now pass up and down the world, and are seen and handled, and read, and understood by men.” It is true, the body of the Scriptures, as now it is completed, is not in all the parts of it so full of days as we speak of : There are many books and writings to be

found that bear a far more ancient date, than that part of the Scripture which we call the New Testament; yea, possibly, than any of the writings of the other prophets, though this be denied by Justin Martyr, Eusebius and others; but in their head quarters, I mean, in the books and writings of Moses, wherein the sum and substance of all the rest is comprised, they lie many years nearer the foundations of the world and the building of the sun's tabernacle in the heavens, than all their fellows. "That which was from the beginning," saith John to those unto whom he writes, "do we declare unto you." This is more than any other writer in all the world can affirm, I do not say with any sufficient ground, but, with so much as any colourable ground of truth, but only those who draw from the fountains of the Scripture what they declare in this kind, and speak the same things with them. The Gospel, as touching the matter and substance of it, came from the mouth of God himself unto our first parents, presently upon the fall; which, according to the best computation, was within less than a day's space of their creation. It came enfolded and wrapped up in that oracle: "The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head." And though for many generations together it was no where written, but in "the fleshly tables of the hearts" of men, and preserved only in living monuments; yet did it get the start of all other subjects whatsoever, in the accommodation of writing; and had a tabernacle of ink and paper, or some like material equivalent unto these, built for it, whilst all other learning and knowledge lay yet in the open field, and had no other shelter or means of preservation, but only the memories and tongues of men. Justin Martyr, an ancient writer, who lived within one hundred and thirty years after Christ, in his Parænetic to the Greeks, proves, by comparing the times of all human writers, poets, philosophers, historians, lawgivers,

esteemed most ancient, that Moses and his writings were extant in the world, before any of them had brought forth; yea, and clearly shows, that whatsoever Orpheus, Homer, Solon, Pythagoras, Plato, or any other of those ancient writers of the Heathen, wrote concerning God or Divine matters with any savour or relish of truth, they were debtors unto Moses for it, and borrowed their light in such things from the lamp of his writings. Eusebius also, who followed Justin Martyr about two hundred years' distance, in the second and third chapters of the tenth book of his "Evangelical Preparation," prosecutes the same argument at large; and from abundance of places, passages, and confessions out of the best and most authentic heathen authors themselves, clearly demonstrates, that Moses was the most ancient of all the writers that were known or named amongst them. Yea; and concludes thus, assertively: "Therefore Moses is found to be much more ancient than all the gods and heroes of the Greeks;" admonishing withal, that "it is much more reasonable to give credit unto the elder and more ancient, from whom the juniors," and those that came after in time, received their grounds. And, to pass by many other testimonies in this kind, Tertullian, who lived between the two mentioned authors, in the 19th chapter of his Apologetic, though arguing the point with more brevity than the former, yet triumphs over the Gentiles in this argument and proof for the truth of the Gospel and Christian religion, the antiquity of it.

If it be here demanded, "But what, if it be granted, that the Scriptures, and the doctrine therein contained, be the most ancient of all books or doctrines in the world, will it therefore follow, that they must needs be true, and the original of them from God? May not the doctrine which hath the most gray hairs upon it, and hath had the greatest number of years gone over the head of it, be of a carnal and unworthy descent,

notwithstanding, and not necessarily from God? Gray hairs are not always found in a way of righteousness:”

I answer,

There is a natural propension in most men—which seems, by God’s commandment in the law, “to rise up before the hoary head, and to honour the face of the old man,” to be a relique of Adam’s tabernacle whilst it was yet standing,—to ascribe much to that which is ancient, especially to authors, and writings, and monuments, religious usages and observations. We know, that the antiquity of the Popish religion, such as it is, is one thing which mainly intoxicates and bewitcheth both the heads and the hearts of those who bow down their backs unto it: There is a Gibeonitish mouldiness upon it, and, therefore, they think it hath travelled a long journey before it came to them in their days. And Tertullian, long since, in the fore-mentioned place, insisting upon the argument in hand, the antiquity of Christian religion, to demonstrate the truth of it against the Heathen, tells them, that they themselves were great observers and admirers of things that were ancient: “It is little less,” saith he, “than religion with you, to give credit or belief unto things according to their time.”

But the more ancient a religion or doctrine is, it hath been so much the longer upon trial; the world hath had so much the more time, opportunity, and means to inquire into the state and condition of it; and so to discover the nakedness, falsehood, or vanity of it, if it be unsound. Silver or gold, the oftener they have been cast into the fire, and the longer they have continued in it before they be taken out, are like to be so much the better and more pure metals in their kind. Now, time, as, according to the common-saying, it is a consumer of things, so it is, too, a touchstone or trier of things. Time will try any doctrine or opinion, whether it be sound or unsound; and so it will every kind

of action, custom, or the like, whether they be lawful and good or no.

This argument, drawn from the antiquity, to evince the truth and goodness of a religion, is, then, very forcible, and little less than demonstrative, indeed ; when the religion which hath for a long time, from generation to generation, been continued, professed, and held up in the world, hath withal, from time to time, from the first rise and spring of the profession of it, been still opposed and persecuted in the world, and the professors of it, by this their profession, rendered obnoxious to the hatred, malice, rage, and fury of the world ; if, such a thing as this notwithstanding, this religion shall be still loved, embraced, professed in the world, and live, and be like still to live, and prosper in the midst of the stormy and tempestuous proceedings of the world against it, though there be little hope of the ceasing of these storms for a long time ; in such a case, I say, as this, the antiquity of a religion is a mighty confirmation of the truth and revelation of it from God. The reason is, because that property in it, to eat up its professors, to expose them to troubles, sorrows, afflictions from the world, hath always been a temptation, a kind of prudential engagement upon men, to inquire and search so much the more narrowly into the estate and condition of it, and fully to satisfy themselves whether it be a religion worth the suffering for, or no, before they should own it, or engage themselves in the profession of it ; it being a most irrational act, and unworthy of men, to sell their precious comforts, peace, and accommodations in the world, for such a thing which they know not whether it will benefit them in the least, or no. And when men are to judge or give sentence with relation to themselves in matters which so nearly concern them, in matters appertaining to the flesh, there is little fear they should be bribed by the spirit, but much that they should be led away with

partiality on the flesh's side. So that, doubtless, did not men see somewhat like God,—I mean, somewhat that commands and overawes their consciences in such a religion, which threatens their flesh so sore,—they would never have to do with it upon any such terms of danger, as thousands have had to do with the religion contained in the Scriptures, throughout all ages.

The longer any religion hath continued or stood in the world, upon the terms expressed, it hath tasted the spirits and judgments not only of so many the more men, but of generations of men. Now, as Solomon gives this reason why two are better than one, namely, because, “if one fall, his fellow will help him up;” in like manner, when a matter or business of so much concernment as such a religion as was mentioned is, hath passed through the hands, not of one, nor of two, nor of a few, but of many generations, it is not lightly possible but that, in case one or two of these generations had had so little of men in them as to look no better to themselves, than to suffer their feet to be taken in such snare, to go on with the profession of such a religion, which threatened them with apparent loss in the world, and promised them nothing in compensation thereof upon any hopeful or likely grounds; yet, first or last, some one or other of these generations would have corrected the error of those that went before them, and so have quite abandoned and thrown that religion out of the world which had so abused their forefathers.

Now, we know that the antiquity of Christian religion, (and, consequently, of the Scriptures, wherein it is contained, and held forth,) and profession thereof, hath that great advantage we speak of in conjunction with it,—to render it full of authority, and excellent in power, to demonstrate the goodness and truth of this religion, and, consequently, the relation which it bears unto God, as the Author and Revealer of it. The pro-

fession hereof, ever since it was taken up in the world, from the days of Adam and Abel, even until now, hath exposed the professors to all manner of sorrows, troubles, and evil intreaties from the world. This the stories of all ages successively from the blood of Abel unto the last sufferer for it, whoever he is or was, do abundantly testify; and, indeed, is nothing but what is generally granted on all hands. And yet we see, though it hath waded through so many deep waters, yea, oceans of blood; though it hath passed through so many fires, and the flames from time to time have kindled sorely upon it; yea, though there be yet more flames of fire and seas of blood before it, in the way thereof; yet it lives, and lifts up its head in the world, and hath those in abundance who are ready still to suffer for it: Whereas all other religions in the world are but punies, and as of yesterday, in comparison of it; and besides, that antiquity which they have is not seconded with any such collateral advantage to make it argumentative,—wherewith the religion of Christians, who profess the Gospel and doctrine of the Scriptures, is accompanied, as hath been showed,—and so hath little force in it, to prove any truth or soundness in them. It was a true observation of one, that “the gods of the Heathen were good fellows, and liked the company of one another well enough: It was only the God of Israel, whose name was ‘Jealous,’ and must be worshipped alone.” It was never said, nor yet verified by any experience, that whosoever should be strict, or live conscientiously, in the profession of any other religion, should suffer persecution; but that “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus should suffer persecution,” is affirmed by the apostle, and confirmed by the experience of all ages and places, when and where any thorough profession of the doctrine of Christ and of the Scriptures hath taken place.

When the antiquity of a religion is such, that it is

able to calculate and prove the day of its nativity in the world, to have had the precedency in time before all other religions whatsoever, in this case the gray hairs that are upon the head of it do fully evince it to be a way of righteousness, a religion that is from God. The reason is, because, as God had a being before Satan, so had he a worship and religion before him; nor is error or falsehood in any kind any thing else but a mistake, or corruption of, or deviation from, the truth. Therefore, that religion which is most ancient must needs be from God; and all subsequent religions, so far as they dissent from that, or are contrary to it, are from some base author, and of a delusive inspiration. Now, that the religion comprehended in the Scriptures was brought forth and had a being in the world, when all other religions were yet beneath in the earth, is, as hath been already argued and proved, the acknowledgment of some of the greatest prophets and patrons themselves of all, or of most, and of the most considerable, of all other religions.

The manner of the bringing and coming in of the Gospel into the world by the Scriptures,—I mean, in respect of the growth or gradual discovery and manifestation of it, the body of the Scriptures still waxing and increasing with further light unto the just completion of them, which now they have attained, and wherein they rest, and have rested these one thousand five hundred years and upwards,—is another argument or consideration effectually persuading the descent and parentage both of the one and the other from God. The Gospel came not at once in the fulness of the beauty, strength, and perfection of it into the world; in the first spring and dawning of it, it was only a kind of brief and obscure oracle, like the first dawning of the day, when there is a little mixture of light with a greater quantity or proportion of darkness in the air:

It was no more but this, "The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head;" a saying which glimmered, indeed, with some light of good intended towards mankind; but there was no distinct form or shape of that good which was intended, nor of the means or author by whom it was to be effected. It was but like the corn, when it first sprouts and peers above ground, which hath nothing of that shape or body which it comes to afterwards. Being thus in the bud and tender shoot of it, it was watered by those precepts and directions which were graciously given by God unto Adam and his family, concerning such a worship and such services as he required; especially by his command for offering sacrifices, together with his acceptance of these sacrifices duly offered, some ways or other signified unto those who offered them. As oft as men offered upon such terms as these, God accepted them; and so they had, from time to time, renewed acts of confirmation from God, that his heart was with them, and that he fully intended them good; and so were more and more established in the love and goodness of God towards them. As a charter, or act of grace from a prince, whether to a corporation, or a person, the oftener it is renewed by him, affords the more security unto those that are concerned in it of a full enjoyment of all privileges therein granted and intended.

When the Gospel had been in the world upon these terms, and under this first degree of discovery, about one thousand six hundred and sixty years, immediately after the destruction of the world by the flood, God publisheth a new edition of it unto Noah and his family, which was then the whole world of mankind. And though, in this second edition, the Gospel came forth in somewhat more plain and distinct words,—I mean, in words more easy to be understood,—than in the former, yet the great particularities of the mys-

tery of it, wherein the glory and strength of it consist, and which were afterwards, though a long time after, brought forth into a clear light, were not a whit more opened or discovered than in that. The Gospel, in this second impression we speak of, was published partly in the renewing of that benediction and charter wherein the lordship of the world had been by God conferred upon man in his creation; partly, also, in certain promises concerning the continuance and standing of the world, and that upon terms of grace and comfort unto the inhabitants of it, for many generations. Both these plainly show, that God is in a reconciled posture towards the world, and, consequently, have somewhat of the Gospel in them,—as by a larger consideration, as well of the one as of the other, we made to appear when time was; but for the present we only recapitulate.

The Gospel, under this edition of it, continued in the world until the days of Abraham, for the space of more than three hundred and sixty years. And now God was pleased to think of a new edition of it, and, as it were, to dedicate it unto Abraham his friend. In this edition it came forth with some further light and discovery of some of the particularities of it beyond what was to be found in either of the former; as, namely, 1. Of what family He should come that should break the serpent's head: "In thy seed," saith God to Abraham, "shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." 2. Unto what the breaking of the serpent's head, being interpreted, doth amount, namely, the blessedness of men: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." 3. Of what extent the blessedness which Abraham's seed should bring upon the world by breaking the serpent's head should be, how far it should extend and reach; this is, to all the nations of the earth: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." 4. Here was

a discovery made of that particular act or qualification in men, by which they are brought into part and fellowship, and come to partake of that blessedness, which was brought unto the world by the seed of Abraham, namely, faith, or believing God, or in God: "And he," saith Moses, speaking of Abraham, "believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." 5. In this edition of the Gospel, here was a picture, a lively portraiture or type, of that Seed of the woman that should do this blessed service for the world,—break the serpent's head, both in respect of some personal properties or relations, as, likewise, of the means by which he should do it; here was Isaac, an "only son," and a "beloved son," offered up in sacrifice unto God by his father; for so the Scripture speaks: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son." Abraham is said to have offered up his son Isaac, either because he presented him unto God upon the altar, which was an offering of him up, or rather because he had fully purposed to have perfected the offering by his son's death, had not God himself interposed from heaven to restrain him. And as God accepts the will for the deed, so doth he usually call the will, or settled purpose of doing, by the name of the deed. 6. And, lastly, he finished this edition of the Gospel by adding his seal for the confirmation of it, "the sign of circumcision," which, according to the Holy Ghost's own interpretation, was "a seal of the righteousness of faith," that is, a pledge, or confirmation, that whosoever believed in God should be hereby justified, or made righteous, and, consequently, be saved, and made everlastingly blessed.

Let us now briefly consider what there is in this gradual manifestation and growth of the Gospel and of the Scriptures, for so great a space of time as four thousand years and upward before they came to perfec-

tion, to demonstrate the pedigree and descent of them to be from God.

We know, it is God's usual method, in things sub-lunary, and endued with life, to raise and build them up to their respective perfections, upon the groundwork and foundations of imperfection. The corn is brought forth out of the earth by those degrees which our Saviour himself takes knowledge of: "First the blade, then the ear, and after this, the full corn in the ear." Paul was first a child, and all this while "spake as a child, thought as a child," did as a child; but afterwards, in process of time, he "became a man," as he saith, and then he "put away childish things." It is said of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, that he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." You will find it thus in plants, and trees, and fruits, and all things that have life in them; they increase by degrees, and grow to their maturity and perfection, from much weakness and imperfection at the first; and any considerable growth or increase in what is good is emphatically called, "the increase of God:" "Increaseth with the increase of God," saith Paul, speaking of that increase which the church, or body of Christ, maketh in knowledge, faith, holiness, and love, by being knit together, and having nourishment ministered from the head, by the joints and hands in the body. So, then, this having been the express manner, as you have heard, method, and course, wherein the Gospel hath advanced and grown to that fulness and height of perfection whereat it now stands, doth it not carry a strength of inducement in it to conceive and judge, that it is a plant of Paradise, planted by the hand of God himself, inasmuch as it doth so hold such a correspondency with, and resemble so perfectly, the method and disposition of God in other things?

Nor can it reasonably be objected, to the prejudice of

this argument, that arts and sciences, and human inventions in several kinds, have received additional increases and augmentation, from time to time, as well as the Gospel; being at this day, at least, most of them, raised to a line of perfection far above what they had obtained in their infancies and youth. For, though arts and sciences, and many artificial inventions which had no greater founders or authors than men, in the sense we argue throughout this whole discourse, have, in continuance of time and successively, received their gradual advancements and respective growths in strength and beauty; yet this hath been with these two signal observations and differences between them and the Gospel, or Scriptures: First, the men who have been successively employed to raise and build up the body of the Scriptures, have only built, and never pulled down; he that succeeded in the work never contended with, never contested against, his predecessor, nor found the least fault with his workmanship; whereas the great architects and builders-up of arts and sciences have still fallen out one with another about their work, he that followed blaming him that went before, as defective in his way, and insufficient for his undertaking, pretending, for the most part, to correct his errors, and attempting to overthrow what he asserted. So that the increase and augmentation of arts and sciences being purchased or procured as well by the pulling down of what, either through negligence or ignorance, had been built amiss, as by the superaddition of what was regular and sound, carry an express character in them of the weakness and insufficiency of those by whom they received them, and, consequently, of those also who were the founders and first fathers of them; whereas the increase of the Gospel, and growth of the Scriptures, have still advanced without the least error or shadow of miscarriage in their way,—those who were set on work to

make the former supplements or additions being never questioned or corrected for any thing they wrote, but attested rather and commended by those who were engaged in the latter.

Though arts, and sciences, and particular inventions of men have received growth and increase since their respective births, or first ground-work laid in the world, yet is there none of them brought to any such perfection, but they are still capable of further augmentation and increase; yea, there are new additions made unto them daily; yea, there is little question to be made, but that they will be still growing and increasing whilst the world stands, and yet never come to their period of perfection, much like those silly women whom the apostle represents "laden with sin, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth:" Whereas the Scriptures and the Gospel have had the seal of their consummation and accomplishment upon them for these many generations; nor hath any man attempted, at least, with any success or acceptance with considering men, since the writing of the book of the Revelation, to indite or publish any thing by way of additament unto them, or as any further part or member of them. This perfection, and incapacity of any further enlargement from men, found in the Gospel and Scriptures, attested and acknowledged by the whole world for these one thousand five hundred years and upwards, is a pregnant inducement to this belief, that he is both the Author and Finisher of them, who knows how to accomplish and perfect his works and undertakings at such a rate, that neither the wisdom nor skill of any creature are able to make any addition unto them. "I know," saith the wise man, "that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it." Whereas that invincible imperfection which is found in arts and sciences—invincible, I mean, in respect of their

strength, who are, and have been, labouring and striving from the first ages of the world to this day to overcome it, but have not been able—is a great argument, that as well the founders of them as benefactors are but men.

There is in the Scriptures a majestic kind of security, under many seeming, yea, many seemingly bold and venturous, contradictions, that yet neither the honour of their truth, nor that unity which they have in and with themselves, shall at all suffer hereby. The consideration hereof is of the same blessed confederacy with the former arguments, tending to clear the pedigree of the Gospel, and to demonstrate the original of the Scriptures to be from God. Yea, that is further considerable, that in all the instances given,—as likewise it is, if not in all, yet in most of the rest that might be given, being of the same consideration,—the Scriptures, which carry the strongest appearance of being contrary to their fellows, yet bewray no manner of tenderness in this behalf. They do not stand to excuse or purge themselves, as if there were any cause at all to suspect them for any crossness or contrariety unto others; no, they speak from place to place what they have a mind to say, with that liberty and freedom as if there were nothing said by them elsewhere, that either was like to suffer the least prejudice by it, or else to cast the least prejudice on it.

Now, then, let us consider a little, whether there be not, in the consideration held forth unto you, that which bewrays somewhat more than human in the Scriptures. Of all writings under heaven they assume most unto themselves,—as that they are the words of eternal life, that they are inspired by God, that they are the testimony of Jesus Christ, the faithful witness that they shall judge the world, that they are that immortal seed of which the sons and daughters of God

must be begotten," &c. And yet they speak and utter themselves from place to place as if they cared not to destroy that interest of authority, credit, and belief which, in some places, they labour to procure for themselves in the hearts and consciences of men. For, that which in one place they build up, in another they seem to pull down; that which in one place they affirm, in another they seem to deny; what in one place they enjoin and recommend to be done, in another they seem to prohibit, and to restrain from doing. Some of them seem to lie to the north, and some to the south; some to the east, and some to the west; and to conflict, combat, and contend amongst themselves, as the four winds of the heavens did in Daniel's vision upon the sea. And yet for all this they stand before all the world, God, angels, and men, like princes, as Job speaks, undaunted, untroubled, unappalled, as full of confidence to prosper in their way, and carry the world before them, to gain upon the hearts, and souls, and consciences of men, as if they knew nothing by themselves, were conscious of nothing in themselves that were like to hinder them. So, then, this is that which I say, that such a security and majestic confidence as the Scriptures ever and anon bewray of doing great matters, of turning the world, as it were, upside down, of being 'had in reverence and high esteem with men, upon such terms of disadvantage and reasons to fear the contrary as flesh and blood might reasonably judge, is a sign that their confidence is Divine, and that their security, in such a case, is the security of God; especially considering, that this their confidence makes them not ashamed, but is justified from Heaven daily by success answerable to it. If they did not know, that God both could and would give gifts of reason, wisdom, and understanding unto men, whereby to throw down the mountains, and to fill up the valleys that are in them, and

D

to make the rough things plain, to make a clear peace between things that seem to be at variance; yea, and that he would stir up their hearts to engage themselves, and improve these abilities accordingly; at least, if they had not known, that men would so far reverence those beams of light, those glorious truths, which clearly shine in them, as for their sakes to reverence the hidden things of darkness which are there, and the things which they cannot understand, so far, at least, as not to reject the things that are clear, because of the things that are obscure; if I say, the Scriptures had not known and foreseen these things, they would, doubtless, have been as tender of their own interest in this kind, as provident for themselves and their own honour, as men use to be in their writings. Men that write and make books upon their own interest, because they know not, in case they should write as knottily as the Scriptures are written, in many places, and let such sentences or sayings pass from their pen from place to place which would trouble men as much, engage men as deep, to make a consistency of sense between them, as the Scriptures frequently do; because they know not, I say, whether men would ever be at this cost and charge with their writings or no, or cast any such honour upon them, to make their darkness light; therefore, they are very tender, cautious, and circumspect, especially those that are the wisest and most considerable amongst them, not to expose themselves so much as to the least suspicion of writing contradictions, of being inconsistent with themselves. And when they have any occasion to say or express any thing which carrieth an appearance in it of some contrariety to what they affirm elsewhere, they still give notice of it in one kind or other, and are careful to distinguish, and to explain themselves with much anxiety and wariness, as being timorous and fearful, that otherwise they should suffer loss in the

opinions and esteem of men : Whereas the Scriptures, on the contrary, in many places seem to speak as if they cared not either to be understood or believed ; and yet otherwise express as great a confidence of both as if they knew nothing by themselves, as was said, why they should distrust or question either. When they come to assert or deliver any thing afterwards which seems to trench upon something which they had formerly said, they are so far from giving any notice or warning of such a thing, or from distinguishing themselves into a clearness of consistence with themselves, to prevent a misapprehension in this kind in the thoughts of men, that very frequently they express the negative in the same word or term wherein the affirmative was expressed before, and on the contrary ; as it were on purpose to raise and strengthen the seemingness of the contradiction.

There remains only one argument more, arising from the consideration of the manner how things are carried in the Scriptures, which avoucheth their authority for Divine. This is the holy and humble ingenuity, candour, and simplicity, which, upon occasion, discover themselves in the respective writings of those who were the amanuenses or penmen of the Scriptures. There is such a lowly, self-denying frame and disposition, such a sweet simplicity and submissiveness of spirit, ever and anon observable in their writings, in publishing their own infirmities and weaknesses, as well as other men's ; yea, the weaknesses of their friends, and such whom they greatly honour elsewhere upon occasion, and both the one and the other without the least air or touch of any compliment or vanity, without ministering unto men the least occasion to judge any such thing of them, as that they should bait their hooks with speaking meanly or disparagingly of themselves, to catch the praises of other men.

And, doubtless, if the spirits of human writers what-

soever, from the first to the last, were judiciously tasted, there would none of them be found to relish with that inward sweetness or richness of contentment to the understanding of a man, wherewith the respective books and writings of the Scriptures do gratify the intellectual palates of their readers, if they be intelligent and attentive in the reading of them. Lightness, pride, aptness to censure or exalt, according to self-interests or relations, an affectation of obscurities to be counted profound, a subtle plausibleness of carriage to gain readers of the common stature for understanding, with the like, are the ingredients most frequently predominant in the constitution of the spirits of other authors and writers of books; nor is there any thing truly noble or heaven-like to be found in the best or greatest of them all. If all that which is truly excellent and desirable, in all the spirits or dispositions of all human writers whatsoever, could be extracted from all their writings together, and made up into one and the same consistence; there might, from the writings either of Moses alone, or of Paul alone, be drawn forth an extraction or quintessence, incomparably more celestial and Divine than it.

Notice also the admirable harmony and consent, for substance and truth of matter, which is found betwixt their respective penmen and parts, from the first to the last of them. They march like an army in good array, where every man keepeth his rank, and none thrusteth or troubleth his fellow.

Having finished those arguments and considerations of the first sort, drawn from the manner of the Scriptures, in their composure and frame, and which tend with an high hand to secure the world that they are indeed royally descended, and know no father or author either amongst men or angels, whether good or bad, but God only; let us, in the next place, advance such arguments and demonstrations for our further confirmation

in the same truth which arise from their matter ; I mean, from the nature, property, and import of the things themselves delivered, and held forth in them.

First, that excellent spirit of holiness which breathes in the faces of the souls and consciences of men, out of many of the commands, motives, examples, and other expressions in the Scriptures, is a fair lineament in the face of God, and plainly bewrays his interest and hand in the framing of them.

Another evidence or demonstration, from the matter of the Scriptures, to prove their original and descent from God, is that heart-searching property which is found in many of the veins and passages of it ; that penetrating force and vigour which ever and anon, in the preaching and opening of them, is felt in the reins and consciences and inward parts of men. As David saith of the sun, " His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof ;" so do the Scriptures compass the hearts, and souls, and consciences of men round about ; there is nothing in the inward parts of men, though never so secret or retired, and that is hid from the beams of the light of them. They are as mediators to bring men and their hearts, men and their consciences, together ; and to make them acquainted the one with the other, who before lived, as it were, at a distance, and had little knowledge the one of the other. " There is not a word in my tongue," saith David, " but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether ;" namely, whilst it is yet in my tongue, and before it be uttered. So experience shows that there is not a word, not a thought, not a purpose or intention, in the heart or soul of a man, but the Scripture knows it altogether, even whilst it is yet secret ; whilst it doth but work in the very conception and first gathering or rising of it, before either it be perfectly formed within, or put into outward act or execution, the Scripture takes hold

of it, the very fountains of the great depths in men are many times, as it were, broken up by it, and the foundations of the round world in the souls of men discovered. The hidden treasures of darkness are brought forth into light, and men come to see the invisible things of their own spirits by it.

There are many things in the hearts and spirits of men which do float and swim, as it were, in the top of the waters, which are nigh unto themselves, and with which they themselves converse familiarly from time to time; but yet they little think or consider that any other hath conjunction with them in the knowledge hereof. Thus many are conscious to themselves of such and such fears under which they live, lest such or such wicked and foul practices of theirs, as in ways of adultery, cheating, coining, and the like, should break out and be discovered, and come to the public knowledge of men. So again: Many know well enough that such and such purposes and intentions lodge in them; yea, and that such inclinations and dispositions work in their members, as the apostle's phrase is. Now then, this is that which I say, that the Scriptures many times, especially in the ministry and opening of them, meet with these secret and hidden things of the soul;—challenge men and women for them, and charge them with them;—describing them with so much particularity and exactness, and so near to the life, that men cannot lightly but think, that either he that presents and shows them unto them upon such terms hath been within them, and seen the things themselves, as it were, face to face; or that he that sets them on work, and directs them to speak, hath had that advantage.

As the king of Aram's servant told her master, that the prophet Elisha made "known to the king of Israel even the words that he spake in his privy chamber;" so do the Scriptures ever and anon tell

men and women in their ear the words they speak in the secret chambers of their hearts ; they discover unto them their most private and retired thoughts, their counsels, the particular motions, debates, and agitations of their spirits in reference to such or such a business, or the committing of such or such a sin ; what hath passed and hath been argued *pro et contra* within them. They describe unto them the fig-leaves, which they sew together to cover their nakedness ; I mean the fleshly and foolish arguments, reasons, and grounds, by which they strengthen and encourage themselves in ways and practices of looseness, vanity, and sin. They declare unto drunkards and vain-company keepers, upon what grounds they build their drunken practices ; and so to the adulterer and unclean person, what their hope and confidence is of coming off at last without danger from the ways of that abomination ; and so to the covetous person, and those that practise deceit, they unbosom these also to themselves, and lay before them those snares of death wherein their feet are taken ; I mean those carnal reasonings and conceits which are the oracles they consult with, for the comforting of them in their way.

A demonstration of the same conclusion, namely, that the Scriptures are from God, drawn from the matter of them, is, that glorious and mighty power which sometimes utters and expresseth itself out of some of the veins and passages thereof, in comforting, raising, filling, and lifting up the hearts of men. The world now for many generations together hath had a full experiment of this great power we speak of, breaking out of the Scriptures in the ministry of them, like fire or lightning out of the cloud ; by which their hearts and souls have been revived, quickened, and raised, as it were, from the dead ; yea, and sometimes taken up into the heavens.

I make no question but many of you that hear me

this day have in the Scriptures “tasted of the powers of the life to come;” and felt your souls, as it were, bound up in the wings of the Gospel, as if they had been ready to have been carried up into heaven immediately; that you have felt the iron bands and fetters of your fears and doubts loosed by the hand of the Gospel, and falling from you; that, upon the sudden turning of the captivity of your souls, you have been as those that dream. My brethren, these are no strange things that I now mention unto you; they are no things that you had need of any, either to ascend up into heaven to know the truth of them from thence; or of any to go down into hell, to inquire the truth of them there; no, they are things really, sensibly, acted and done in the midst of you; yea, I nothing doubt but that the hearts and consciences of many of you are ready to rise up, and stand forth to give testimony to the truth of these things.

Is it not sufficient to conclude affirmatively for them, that certainly they are so, they are from God, if we be able to say that poor souls are mightily comforted; the weak hearts of men are wonderfully strengthened; the dead spirits of men are raised and made to live again; men and women that sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death, are enlightened; many that were in chains and fetters of fears and terrors of soul, are delivered and set at liberty, and the world is filled with joy and gladness by them? Is it reasonable to conceive, that a tree that bears such wonderful fruit as this was planted by any other hand than the hand of God? Who can speak words that should be able to order the powers of darkness, when they are fallen in making havoc and desolation in the souls of men? that shall be able to give laws to the fears and terrors of death, of eternal death, when they have taken hold of the consciences of sinners? Who hath any such rod in his mouth, but the glorious God alone, by the smiting whereof the fiery

and cruel burnings, the fierce and furious ragings, of the guilt of sin in the inward parts of the soul will be rebuked, and give place to that joy and peace which are unspeakable and glorious? Are these like to be the achievements or works of the words of men? Is flesh and blood like to speak those that are dead, alive? Or hath God sanctified the breath or wisdom of any mortal man, to act at this rate of excellency and power, otherwise than in conjunction with his own?

Another demonstration from the matter of the Scriptures, to prove their original from God, is another power which sometimes discovers itself out of some other places and quarters thereof, answering the former in excellency and in glory, but producing effects of a contrary nature; a power which smites, troubles, wounds, terrifies, and shakes all the powers of the souls and consciences of men, and sometimes, like a storm and tempest of the wrath of the Almighty, bears down all before it. The world now hath had the real and sensible experiment of this power also in the Scriptures for many generations. How many mountains have the Scriptures in their ministry thrown down, as well as filled up valleys! How many sons of pride have they abased! How many obdurate and hard hearts have they broken! How many secure persons have they awakened, with affrighting and horror, out of their golden dream! How many confident ones have they shaken, and made them company for fears and doubts! as Nebuchadnezzar was turned out of his kingdom from amongst his princes and nobles, to live amongst the beasts of the field, and the owls of the desert. Many a soul hath these Scriptures covered with the shadow of death, who conceited themselves to be full of light: Unto many a soul have they opened their eyes, to see themselves in the midst of Samaria, when they thought they were in Dothan: Many a soul have they thrown down unto hell, which thought themselves in the very confines

and borders of heaven : Unto many they have been as the appearance of the hand-writing in the wall was unto Belshazzar : They have made " their countenance to change, and their thoughts to trouble them, and the joints of their loins to be loosed, and their knees to smite one against another." Thus have they from day to day made havoc and spoil of the high thoughts in the hearts and judgments of men, which exalted themselves there against the knowledge of God, yea, and of men themselves, and of the truth.

Another consideration, taken from the matter of the Scriptures, strongly argumentative of their descent from God, is, that great and marvellous transforming power, which ever and anon puts forth itself in them. The hearts and spirits, the thoughts and counsels of men, the dispositions and inclinations, the ways and courses of men, are marvellously changed, and turned, as it were, upside down by the nature, force, and power of the Spirit, which speaks unto, and acts in and upon, the world, by them. The covetous man it makes liberal, the oppressor it makes merciful, the earthly-minded it makes heavenly, the fearful it encourageth, the proud it humbleth, the unclean it purifieth, the profane it sanctifieth ; the powers of sin and darkness in the natures and souls of many flee before it. It alters many times the whole course and frame of nature in men ; and so defaceth the image of satan in many, both men and women, that those that knew them in the days of their vanity, looking upon their ways and spirits after the Scriptures have had to do with, in the way of their change, could hardly say these are the men ; it takes away the heart of stone, and gives men an heart of flesh in the stead of it.

The argument or demonstration to evince the descent of the Scriptures, and so of the Gospel, from heaven, arising from the matter of the Scriptures, is the excellency of that wisdom, the heights and depths of that

understanding, which shine forth and discover themselves in them, and particularly in the great transaction of the Gospel, as it is presented unto the world in the Scriptures. Let all the books and most accurate writings of men be drawn together, those that are of greatest observation and name; let them bring forth and show all their treasures of wisdom and understanding; the Gospel will, or at least well may, be as clearly distinguished and known from all the rest, by those heights and depths of wisdom that are here, as the heavens are from the earth by their height, and the sea being fathomed where it is deepest, from the flats and shallows of smaller rivers; yea, the sun is not more easily discerned from the stars of the night by that superabundant excess of light which he carries about him, than the Gospel may be from all human writings whatsoever, by that predominancy of wisdom and understanding which is seen in it above them all. All the subtle stratagems, and wise projections, and profound policies of men, that are read or heard of from any other hand whatsoever, are but like devices how to catch flies, or to make bubbles in the air, such as little children use to sport withal, in comparison of that unfathomable, incomprehensible design, by which God hath projected, not the saving only, but the glorifying also, of a lost world.

When we hear of the enemies of God reconciled to him, of sinners justified, of aliens and strangers adopted for sons and daughters unto God; of sin and corruption mortified, where sometime they were alive; of men quickened, and made alive unto righteousness, who before were "dead in sins and trespasses;" of men redeemed, who were the worst and most miserable of bondmen and vassals; of men glorified, and made like unto the angels, who were the children of shame, villainess, and contempt: I say, when we hear of all these great and marvellous things, partly already brought to

pass, partly undertaken, and this, with all possibly-imaginable likelihood to be brought to pass, in the times and seasons assigned hereunto, by a piece of wisdom or learning; may we not without any fear or doubting conclude, that certainly this wisdom, this learning, which advanceth the blessedness of the world to this height, is not from men, but from God? That great hand of providence which hath appeared in preserving of the body or books of the Scriptures for so many generations together, as have passed over them since the first writing of them, in the midst of so many dangers, and against so many endeavours to root them out of the world, is a great argument that they belong unto God, as the Author and Parent of them. The high hand of success wherewith the Gospel, even in the infancy of it, and soon after it first went forth into the world, was attended; the mighty and marvellous prevailings of it, wherever it came, notwithstanding the many and great disadvantages which it was to encounter and overcome, before it could conquer or subdue the hearts or lives of men unto it.

There are four things, in the general, which seemed to threaten the Gospel with being nonsuited, in that great controversy which it went forth to plead with the world; and to prophesy nothing of that high undertaking, but only that it would be like "the untimely fruit of a woman, which never seeth the light of the sun." The first was the very tenor, frame, and composition of the Gospel itself. The second, the deep and desperate opposition or contrariety in the natures, hearts, and spirits of men against it. The third, the weak and contemptible arm of flesh, which it had to assist or promote it in the world. The fourth, and last, that strong and potent arm of flesh which was every where likely to be, and for the most part was, lifted up against it, and the proceedings of it, in the world.

The Gospel was much disadvantaged as to matter of

acceptance or belief in the world, from the frame of it, in regard of those frequent abasements, and vilifications of all worldly excellencies that are found in it : It pours contempt upon the Head of the world and all the glory of it ; it throws down all the mountains of earthly honour, riches, pleasures, wisdom, and of whatsoever is called great under heaven, and fills up the valleys with them, and makes all but a level or plain. It takes away all difference between " Jew and Grecian," between " bond and free," between " male and female ;" and so between rich and poor, honourable and despised, &c., making all to be but " one in Christ Jesus." The meaning is, that it invests all those, without exception, who receive and subject themselves unto it, in an estate or condition, so super-abundantly glorious and blessed, that nothing any ways relating or appertaining to their present condition in the world, whether on the right hand or on the left, whether convenience or inconvenience, privilege or disprivilege, honour or dishonour, riches or poverty, strength or weakness, health or sickness, is any ways considerable, or much to be regarded, in comparison thereof. It is only in the time of the night when " one star differeth from another in glory : " When the sun ariseth in his might, he presently dissolveth all those distinctions of first and second, of fifth and sixth, magnitudes between them, swallowing them up, as it were, into victory by that abundance of light which he still brings with him into the world. In like manner, the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ brings that excess of blessedness and glory unto men which drowns all consideration and thoughts of such differences in their outward estates and conditions, which before seemed to distinguish them into mountains and molehills, into men happy, and men miserable : Even as the vastness of the globe or body of the earth causeth the mathematician, who yet useth to be very exact and punctual in his demonstrations, not

so much as to mention, or take any notice, either of the highest mountains or lowest valleys, in his account concerning the figure of it, but pronounceth it perfectly spherical or round, these notwithstanding. Now, kings, and princes, and the children of the greatness of this world, who, as the Scripture speaketh, "make their nests among the stars," and please themselves with their prerogative estates and conditions in the world, were not like to endure any such doctrine or spirit, which were ever and anon magnifying themselves against their beloved interests of greatness, pomp, and power in the world; representing also their persons as miserable, as despicable, as the poorest of men, unless they submitted themselves, and all their earthly glory to the sceptre of Christ, which was as the shadow of death to such men.

Who or what were the men with whose assistance and help the Gospel undertook that great and glorious undertaking we so often mention, the spiritual conquest of the world? What were their numbers? Of what family, descent, and blood? Of what educations, accomplishments, or endowments were they? Were they a numerous and potent host or army, that could bear down whole nations and kingdoms before them, and by force of arms give laws to what state or people they pleased, and plant their doctrine by the terror of the sword? No, they were at first but twelve men; and if they had been twelve times twenty thousand, especially such as they were, what had this been for the conquest of the world? Nor were prisons or swords, or such like weapons and engines of the flesh, chosen by them, or by any direction from them, for church-officers, or for a life-guard to the Gospel, though now they have this honour cast upon them; nor was the favour of earthly princes or civil magistrates coveted by the apostles, either for the support of the honour and dignity of their calling, or by way

of advantage for the planting or propagating of the Gospel, though they were no more in number but twelve men. "Well, but though their number was inconsiderable, yet this, possibly, was recompensed by the quality or interest of their persons. These twelve, may be, were the sons, or else of the house and lineage, of those famous kings and princes who were adored by the world as gods, having been their great benefactors, as of Jupiter, Hercules, or the like; and by reason of their relation in blood to such progenitors as these, the world might more willingly come in unto them, and receive the doctrine and laws that they should bring unto them, and desire them to accept." No, they were, the most of them, if not the whole number, persons of mean and ordinary parentage, poor fishermen, unknown, both they, and their parents, and progenitors, unto the world; yea, they were of that nation and family in the world of which neither Jupiter, nor Mercury, nor Hercules, nor any other of their gods, either great or small, were ever reported to have come. "But, it may be, they were men of choice education and parts; they had some rare accomplishments of learning, arts, sciences, above other men; and so might take the world by craft, or subtilty of device; by magic charms, incantations, delusions, or the like." Indeed, Julian the apostate said, that Peter and Paul were the most expert in magic of any that ever lived; and that Christ wrote a special book of this profession, and dedicated it unto Peter and Paul, and that by this means they enchanted the world. But, alas! the apostles were children of no such education or breed; they were so far from any excellency or depth in any human science or learning, that their adversaries themselves discovered them to be ignorant and unlearned men, in respect of any such learning. They were brought up in the trade and employment of fishing, several of them, all their days, till they

were called to be apostles ; yea, after three years' converse, and more, with Christ himself, even till his death, notwithstanding those many rich and blessed opportunities they had of gathering knowledge in abundance from his lips, who was ever and anon speaking "the words of eternal life" unto them, yet it appears by their questions and demands, that they had learned very little of the mystery of the Gospel ; yea, by some expressions that came from them it might reasonably have been thought, that they had been utterly incapable of the knowledge of it. That knowledge or learning which they had afterwards, of what kind soever it was, the world neither knew whence it came, nor whither it went, or was like to go. Thus, then, you see, the Gospel went forth in that great expedition to subdue the world, under the greatest disadvantage that lightly could be, in respect of any collateral help or strength from men also.

As the princes and rulers amongst the Jews began, and led the way, so did the kings and rulers of other nations for some hundreds of years together follow, every where magnifying themselves with all their power and policy, with all cruelty and blood, against the Gospel, making severe edicts and laws against those that should either preach or profess it ; yea, prosecuting and pursuing them up and down the world, with slanders and reproaches, with spoilings and confiscations of goods, with imprisonments, with banishments, with deaths, and those the fullest of shame and torment that they could devise ; and all to secure their palaces, their towns, their cities, their kingdoms, against the Gospel, that it might not get within them, or, at least, might soon be cast out, rush and branch, from amongst them, if at any time, notwithstanding all their diligence and watchfulness and way-layings, it should come in unto them. They made partition-walls of fire, and swords, and blood, between their

territories and the Gospel, to keep the one from coming at the other. It would be a long work, and take up much time, to relate particularly what the Scriptures themselves intimate, and other histories of the primitive times relate, concerning the subtle, politic, the violent and bloody practices in every kind, that were set on foot, and managed with all industry and diligence, by the rulers of the earth, and their officers and agents, to keep the Gospel down, that it might not propagate, nor lift up its head in the world.

The other sort of enemy, as desperately bent against the Gospel as the former, and having as much, if not more, advantage in his way to set the world at the greatest distance from it in their affections, is the generation of the wise and prudent, of the learned and eloquent, of the great disputers of this world. The Gospel was as great an offence and matter of indignation unto these men, as unto the other; and these, by means of their endowments of wit, learning, eloquence, &c., were unto the others as drums and trumpets are to soldiers, when, by their warlike notes and sounds, they fill their breasts with martial courage and resolution against their enemies. So did the heathen orators and philosophers, the one by their eloquence, the other by their arguments and disputes, cast oil upon the flames, and made that enmity and hatred against the Gospel, which was already kindled in the breasts of kings, to break forth into a raging and devouring fire. Lactantius reports of a philosopher in Bithynia, who, writing against Christians, poured out himself in the praises of persecuting princes. Many such passages there are upon record in ecclesiastical histories.

But behold the finger and mighty power of God! This Gospel, which was so mightily disadvantaged in itself,—I mean, in the frame and constitution of it, having so little therein, as we have seen, to commend

it unto the world,—which had so little help from **men**, so slender an arm of flesh, as we heard, to **stand** by it, or promote the cause of it in the world; **nay**, which had so many great and potent enemies to **oppose** it, who dealt furiously on the one hand, and **subtiley** on the other hand, against it; yea, which had, **in a manner**, the whole world as one man up in **arms** against it;—this Gospel, I say, hath made its **way** through the midst of all their fierce and fiery **oppositions**, hath thrown down mountains on the right **hand**, and mountains on the left, and hath built herself a throne in the midst of the earth, and rules the **nations** with a rod of iron.

The three pecks in which the leaven of the Gospel was hid,—that is, the three parts of the world, being all of it that was then known, Asia, Europe, and Africa,—soon came to be leavened with it. Alas! the **kings** and rulers of the earth, as well they that ruled it by power, as they that ruled it by wit and subtilty, when they consulted the obstruction of the Gospel, “they imagined,” as David saith, but “a vain thing.” Their consultations were but flesh, and their horses and chariots were but flesh; but the counsels by which the Gospel advanced in the world were spiritual, and the guard of it were chariots and horses of fire in the mountains; so that it laughed all that pomp and terror of opposition wherewith it was resisted by the world in the face to scorn. It took no knowledge of the leopards, or lions, or bears, that were in the way of it, and, leviathan-like, it “esteemed iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood.” The bloody edicts of emperors and kings could not make it flee, or keep back; and fire and sword were turned with it into stubble. It leaped over the walls of their cities, it brake into their forts and castles, yea, it found a way into the palaces and chambers of kings and emperors themselves, and took hold of those that stood at their right

hand, even whilst they were breathing out fury and death against it. When they let it alone, it prospered ; when they persecuted it, and that unto death, it prospered yet more, insomuch that they were at their wit's ends what to do with it, or how to break the course and proceedings of it. One while they would give it rest and peace, as it were, to see whether prosperity would not slay it. Well, this would not do ; therefore, another while they fell upon it with the whole weight of their bloody fury, and they would destroy it at once, rush and branch, from under these heavens. But when they cast three into the fiery furnace, they saw four walking in their stead. The blood of Christians which they shed made the places where it fell more fruitful, yea, abundantly yielding of Christianity, insomuch, that within forty years after the first going forth of it into the world, the Gentiles themselves confessed, that "the branches of this congregation," I mean, of Christians, "were spread over all the world, and began to put in fear the very Roman emperors themselves."

Have we not foundation and ground in abundance, from the mighty and wonderful works which the Gospel wrought in and upon the hearts of such infinite numbers both of men and women, in the very face, as it were, of such astonishing and devouring oppositions, to build this conclusion, with the greatest confidence that may be upon, that certainly this Gospel comes from God, and that no doctrine under heaven could do the works which it hath done, except God be with it? Had not God stood by it when it was at work, and helped it to pull, could it ever have drawn to it the hearts, and minds, and affections of so many millions of men and women, rich and poor, old and young, as we have heard it hath done, against such potent detentions and pullings back, against so many mighty engagements of flesh and blood, all drawing

and haling a contrary way? If a man should see a vessel or a ship run swiftly upon the waters, quite against the tide and stream, and a strong gale of wind, would he not presently say, that there is an invisible force or power, greater than that of the tide, and stream, and wind put together, that carrieth her along, and gives her this motion? In like manner, the Gospel, bearing up with a swift and irresistible course, against the natures and dispositions, against the fury and bloody persecutions, against the policy and subtle oppositions, of the world, it cannot reasonably be conceived but that the stars in their courses carried it along with them, and that the power of the Almighty wrought with a high hand in the progressive motion of it upon such terms.

But here it may be objected and said, that "neither is a speedy, nor yet a large-spreading, propagation of a doctrine or religion any argument of assurance, that either the one or the other is of a Divine original, or from God; for then the Turkish religion, the law or doctrine of Mahomet, might claim this honour of being from God, too; for this also ran, and propagated, and made proselytes in abundance in the world, drew in many nations and kingdoms into a subjection and obedience to it, as is famously known at this day." To this I answer,

The doctrine or Gospel of Mahomet was fitted to the natural inclinations, lusts, and corruptions of men: It every way comported with men in these; whereas the Gospel, as we heard, handles these with all severity and roughness, ever and anon enjoining the crucifying, and prohibiting the fulfilling, of them, urging and pressing upon men, with all authority and power, things that are of a most cutting nature and sharpest contrariety unto them. He gratified men in his law with plurality of wives, to what number they pleased; gave them liberty to put them

away, and exchange them, as oft as they pleased; made it lawful for men to revenge injuries; taught that men are not bound by their oaths before God, except they swore from their hearts; with many other like things of a wicked confederacy with the vile and sinful hearts of men. So that whereas God, the Author of the Gospel, for the composure and frame thereof, did, as it were, go round about the corrupt hearts and natures of men, telling and observing all the inordinate affections, corrupt inclinations, and sinful propensities and dispositions thereof, that so he might make and temper his Gospel to meet with and strike at them all; Mahomet, on the contrary, took cognizance of them, that, in the composure of his Gospel, he might accommodate them, and speak to their hearts.

There is this subtle and carnally-politic device in the law of Mahomet, to make proselytes of men laden with divers lusts and vanities, especially being injudicious and inconsiderate withal, which was the condition of the greatest part of the world when this law most prevailed. First, there are in this law many precepts and injunctions unto things morally virtuous and good, which are apt to commend it much to the natural consciences of men, as prayers unto God, fastings, almsdeeds, justice, temperance, &c.; and again, many sins against the light of nature, as covetousness, drunkenness, adultery, deceit, especially practised upon orphans, and so swearing and forswearing, with some others of like nature, are sorely threatened with the displeasure of God, and fire of hell. Thus far the natural consciences of men are charged and burdened with this law, which charge, notwithstanding, is none other than what lay upon them before, in those natural impressions of things morally honest and dishonest which God hath planted in them. But, then, secondly, though this doctrine of Mahomet thus chargeth the

consciences of men, and threatens transgressors sorely, yet it hath a way very pleasing to flesh and blood, to exonerate and discharge them again, when they shall transgress and do contrary to the things commanded; namely, certain carnal penances or compensations, that are more easy and near at hand, wherein the religion of Rome much sympathizeth with it, as, for example, about the case of perjury, there is this declared, that "they that forswear themselves shall have no good thing in the world to come:" But elsewhere this burden is eased by such a proviso or clause of mitigation as this, that "to redeem an oath," as the law calleth it, that is, either to purchase a liberty to act contrary to an oath, or to redeem a man's self from under the danger or guilt of having broken an oath, "they must feed or clothe ten poor men, or fast three days." Other instances of like nature might be produced, but we cannot insist upon particulars. Generally, to go into the wars, and to be valiant and courageous there, is made a universal atonement for all sins, and carries their paradise, planted with all sensual delights and pleasures, with a strong hand, before it, against all wickednesses and villainies whatsoever. Now, such a constitution and temper of a doctrine or law as this, namely, wherein there shall be some things commanded which are apt to commend it to the consciences of men as just, and holy, and good, and other things again prescribed of an easy purchase or procurement to relieve and ease the consciences of men, under the stroke of the guilt of sin, must needs be conceived very apt and likely to take with the generality of men, and to carry the sinful, sensual, and ignorant world before it, because it gratifies both conscience and concupiscence at once in such men; yea, and that part of it wherein it gratifies conscience—I mean, wherein it commands things agreeable to the moral impressions in the consciences

of men—is a confirmation by way of comfort unto them, that that part of it also wherein it gratifies concupiscence, and gives men hope of escaping punishment, without mortification of their sins, is a truth approved of and assented unto by God. So that, in this consideration, also, the doctrine of Mahomet had a main advantage, and likelihood of propagating itself in the world, which the law of God and of Christ in the Gospel had not. This law admits of no carnal or fleshly atonement for sins committed, nor doth it give any hope of the pardon of sins from the hand of God unto those that have committed it, upon any atonement whatsoever, without the mortification of it in our members, at least, in some degree. Therefore, in this respect also, the great prevailing of the doctrine of Mahomet in the world doth no ways shadow or obscure the demonstrative force of this argument, to prove the royal descent of the Gospel from Heaven, the great and marvellous success wherein it rejoiced over the world.

It was the spreading and prevailing of the Gospel upon the world as it did, that occasionally—partly through the weakness, partly through the wickedness, of men—promoted that great prevailing of the religion of Mahomet in the world. This it did occasionally two ways: First, as it had acquainted the world with, and made familiar amongst men, the knowledge, or at least the discourse, of all those particulars in that religion which are any ways considerable, before the doctrine thereof did so much as look forth into the world. Secondly, as by reason of the neglect of it, and the unworthy walkings of men under it, now generally prevailing upon the world, God was provoked to give up the world to a reprobate or injudicious mind, a judgment which made them capable of receiving the impression of any doctrine or religion whatsoever that should be brought unto them,

though never so erroneous or inconsistent with reason itself.

The weapons whereby the religion of Mahomet was promoted in the world were chiefly carnal, and not spiritual ; he taught the world his law, as Gideon taught the men of Succoth ; I mean, with thorns and briers, and much after the same manner wherein the grand seignior of Rome procureth quarter for his religion and law in the world, whose chief quarter-masters were fire and faggot. "Kill the unbelievers whom you conquer," saith Mahomet in his law, "if they will not turn to the law ;" and the reader or preacher of this law,—as a friar, who sometimes, as himself saith, had been a student amongst them in the university of Baldach, reporteth,—holdeth a bare sword in his hand, or setteth it up in an eminent place, to the terror of the gainsayers. So that whereas Christ went forth in his Gospel sitting on a white horse, attempting and making his conquests without striving, or crying, or any man's hearing his voice in the streets ; that is, with all gentleness and meekness, without offering or threatening the least outward force or violence unto any that should oppose him : Mahomet, on the contrary, set forth in his law, upon a red horse, taking a great sword in his hand, wherewith he threatened to take peace from the earth, I mean, to trouble, oppress, or slay where his law should not be embraced and subjected unto. So that, in this respect, also, the marvellous prevailings of the doctrine of the Gospel upon the world have a plain character upon them, by which they may be clearly discerned to be from God ; and the prevailings of Mahometanism another as plain upon them, by which they may readily be known to be from the wisdom of the flesh and from men.

It appears from the Scriptures, that whoever was the author of them saw, as it were, the substance and

frame of many great events, occurrences, changings, and turnings of things in the world, whilst they were yet secret, and only in working in the lowest parts of the earth, and that he wrote down all the particulars of them in his book, which in time came to be fashioned and to receive their being, whilst as yet there was none of them.

What may be taken in by knowledge, and given out in prediction, by the help of nature, and the narrow observation of her motions and course in all her respective ways, before she brings forth, is of no consideration at all to check the evidence and power of the demonstration in hand; because such events, which depend upon natural causes, working by the known rules of necessity, are interpretatively present, and not future, when their causes are in being and before us. And besides, such events as these, being nothing else but the issues and productions of nature, are of a quite differing nature and consideration from the greatest part of those, the prophetic discovery whereof the Spirit of prophecy in the Scriptures thought worthy of himself; whose chief engagement in this kind is, plainly and distinctly to foreshow such particularities of events which depend partly upon the will of God, otherwise secret and inaccessible to the understandings of men, partly also upon the wills of men; and this, many years before they do so much as bud, or begin to put forth, from any cause producing them. An experienced and skilful gardener may possibly, upon the first and smallest appearance above ground that can be imagined of several kinds of herbs from their respective seeds sown in your garden, tell you what manner of herbs, and of how many kinds, you may expect for your use by such or such a time or season of the year; which another man who hath not been versed in such observations cannot do; but if you bring this gardener, as skilful as he is, to a bed or piece of ground not yet sown, yourself not yet resolved with what kinds of seeds to sow

E

it, all the skill he hath will not enable him to tell you what herbs you shall gather from thence ; he that shall clearly, and upon grounds, inform you of this beforehand, had need be Mary Magdalen's gardener, spoken of, John xx. 15. In like manner, when events of things natural begin to work in their causes, though at never such a distance from the full production and accomplishment of them ;—an exact naturalist, who, for a long time together, hath, with much intention of mind, and clearness of observation, accompanied nature in her retired and secret progresses and paths, may prophesy of many of her works some considerable space of time before she bringeth them forth, to the admiration, haply, of ordinary men, whose education and course of life have looked quite another way. Yea, moral philosophers and wise statists, who are well studied in the actions, manners, dispositions, and tempers of men, and have conversed in history with the most understanding and knowing persons of all ages, and of all countries and nations, about all the memorable occurrences, changes, and turns of affairs, that took place in their respective generations, together with the specialties of occasions and means producing them, may possibly, from a prudential contemplation partly of the present juncture of things in a state or commonwealth, partly of the inclinations and humours most predominant in the generality of the people, foresee in a way of pregnant conjecture, and such as seldom miscarrieth, what will befall this state or commonwealth, either to the advancement or to the detriment of it, within such or such a time. But to pre-declare particularities of events whilst there is yet nothing at all in being any ways likely to produce them, or to contribute towards their being, yea, such events which depend upon the mere notions and acts of the wills of particular persons yet unborn, and to the effecting whereof when they are born they cannot be led, neither by any common principle or suggestion of

reason, nor yet by any evil inclination or corrupt principle incident to the natures of men ;—to pre-declare, I say, and give perfect and distinct knowledge unto the world, of such events as these long before their coming to pass, is an undoubted and indisputable character of “one greater than Solomon” in wisdom ; even of him who was able to read the long roll of time from the one end of it unto the other, whilst it was yet folded up ; and whose knowledge prevented [preceded] all, and all manner of, beings whatsoever, but his own. Now this kind of prediction being frequently found in the Scriptures, and accordingly justified by a constant correspondency of event, both which have been sealed for truths in the former part of this demonstration, doth it not make it plain robbery either for men or angels to count or claim themselves the authors of them ?

Those persons, states, and kingdoms, who, thirsting after the blood of the saints, made way by a strong hand of violence, oppression, and cruelty, to come at it, and drank of it, found it a “cup of trembling” and astonishment unto them. Though the taste of it was very sweet, and as honey in the mouth, and in the going down, so that they thought they had had a sovereign cordial of it, yet when it got into their bellies it wrought terribly, it either brought present death, ruin, and destruction upon them, or else exposed them to shame and misery in the world. And as sometimes it comes to pass, that he that heaves at a stone that is too heavy for him, and seeks to take it up, and bear it away upon his shoulder, is thrown back and dashed to pieces by the weight of it ; so have many, both persons and kingdoms, heaved at the Scriptures, and those that held them forth, attempting the removal both of the one and of the other out of the world ; whose enterprise hath recoiled upon them with such violence, that their bones have been broken, yea, they and their kingdoms dashed in pieces by it.

II.—GOD.

THAT there is a Supreme Being who surveys this universe with all its various orders of beings, as the workmanship of his own hands, and that all creatures are lineally descended from him, as the great Parent of all, contain such principles of light and truth, written in the most indelible characters on the hearts of all men, that even whilst they run they may read them ; neither can they easily lose their first principles of truth, for they carry their own evidence along with them ; therefore, what God hath made so manifest and clear in men we will not obscure by making it the subject of disputation.

If the nature, essence, and being of God be most perfect, then it must needs be most simple, and absolutely one, not admitting of any plurality or composition. The reason of this is plain ; because all plurality, whether of parts or of natures, supposes imperfection. For if any one of these parts or natures were absolutely perfect, it would be able to do whatsoever is necessary or possible to be done ; and then what need would there be of any thing more to be added to it, or joined with it ? That a man hath ears, eyes, hands, feet, &c., clearly proves that no one of these members is simply and absolutely perfect, that is, can do whatsoever is necessary to be done and performed by man ; for then all the rest would be superfluous. So, if an angel could perform any action immediately by his mere essence, without the intervention of those natural endowments of strength, power, activity, &c., all these appendages to his nature would be merely useless. Indeed, it is not possible for God to make any such creature, which shall be able to act immediately by its essence, or any otherwise than by the mediation of some power or qualities inherent therein ; it being the glorious and incom-

municable prerogative of the Divine Essence so to work. Therefore, the absolute and infinite simplicity of the nature of God being supposed, for without which he cannot be absolutely and infinitely perfect, it evidently followeth,

That all the attributes of God, his wisdom, knowledge, justice, mercy, &c. ; and all those passions and affections, anger, grief, love, &c. ; and again, all those parts or members, as eyes, ears, hands, &c., which are so frequently attributed to him in Scripture, are all one and the same thing in God, though they be very different in men : Nor is any one of them, nor all of them together, any thing else but his single, simple, and pure essence. But all this variety and diversity of attributes, affections, and parts are attributed unto him : By virtue of this one simple essence, being infinitely perfect, he can, whenever he pleaseth, perform all that variety of action, which these different principles ordinarily produce in men. Suppose there was a herb, root, or drug, which had such a sovereign virtue in it, that it would be an infallible cure of all diseases, as gout, stone, fever, &c. ; and further, that there were particular medicines besides appropriated to every disorder, and were all of them sufficient to cure their respective disorders ; in this case that simple root or drug might be said to possess the several virtues of all those other medicines in it, because it is able to perform as many cures as all those taken together : Yet can it not be said to have the virtue of any one of them, in the specific nature of it, but only in respect to that sovereign property which, though but simply and formally one, yet answereth to the healing properties of all the other medicines. In like manner all that great variety of faculties, powers, properties, and all principles of action whatsoever, which are in their proper and distinct natures among the creatures, may be attributed to God, though not any one of them be formally and

properly in him ; because there is that sovereign and transcendent perfection in his nature, being simply and indivisibly one, which, for power and variety of action of every kind, is equivalent to them all, and infinitely exceeds them.

As the beating back of the eye by the sun, with a kind of indignation and disdain to be directly beheld or looked upon by it, argueth a marvellous strength and fulness of light in it ; so doth that constant sending-empty-away of the reasons and understandings of men by God, when they come to fasten and feed upon the contemplation of his essence and being, abundantly argue and prove a strength, fulness, glory, and perfection of being in him, which disdaineth all proportion or commensurableness with any creature whatsoever, yea, with all of them put together.

This epithet, "living," when applied unto God, is characteristical ; and singleth out Him who is God indeed, the "only true God," from amongst the rabble-rout of those many gods, so called, who are all either dead, as the dumb idols, or dying, as the unclean spirits or devils, worshipped in them, whose godship was long since waxen old, and ready to vanish away into open shame and torment : Whereas the true God is said to be living, "the living God," not only, as I with submission conceive, because his Godhead is immortal and imperishable, but also because the glory and greatness of it is still growing and waxing in the minds and understandings of men and angels.

All such tenets or doctrines which reflect any matter of unrighteousness or hard dealing upon God ought to be the abhorring of a Christian soul.

As a narrow and intense beholding of the face of God in a true glass, and which representeth him uniformly like unto himself, is an unquestionable means of that blessed transformation I speak of ; so, on the contrary, to feed upon a false or undue representation of him,

with a strong conceit that such a representation is according to truth, and that God is really such as by the false light of this representation he is exhibited and appeareth unto us, is, especially as the misrepresentation may be, of most dangerous consequence, and apt to transform men into the likeness of the devil, or at least to harden and confirm men in such a transformation. The prophet David personateth God speaking thus to the wicked: "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." When men are unjust, unmerciful, inordinate lovers of themselves, partial, hollow, and loose in their promises, full of dissimulation, or the like, if, under these most hateful and horrid impressions upon their souls, they shall be brought by men of learning, parts, and of supposed godliness, into this hellish paradise, whether it be in expressness of words, or in pregnant and near-hand consequence, it is much the same; the flesh will smell a consequence afar off, that sympathizeth with her, that the like things are found in the glorious God himself, and that he acts and moves in his way as the sons of such abominations are wont to move in their way, this must needs be as oil cast upon the raging flames, a teaching of wickedness to be more confidently wicked, than otherwise, in all likelihood, she durst presume to be. He that shall put it into the heart and conscience of an evil doer, that God is like unto him in the way of his evil doing, makes it next to an impossibility for such a man to relinquish the evil of his way. For who will not with his whole heart and soul desire and delight to walk in such ways, being otherwise pleasing to the flesh, wherein he verily believeth that he shall be like unto God?

OMNIPOTENCE.—If the question be, whether God could not have made things otherwise than now they are made, or govern the world after another manner than now he governeth it, and with different adminis-

trations from those now or formerly in being; the answer must be by this or the like distinction: That if we respect the power of God in itself, or God himself as simply omnipotent, so it may be said that he could or might have made things otherwise than now he hath done, and so have governed the world otherwise than now he governeth it. The reason is, because the power of God, simply considered, extendeth itself to the utmost bounds and limits of all things that are possible, that is, which do not imply a contradiction in their natures; as, to make a man without a reasonable soul, to make a wall white without whiteness, &c.; yea, it stretcheth itself to the very confines and borders of impossibilities. In that consideration we now speak of, that is, in respect of the power of God simply considered, he might have made not only another world instead of this, differing from it, and governed it accordingly, but also many other worlds besides this; as it is the opinion of some that he hath done. But, now, if we respect the power of God as in conjunction with his other attributes and perfections, as wisdom, goodness, righteousness, &c., and as regulated in the exertions and actings of it by these, so we say that he could not have made this world which is known unto us, and wherein we live, otherwise than now he hath made it, nor govern it otherwise than now he hath and doth govern it; whatsoever may be thought or conceived concerning his making other worlds, and his governing them.

We are not said to "live, move, and have our being" in God, by way of permission only, namely, because he forbears to take away our being or annihilate us: In such a sense as this, we might as well be said to live in every man, who, having an opportunity to kill us, yet suffers us to remain in the possession of our lives; but we are said to have these accommodations in, or through, God in a positive way, by means of a glorious, support-

ing influence, issuing from his power as the effect of his goodness to the great body of creation, which preserveth it from dissolution. The Holy Ghost expresseth this dependence of all created beings on God in very clear terms: "Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to the dust." This great act of God, in itself so wonderful and glorious,—the upholding of the universe in being, with all its parts,—is ascribed to the turning his face towards it; to show that it is an act of special favour for him to preserve it, and yet easily performed by him, without any labour or toil. A gracious look from God will do it effectually, as the contrary is enough to affright all things out of being, and out of all that is desirable in their being.

When the apostle affirmeth, that "we live and move in God," as well as "have our being" in him, his meaning appears to be, that it is through God's gracious concurrence with us, that we enjoy all the accommodations of being, as well as our being itself. "To live," in Scripture, sometimes signifies to enjoy a happy and contented condition, which signification is not unapplicable to this place. Or if the apostle speak of "natural life," he must include all those noble faculties of reason, memory, judgment, &c., which are peculiar to the life of man; that when he saith, "We live in God," his meaning is not simply, what in a distinct sense is termed "natural life" is possessed by a supporting influence from God; but that all those honourable and excellent powers and faculties above-named, which attend upon the principle of life in man, are maintained by the supporting hand of God.

Whereas he adds, that in him also "we move," or "are moved," as the original importeth; not only that all our vital actions are performed by the gracious concurrence of God with us, as well as our lives and principles of action preserved; but, further, there is a peculiar

concurrence of God required to enable men to exercise those very principles of action that are in them, distinct from that by which their lives are preserved. Although men be never so well provided for action, in respect of suitable principles; yet upon a suspension of that particular influence, which is necessary for leading forth unto and suppressing these principles in their proper actions, there is none of them will go forth into action, or be able to support itself in acting.

OMNISCIENCE.—The knowledge of God (for foreknowledge can only be improperly applied to him) is all light, and there is no darkness in it at all: All possibility of error is at an infinite distance from it. Notwithstanding the certainty of the knowledge of God concerning all things which daily come to pass; yet they are no more necessitated by the knowledge of God, than if they had not been foreknown. Many things in Scripture are frequently attributed to God, which, according to the common signification of the words, are no ways suitable to him, as hands, eyes, ears, repentance, &c. So is foreknowledge also. Yet as there is a reasonableness for those improper expressions being applied unto God, so is there for this of foreknowledge also. Only great care must be taken lest those things which are spoken of him, by way of accommodation to our understandings, and to enrich our ideas of his nature and being, be not so understood by us as to give rise to any conceptions which are unworthy of him.

The intention of the Holy Ghost in ascribing such things to God, which are only proper to the creature, is to teach us that the Divine Essence, or God himself, hath that eminently, and in the most perfect manner, in his nature, which always enables him, and renders him actually willing, to express himself in such kind of actions or effects wherein the creature is wont to express itself, by means of such principles of action as

are ascribed to God : As for example : To inform mankind that the Divine Nature doth, upon just occasion, express itself in such a way as men do, when they are angry,—namely, by reprovng, expostulating, punishing, and the like,—the Holy Ghost frequently ascribes the passion of anger to God. There is the same reason for those affections of love, grief, repentance, delight, &c.; and so also for those members of the human body, as eyes, ears, hands, &c., which are so frequently attributed to him in the Scriptures. We learn from such passages, that though the Divine Nature is most simply and indivisibly one, yet, from the infinite perfection of His nature, he is able to produce all that variety of effects which the creature is wont to do by means of such bodily organs and members respectively.

The Scripture ascribes knowledge to God, to teach us what advantage and happiness men receive from their knowledge of the things they possess; God enjoys a similar satisfaction and advantage from the infinite perfection of his nature. For example: Men of knowledge, in proportion to the extent of it, are free from error, in reference to the things known, and are hereby enabled to order and conduct their affairs to the best advantage, and to communicate the same light of knowledge to others, which shineth in them. In like manner, knowledge, yea, the knowledge of all things, is ascribed to God; not because he knoweth them in the same manner in which things are known by men,—“for the Lord seeth not as man seeth,”—but because, from the infinite perfection of his nature, he enjoyeth the most perfect and scientific contentment; and because he is enabled to dispose of all things to the best advantage, for the promotion of his own glory, and what other ends he pleaseth; and because he hath an opportunity, also, thereby to communicate the knowledge of what things soever he pleaseth to his intelligent creatures.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which 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!” Here the Lord Christ professeth the greatest care and tenderness that can well be conceived towards Jerusalem and her children, in his vouchsafements of means of grace and repentance unto them; and, withal, plainly expresseth the sad event of this his care and tenderness in their impenitency, and destruction hereupon; yet, evident it is, and is acknowledged by all, that Christ, as God, did foresee, in such a sense as God is capable of foreseeing, this sad event we speak of in Jerusalem and her children, and that, notwithstanding all the means of grace that should be vouchsafed unto them, yet they would remain rebelliously obdurate to destruction. Therefore, that foreknowledge which God hath, that men will turn his grace into wantonness, and abuse the means of salvation granted unto them, to their greater condemnation, doth no ways argue or prove that his grace, love, or goodness were ever the less towards them in the vouchsafement of them.

David finds this character of God in the frame and making of the heavens. “To him who by wisdom made the heavens:” And so again in the whole course and tenor of his providence: “O Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all.” Solomon also, the wisest amongst men, takes notice, not so much of the power or omnipotency of God, as of his wisdom, in laying the foundations of the earth, and stablishing the heavens. “The Lord by wisdom hath laid the foundations of the earth, by understanding hath he established the heavens.” So that a choiceness or excellency of wisdom found in any thing hath still been acknowledged and looked upon, by the wisest and most considerate of men, as a clear impression of God,

and hath been a sufficient ground unto them to conclude such things to be from God, or of his doing, wherein it hath been found.

HOLINESS.—If God should deprive men of all ability and power to repent and to believe, and then should be still moving and persuading, still entreating and beseeching, urging and pressing them to believe with that patheticalness of affection wherein he expresseth himself in the Scriptures, even to those that perish, as well as to those that are saved ; this would seem very hard, yea, somewhat harder than injustice itself ; but this is not so. As if a king having caused a man's legs to be cut off, suppose he hath done it in a way of justice, and according to the law, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," this man having cut off the legs of another ; yet, if he should urge, press, and persuade such a man as this, whose legs he hath cut off, to run a race with those that have their limbs, and are swift of foot, and should promise him, with many expressions of love, exceeding great rewards, if he would quit himself in the race like a man, and come as soon to the goal as they that run with him ; this would be a carriage savouring more of a bloody and unmanlike insolency over this poor wretch in his misery, than of any real affection, grace, or respect towards him, or of any desire of his good : In like manner to conceive that God applieth himself with such moving and melting expressions of mercy, tenderness of bowels, love, grace, bounty, &c., towards his creature, man, as the Scripture from place to place emphatically asserts that he doth, yea, towards very sinful and unworthy men, promising unto them life, and glory, and the great things of the world to come, if they will believe, repent, and turn unto him ; and yet to suppose withal, that these men, to whom he maketh these rich and sweet applications of himself, are wholly destitute of all power to do what he

requires of them in this case, to save them from destruction, and to confer the great things promised upon them, as, namely, to believe and repent, is to represent the glorious God, in his greatest expressions of mercy and grace and love unto the world, rather as laughing the world to scorn in that great misery wherein it is plunged, than as a God any ways truly desirous or intending to relieve it, his glorious overtures and professions of love, grace, and favour towards it notwithstanding.

BENEVOLENCE.—We judge that when God professeth thus: “I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth;” and again, when he interrogates thus: “Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, and not that he should return from his ways, and live?” and yet again, when he protesteth and sweareth, “As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live;”—we judge, we say, that the ever-gracious and blessed God doth not in any of, much less in all, these passages express himself ironically or antiphrastically, but declareth his very heart and soul towards and concerning wicked men in general. We judge, also, those most pathetic, affectionate, and bowels-breathing wishes or desires of God for the peace and prosperity even of the vilest and worst-deserving men, to be utterly inconsistent with a bowelless and merciless reprobation of far the greatest part of mankind.

We conceive such a reprobation to contain in it a very fiery and notorious antipathy and contrariety to those impressions of love, tenderness, and care, which God hath planted in the natures of all living creatures towards their young ones, the ostrich only excepted; of whose hardening against her young ones, as if they were not hers, God himself giveth this account: “Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he

imparted unto her understanding." So that we cannot but judge, that they that go about to fasten such a reprobation upon God as we oppose, make him altogether unlike that part of his workmanship or creation which himself most commendeth, and most like that only part of it on which himself hath set a peculiar brand of ignominy and folly, and this in respect of that very property which such a reprobation as we speak of chargeth upon him.

We conceive, that if all living creatures be propense in affection, tenderness, and care for the preservation of those which receive being from and are propagated by them, and God be as hard of bowels, and as implacably bent upon the eternal ruin and torment of the far greater part of men, who are all lineally descended from him through the loins of Adam, who was his son, and this without and before any cause given by them, as our brethren's doctrine of reprobation clearly rendereth him to be; those creatures of his would rather be a dishonour, prejudice, and reproach unto him, by those more lovely impressions we spake of, found in them, than a praise or glory unto him by their creation.

We further conceive, that such a decree of reprobation clearly overthrows the very foundation and substance of the Gospel,—breaks the very heart and soul of it. For we cannot understand how God can fairly, or with simplicity of truth, say unto all and every person of mankind respectively, "If thou believest, thou shalt be saved," in case it be supposed that any of them lie under a peremptory and irreversible decree of reprobation. For, if so, impossible it is that they should be saved, yea, though they should believe.

We conceive that all those most sweet and gracious applications, frequent in Scripture, made by God unto the generality of wicked and impenitent persons, in

admonishing, exhorting, inviting them to repentance, and this by a most loving and free tender of all the great and precious promises unto them, by way of encouragement thereunto, to be notoriously inconsistent with our brethren's decree of reprobation; and that they who make God to speak so graciously, and so much to the hearts of men, with a doomful decree of reprobation in his breast against them, make him like the worst and vilest of men, even such as David describeth: "The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: His words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords."

We judge such a decree of reprobation to be diametrically repugnant to all those blessed manifestoes or declarations made by God himself of the riches of his grace, mercy, love, kindness, goodness, compassion, patience, long-sufferance, bounty, unto the world.

We cannot but judge it injurious and dishonourable in the highest to the infinite and immense grace of God, to conceive, that it should content and contain itself within the strait bounds and narrow compass of minding or intending the salvation only of a handful or small number of men, whenas he had an opportunity before him to provide for the salvation of all; yea, and by the self-same provision which, as our brethren themselves acknowledge, he made for some few, might, if he had pleased, have equally provided for all; which they, also, will not deny. Nor are we able to cast it or make it out in our thoughts, how it can possibly stand with the unsearchable riches of that grace which is in God, rather to suffer the blood of Christ, in respect of many millions of millions of poor creatures, who stood in every whit as much need of it as those whom our brethren grant to be relieved by it, to vanish into the air, or be as water spilt upon the ground, than to provide for the support and relief of those poor creatures by it. And as the apostle John,

speaking of such a man, who, "having this world's good, and seeing his brother have need, and yet shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him," demandeth, "How dwelleth the love of God in him?" so, doubtless, there would be a far greater occasion to demand concerning God, "How dwelleth the love of man in him, or how is he so unmeasurably gracious, if, having means and opportunity in his hand to relieve the whole world of mankind in their great misery and utmost extremity, yea, and this without the least inconvenience unto himself in any kind imaginable, yet shall suffer the far greatest part of them to perish everlastingly, without showing them the least grace, favour, or compassion, or so much as intending the least degree of relief unto them thereby?"

We judge the Scriptures to be very pregnant and clear in holding forth this,—that God vouchsafeth a sufficiency of means unto all men whereby to be saved. Otherwise, we cannot conceive how it can, with truth, be said of him that he "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth;" or, that he is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;" or, that he desireth not "the death of him that dieth." For, doubtless, he is not willing that all men should be saved, who, 1. Knowing that they cannot be saved without sufficient means granted unto them by himself in order thereunto; and, 2. That himself is able, without the least inconvenience, to grant them these means, shall yet refuse to grant such means unto them. Nor can he be said not to desire the "death of him that dieth," who, knowing that he must of necessity die, unless himself vouchsafeth sufficient means to prevent his dying, being every ways able, and without prejudice to himself in the least, to afford them, shall, nevertheless, deny the vouchsafement of them.

GOODNESS.—This decree of God, “Whosoever believeth shall be justified,” doth not suppose any one person nearer to believing or justification than another; nor, on the other hand, doth this decree, “He that believeth not shall be condemned,” suppose any one nearer to unbelief or condemnation than another. A law that is made for the punishing of murder with death has no relation, at the time of its making, to one person more than another, personally considered; much less were it intended to make or permit any man to become a murderer, but just the contrary: Yet this law, when put in execution for the crime punishable by it, and voluntarily committed by men, makes as great a difference between one person and another as is between the living and the dead.

What honour or glory can there be brought to God, in introducing him upon the theatre of the world, speaking thus: “I will cast out of my favour, and devote to everlasting misery, thousands and tens of thousands of my most excellent creatures, men, women, and children, though they never offended me otherwise than children may offend thousands of years before they are born. And though I, in my secret counsel, intend thus to leave them irrecoverably to suffer the most exquisite torments eternally, without any possibility of escaping, though they should do their utmost to please me and obtain my favour; yet I will, in my word, proclaim and profess myself to them to be ‘a God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin;’ I will entreat them with bowels of tenderness and compassion, and profess to be troubled in soul, because of their impenitency; I will allure them to repentance with all my great and precious promises of pardon, life, and glory; yea, I will solemnly protest unto them by the greatest oath, even by my own life,

that 'I desire not their death.'" Can intelligent and considerate men see any thing in such proceedings as these, that is likely to constitute a prerogative worthy the name, glory, and transcendent holiness and excellency of God? It is most certain, that there is nothing in God, nor that proceeds from him, but what is agreeable to the principles of sound reason, and the light which he hath infused into the hearts of men, and which is just matter of praise, honour, and glory to his name.

Though it will not be denied, but that God hath an absolute right and sovereignty over his creatures, yet it is a most horrible indignity put upon him, and, in effect, a denial of his infinite grace, goodness, mercy, &c., to affirm that he exerciseth this sovereignty on terms the most grievous to his creatures, and which can no ways conduce to his own glory; which, notwithstanding, they affirm, who maintain, that from eternity he purposed to leave the far greatest part of his most excellent creatures to drop into everlasting misery, without any possibility of escape. How extravagantly inconsistent with the goodness of God, which is infinite and without bounds, to create millions of rational creatures, with an intention to declare his prerogative or sovereignty over them, in leaving them irrecoverably to perish in the endless torments of hell!

The Scriptures are so far from countenancing any such sovereignty in God over his creatures, which consists in designing from eternity to leave any of them unavoidably to fall into everlasting misery, that they present us with a most amiable and delightful contrast to this, respecting the Divine character. They frequently represent him as a Creator very gracious, loving, and bountiful towards all his creatures; insomuch that our Saviour recommends him, in his deportment, towards the most unworthy of men, as an absolute pat-

tern for his people to imitate, in doing good and showing mercy, even to their enemies. If it should be supposed that God from eternity hath irresistibly doomed to misery those very persons on whom "he maketh his sun to rise and sendeth rain," it must be supposed, therefore, that he intends the greatest evil possible to them, even while he doth these good things to them. If so, then must they who imitate him be the most wretched dissemblers under heaven; making a show of love and kindness in their outward deportment, while war and blood are in their hearts; yea, doing them good with a purpose of bringing so much the greater evil upon them. But the Scripture every where abounds with the most powerful evidence of the love and goodness of God towards all his creatures. St. Peter styles him "a faithful Creator," and exhorts Christians to "commit their souls unto him in well-doing," upon that account, namely, as one that would faithfully perform the relation of a Creator to them. In calling him a "faithful Creator," he clearly intimates that there is a kind of natural tie in every author of being, which promiseth to those that receive being from them a regular and due care for their preservation and good. The relation of a parent promiseth to a child a constant desire and endeavour to promote its comfort and well-being. By virtue of this promise, parents are obliged to provide and "lay up for their children." In reference to this natural obligation it is that God saith, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" implying that such women are indeed very unnatural and unfaithful who can. Thus, every rational creature has the strongest ground of assurance, from the relation in which he stands to God as a Creator, that, upon a regular deportment of himself towards him, he shall receive protection and every good thing from him. The Scripture evidently implies, that there must be a

very great breach on the creature's part, in point of degeneracy and unworthiness, before God looks upon himself as discharged from a performance of all the parental kindness to which he stood obliged by the relation of Creator.

The relation of a Creator in God is one and the same towards the elect and reprobate; the one being the workmanship of his hands as well as the other. If God were likely to have reprobated any of his creatures from eternity, and had his people believed this, it would have been but a very slender encouragement of their faith that he should put them in mind of this relation. For might they not, on such a supposition as this, have replied, "Lord, why dost thou so much insist on the consideration of being our Creator, as if there were any thing in this to comfort us? Do we not know that thou art a Creator to many thousands in the world, whom, notwithstanding, thou didst cast out of thy love from eternity, without any cause given by them? Therefore what assurance of thy grace or favour can we obtain from the consideration of such a relation?" Therefore it is evident, that God acknowledgeth a gracious tie upon himself as a Creator, to love, respect, and take care for his creatures, until they voluntarily renounce their relation to him, by walking in rebellion against him.

III.—MAN.

CREATION OF MAN.—What can there lightly be imagined more repugnant to the law of nature or light of reason than, that that which receives the benefit or good of being from another,—which, how mean or ordinary soever it be, it could no ways deserve or claim from him that gave it,—should, notwithstanding, censure or reprove him because the being which he gave unto it was not better, or some other, than what it is? Have sheep or oxen any cause to find fault with their Creator because he made them such, and not men? or men, that he made them men, and not angels? especially considering that it was impossible for God to have given any other beings unto them than those which he hath now given them, and by which they are that which they are. God could, indeed, have made other creatures, and, doubtless, better than they, when he made them; but what had this been to them in case they had not been made? It cannot, upon this account, be said, that he had done better for them, or given them any better being than what they now have; nay, if they had not received those very kinds of beings which now they have, they could have had no being at all, but only other creatures should have had beings in their stead.

FALL OF MAN.—We hold, that all men by nature, that is, considered as sometimes in the loins of Adam, and as descended from him by natural propagation, are children of wrath, and liable to condemnation. We hold and judge, that all those dispositions and inclinations unto good which were vested in the nature of man in his creation, were forfeited, lost, and ruined by his fall. We hold, further, that no person of mankind, by nature, that is, considered as one of the house and

lineage of the first Adam, hath any strength, power, or disposition to mind or will any thing that is spiritually good. We yet hold, that men and women, generally, walking according to the course of this world, and fulfilling the lusts of the flesh and of the mind, hereby become dead in sins and trespasses. We hold, that no person, being dead in sins and trespasses, hath any power to quicken himself; that is, the apostle himself being the interpreter, to forgive himself his trespasses. We hold, that no person of mankind is sufficient of himself to think or reason any thing of a saving tendency, either to himself or others, as of himself; but that every man's sufficiency, in this kind, is of God. We hold, that no person can truly repent or believe without the gracious presence and assistance of the Spirit of God with him.

Concerning Adam's sin, or disobedience, "many" are said to be "made sinners" by it. And so "by the obedience of Christ," it is said, in the same place, that "many shall be made righteous." But if men will exchange language with the Holy Ghost, they must see that they make him no loser. If, when they say, "Adam's sin is imputed to all unto condemnation," their meaning be the same with the Holy Ghost's when he saith, that "by the disobedience of one many were made sinners," there is no harm done; but it is evident, by what many speak, that the Holy Ghost and they are not of one mind touching the imputation or communication of Adam's sin with his posterity, but that they differ as much in meaning as in words. If, when they say, "Adam's sin is imputed to all unto condemnation," their meaning be this, that the guilt of Adam's sin is charged upon his whole posterity, or that the punishment of Adam's sin redounded from his person to his whole posterity, a main part of which punishment lieth in that original defilement wherein they are all conceived and born, and whereby they are

made truly sinners before God ; if this be the meaning of the term "imputation," when applied to Adam's sin, let it pass. But if the meaning be, that that sinful act wherein Adam transgressed when he ate the forbidden fruit is, in the letter and formality of it, imputed to his posterity, so that by this imputation all his posterity are made formally sinners, this is an imputation which the Scripture will never justify.

The equity of God involving Adam's posterity in the punishment due to his first sin, seemeth to be founded upon three things : first, the demerit or sinfulness of sin ; secondly, the straitness or narrowness of Adam's person ; thirdly, the special relation that his posterity had to his person.

First, for the fulness of the demerit or sinfulness of it : It is almost inconceivable what aggravations it is capable of, if all its circumstances were considered ; but these I do not now purpose to insist upon ; only I desire to mention one, which is obvious. The sin of Adam hath this peculiar burden of sinfulness in it : The wicked angels were entrusted but with their own portions ; and therefore, when they sinned, they sinned to themselves, they sinned away and ruined only their personal blessedness. But Adam had a dearer and deeper engagement upon him : He had the estates of all his posterity put into his hand ; and knew that if he sinned and fell, he should draw thousands of souls after him into the same perdition ; and those such, the things of whose peace and welfare the law of nature itself obliged him to provide for with more care and tenderness than of all other creatures whatsoever ; being those that were to be his own children, "even flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone." If it be esteemed a sore brand upon the wickedness of Jeroboam, that "he made Israel to sin ;" and yet this was no other making to sin than what might have been resisted by those that were drawn

to sin by it ; then must it be a far sorer charge upon the sin of Adam, who made not Israel only, but the whole world, to sin ; and that in a way against which there was not the least power in the world to make any resistance or opposition.

Now, the exceeding sinfulness of this sin of Adam being granted, it cannot be judged any ways unequal in God to inflict an answerable measure or weight of punishment upon it.

Consider we, secondly, the narrowness or scantiness of Adam's person ; of how small capacity his vessel was, to contain that fulness of punishment which God might lawfully require for the great injury or dishonour done unto him in that mighty sin ; and this will bring you to confess farther, that either God must sit down by the loss, as we use to say, or must look beyond Adam's person, for more to be joined in the punishment with him, to supply, as it were, what was wanting in him in that respect. In civil states, it is not more usual than reasonable, that when the offence is of a very high nature, as in the case of treason, the punishment should not be confined to the person of the offender, but be farther extended, until the quality of the offence be some ways answered. Upon this ground of equity I conceive it was, that God would not be satisfied with the personal destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, but involved their families, their wives, their sons, their little ones, in the punishment with them. Indeed, for Korah's children, at least some of them, it seems, from Numbers xxvi. 11, they had withdrawn from their father's tent and company, before the judgment came, and so escaped. But the families, wives, children, little ones, yea, and all those persons that were found with Korah, when the stroke of Divine recompence came, were cast together into the scale of the punishment, to make weight for the heinousness of the sin. The like is to be conceived

F

in the case of Achan's sin. If the personal punishments of these men would have held out full consideration with their offences, it is no ways probable but that the punishing hand of God would have stayed there.

The third and last, but principal, consideration is, the peculiar relation of the posterity of Adam to his person. His posterity was so nearly and entirely his, when the sin was committed, and the judgment first poured out upon it, that they were in his person, and, as it were, a part of it. "The time was, when all men were but one Adam," as Augustine expresseth it; that is, "Adam was us all." And again: "We were all that one Adam." And the whole generation of mankind is but Adam, or Adam's person expounded at large; and may with as good propriety be called "Adam," as the nation of the Jews is often in Scripture called "Jacob." It being then granted, first, that the sin of Adam was exceedingly sinful; secondly, that his person, properly taken, was not capable of the fulness of that wrath which that sin deserved; it cannot be thought unequal that his posterity should be arrested also, and taken into communion with his person in the punishment inflicted; especially if we consider the peculiar nearness and relation between his person and his posterity.

It being said, that "death, being entered into the world, passed upon all men," or "over all men," it showeth, that Adam's single person was not sufficient to bear the fulness of that punishment which the sinfulness of his sin had deserved; otherwise death would have stopped there, and have passed on no farther.

Where it is added, as the reason why death, being gotten into the world, passed on, and prevailed over them all, without exception, namely, "because that in him," that is, Adam, "all men had sinned;" this implieth, that had not men been in the loins of Adam

and had a special relation to him, this death had had no more advantage against them than against other creatures.

These things then considered, it is evident, that the imputation of Adam's sin, or rather of the act of Adam's sin, (for otherwise it is nothing to the purpose,) to his posterity, is not the ground of the punishment that is fallen upon his posterity for it ; neither is there the least tittle in the Scriptures sounding that way, but chiefly that special communion they had with him in his nature, having then their several beings in his loins, and consequently in his sin ; "in whom all have sinned." Therefore the ground of that punishment or condemnation, which is come upon all men, is not the imputation of Adam's sin : But if any imputation be in this case, it is of every man's own sin in Adam ; for it was not Adam alone that sinned, but all sinned in him.

Adam's sin has reference to his posterity in matter of defilement, and, consequently, of guilt and punishment, by natural propagation from him. Adam's person, the fountain of all his posterity, being corrupted and poisoned with him, except God should have wrought miraculously, either by a thorough purging of the fountain before any stream issued from it, or by dissevering the poison from the waters in the very moment of their issue, (neither of which he was any way bound to do,) could not but send forth streams of like defilement with the fountain itself. This the Scripture plainly teacheth : "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? not one." So our Saviour, "That which is born of the flesh," corrupted and weakened by sin, "is," by the course of nature whereunto God himself hath righteously consented, "flesh ;" that is, a creature or thing of the same sinful and weak nature ; and, to forbear other texts, the apostle expressly affirmeth, that "by the disobedience of one many were made sinners ;" not by the imputation of the act of his sin to them, (this

is neither Scripture nor good reason,) but by corrupting and defiling his own person, by reason whereof all that are born of him in a way of natural propagation must needs be born sinners.

Death and condemnation are justly come upon the world, not so much (to speak properly) FOR Adam's transgression, as BY Adam's transgression; partly as this transgression of his was the sin and transgression of the world; partly as, by means of this sin, the world, I mean, all the sons and daughters of men born into it, are become personally and completely sinful. In this sense it is said, that "by the offence of one, death reigned," namely, over all, "by one;" and so that "death passed over all, in that all had sinned." And again: "That judgment came by one unto condemnation;" and, "that all men by nature are children of wrath," &c. If men can find any propriety in the word "imputation" to signify any of these three considerations, let the sin of Adam be said to be imputed to his posterity, I shall no way contradict it; but for any such imputation, as is pressed by many, by which men should be made formally sinners before God, and the sin no ways looked upon as theirs, but only by means of such imputation, I neither find the Scriptures affirming, nor am otherwise able to comprehend it.

IV.—CHRIST.

DIVINITY OF CHRIST.—The Lord Christ is said to uphold, or “bear up all things by the word of his power;” which implies, 1. An utter inability in the creature to preserve itself from falling into its original state of nothingness; for that which is able to keep itself from falling needs no bearing up by another. 2. That Christ feels no burden of the universe whilst he supports it. The speaking of a word, and in the mind only, putteth not to the least pain. This great work of bearing up the universe is appropriated unto Christ, because in his mediatorial humiliation he laid a foundation of justice and reason, why God, notwithstanding the great provocation given by man’s sin to dissolve it, should yet consent to the supporting of it. Such works as depend upon his mediation are in Scripture peculiarly attributed to him in respect thereof. Though in respect of the Divine nature, power, and will, being one and the same in all the three Persons, there is a necessity of their joint concurrence in their works; yet such of these, for which way hath been made by any of the three, may be in a more special manner attributed to that Person who hath more peculiarly interposed for the procuring them.

That Jesus Christ is God, is, I suppose, evident enough from hence, not only that one, or some few, but that all the angels of God, without exception of any, are commanded to worship him. Certainly God would not command one creature to worship another; no, not the inferior to worship the superior, much less the superior to worship the inferior. “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”

The apostle chooseth rather to assert the Godhead of Christ by appealing unto him in his oath of assevera-

tion, than to avouch the honour or being of God, by swearing by him; because God, as we have said, was generally acknowledged in his Divine prerogative, by being called upon in oaths for confirmation amongst men; whereas the Godhead of Christ wanted as yet that honour in this kind which was and is due unto it. Christ himself, in the days of his flesh, pleaded for and demanded Divine honour for himself of those whom he acknowledged as worthy homagers unto God. "Ye believe in God," saith he to his disciples, "believe also in me." Elsewhere he saith, that God "the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son," meaning himself; "that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father." In like manner the apostle Paul, joining in design both with God the Father and the Son, may well be conceived to take the opportunity of the case in hand to advance the honour of Christ the Son to an equality with that Divine honour which was every where exhibited to God the Father.

INCARNATION.—Though the Son of God did not assume human nature with any defilement or embasement of sin, yet, as the Scripture saith, "God sent his Son in the similitude or likeness of sinful flesh,"—that is, in such flesh, in that flesh, which to the eye, and in outward appearance, differed nothing from that which was sinful indeed; no, the sinfulness of it itself not excepted, yea, which was charged with all those natural infirmities which that flesh which is really sinful is universally exposed and subject unto;—he was so far from being under any engagement whatsoever to that nature which with such an infinite condescension he did assume, I mean, unto men, that as far as evil entreaties, injuries, provocations in the highest, could interpose and prevail with him, he was likely to have stood engaged and bent, in his resolutions and desires, upon the ruin and destruction of it.

Nor could he expect, being truly and substantially God, that any matter of gain, advantage, or addition of good, in what kind soever, should or could accrue unto him by such a condescension; that which is infinite can have nothing either added to it or taken from it. Nor could he but know, even before he put on and wore that garment, or clothing of flesh, which we speak of, how it would be rent and torn, and a thousand ways abused, before he should come to put it off again. These circumstances, with some others of like consideration, which might be added to them, duly considered, must needs render the condescension of the Son of God, in his incarnation, hyperbolically strange, wonderful, and mysterious.

A person exalted in worth and honour far above all men, patriarchs, prophets, and whomsoever, yea, above the angels themselves;—a person counting it no “robbery to be equal with God,” having also, Godlike, the absolute dominion of the world, and over all things in it, vested in him:—This Person, I say, thus astonishingly great, wonderful, and glorious, accepted that flesh or human nature which he assumed at the hand of this nation and people, and was born of one of their daughters.

CHRIST A PRIEST.—It was the lawfulness of the Sacrifice, the dignity of the Priest, and the manner of its being offered, according to God’s appointment, that rendered it acceptable to God. Therefore, the acceptance of this great Sacrifice depended wholly upon Christ himself, who, 1. In respect to his person, was every way qualified to be a proper Atonement for the sins of the world. 2. In respect to his office, he was legally called and anointed by God to offer that great Sacrifice of himself. 3. And, lastly, by virtue of the holiness and perfection of his nature, fully qualifying him for the office of the priesthood, he made

a perfect and acceptable oblation to God. He had not the least dependence, in any of these, upon those who put him to death; neither did he stand in need of their wickedness in crucifying him, to make either Sacrifice, Priest, or Oblation so highly acceptable to God.

The death of Christ is necessary on several accounts. 1. If he had not actually yielded up himself to death, it would have been concluded by some men, that he was not really willing to have laid down his life for the world; and, consequently, there would have been no ground for any man to believe, either that he was the Son of God, or that he was properly qualified for the redemption of the world. 2. Had he always declined yielding himself up to death, under those frequent attempts made by men to take away his life, it could not have been known that God the Father "delivered him up to death;" and, consequently, his will and pleasure concerning the salvation of the world by his Son could not upon any reasonable terms have been believed. 3. The prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the sufferings of Christ could not have been fulfilled. 4. If he had not suffered, that great example of his humility, patience, self-denial, love of the brethren, even unto blood, &c., had been wanting in the churches. 5. Upon the supposition mentioned, the real sufferings of Christ were necessary, in respect to the inward frame and disposition of his soul, which rendered him freely willing to lay down his life, if required of him, at such a time as his Father judged it meet to permit the execution. Now, this disposition of soul being found in Christ, which qualified him for a Redeemer, could not possibly but produce his actual death, when men should attempt it, and God no ways interpose to prevent it. It doth not suppose that the real shedding of his blood by men was absolutely necessary to the redemption of sinners, but

only that great act of the resignation of it to be shed by them, which was transacted inwardly in his soul, was absolutely necessary thereto.

RESURRECTION.—Was there not all the reason in the world why God should raise him again from the dead? Was there, or is there, any thing to disparage that act of God, either in point of wisdom, righteousness, or equity, by which he raised him from the dead? Did he not live holily and blamelessly in this present world, whilst his natural life stood by him? Did he not challenge all his enemies to rebuke him of sin, and none of them accept the challenge? Yea, and were not his inward parts as “full of grace and truth,” as John speaketh, as his life was of the fruits and expressions of them? There was no spot or blemish of sin to be found in him, body or soul; so that there was not the least cause, nor colour of a cause, why God should leave him in the hand of death, in respect of any thing relating to himself, or why he should not raise him up again: Yea, the truth is, that thus far there was no cause why he should so much as taste of death, much less why he should be left in the hand of death.

Again: As touching his undertaking for others, I mean, of expiating and making atonement for the sins of the world, it is true, there was reason why, in respect of this, he should die, or taste of death; because, otherwise, he could not have performed his undertaking. But there was no reason why, having performed this, and that with a surplusage of performance, not only dying, but remaining in the bands of death for a longer time than was simply necessary for that expiation,—there was no reason, I say, in respect of this neither, why God should not raise him from the dead. Nay, what in respect of his innocency, and of his willingness to lay down his life for others, and

of his full accomplishment of what he intended and undertook to do, yea, or was necessary for him to do, for others, it was no way consisting with the wisdom or righteousness of God not to have made out that outstretched arm of his power, which he did to raise him from the dead. And in this respect it was that Peter spake as he did: "Whom God hath raised up, and loosed the sorrows of death, because it was impossible that he should be holden of it;" that is, of death. How, or in what respect, was it impossible, that Christ should be held by death? It was not impossible, in respect of that nature wherein Christ suffered death, this human nature; nor was it impossible simply in respect of the Divine nature, wherein he had communion, even whilst he suffered death, as well as in that nature wherein he suffered death; nor was it impossible simply in respect of that absolute holiness and freedom from sin which was in him; but this impossibility, I conceive, sprang chiefly from an utter inconsistency with the righteousness and goodness of God to suffer a person so innocent and holy as Christ was, and withal, having fully accomplished what he undertook by dying, to remain any longer in the bands and prison of death.

V.—GENERAL REDEMPTION.

THE first class of scriptures which affirm the universality of the atonement of Christ are such as represent the gift and sacrifice of Christ, as relating to and being designed for the world. Some of the principal are these:—"God so loved the world, that he gave," &c. "That the world through him might be saved." "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." "My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." "For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." "For God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

The second class of scriptures which we bring forward to maintain the same doctrine are such as ascertain the ransom of Christ, and the will of God in the great business of salvation to all men, and every man. The following are some of these:—"Who gave himself a ransom for all." "Because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they who live," &c. "That he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." "Who will have all men to be saved," &c. "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." "Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men."

A third class of Scriptures, allied to the former, are such as exhibit and promise salvation indifferently to whosoever believeth. Of this are the following:—"And him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise

cast out." "He that believeth in me shall never thirst." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "That whosoever believeth in him shall not perish," &c. "That through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all that believe."

A fourth class, pregnant with the same truth, consists of passages where Christ is said to have died for those who do actually perish; and where such persons are said to have been bought by him, and to have been sanctified by his blood, who yet, through their own negligence and wilful sin, bring upon themselves everlasting destruction. Texts of this kind are well known:—"Destroy not him" with thy meat "for whom Christ died." "Even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again," &c. "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted," &c. "Then his lord, after he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant! I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me, shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due to him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your heart forgive not every one his brother his trespasses."

It is evident from the general drift of these passages, that Christ died for all men without exception; for the term "world," in these places, being necessary to be taken in its proper sense, for all the men and women in the world, and not for any less number, as for some

of all sorts, for the elect, or the like. We shall investigate only some of these places, and leave the light of their interpretations to assist in understanding the rest.

The first proposed was that very remarkable passage : "God so loved the world, that he gave," &c. It is evident that Christ was given for their sakes, whoever they be, who are meant by "the world." I do but remember ever to have heard of three senses put upon this word. First, some by the "world" here understand the elect dispersed up and down the world. By the "elect," they mean those who shall, in time, be actually saved ; whom they call the "elect," because they suppose them to have been chosen from eternity by God out of the generality of mankind, with an intent to be by him irresistibly brought to believe and to persevere to the end, and, consequently, to be eternally saved ; the residue of men being absolutely rejected, and left unavoidably to sink into everlasting misery. But that this is not the sense of the term "world" in this passage, will appear by the following considerations :—

The word here translated "world" was never known to have any such signification in the Greek language ; nor is it to be found used in such a sense in any author, who wrote in this language before or about the time when St. John wrote his Gospel. Now, it is generally acknowledged, that the Gospel, being written in the Greek tongue for the sake of the Gentiles, that they might be brought to believe and be saved by it, it is no ways probable, that the evangelist would use words in an uncouth or unknown signification.

Nor does it appear, that it is to be taken in the sense now opposed in the other passages of Scripture ; but in very many places it signifies the generality of men in the world, and it is also put for that part of mankind who are contradistinguished to the elect. This latter

signification of the word "world" is evident in these scriptures:—"We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lieth in wickedness." "Even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive," &c. "If ye were of the world, the world would love her own," &c.

If by "the world" be meant the elect, then it will follow, that God out of his great love gave Christ for those who stood in no need of him, either to deliver them from misery, or to invest them with a title to eternal life. For if salvation and eternal life be secured to men by virtue of the decree of God from all eternity, they have a full right and title to them without the interposition of any thing else whatsoever. For what better right or title can there be to the enjoyment of any thing than the decree of heaven? the determination of Him who hath an unquestionable right to dispose of all enjoyments, and to whomsoever he pleaseth?

The very construction of the passage makes against this sense. For, 1. If by the word "world," we understand the elect, the very grammar of the place is destroyed, and we cannot make sense of it. "God so loved his elect, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever," &c. How is the distributive particle, "whosoever," or "every one," to be understood? It is well known to those who understand grammar, that distributive particles always suppose a difference, at least in possibility, between the things distributed. For instance: Suppose a king, having many sons, should say, "I so love my children, that, whichsoever of them shall be dutiful to me, I will bestow on them dukedoms," &c., would he not plainly imply a possibility that some of them might prove undutiful to him? In like manner, if the word "world" signify the elect, the distributive "whosoever" must necessarily imply that some of these might possibly not believe, and so perish everlastingly. 2. Though our Saviour, in this passage, mentions only

the benefit intended by God in the gift of his Son, to those who shall believe; yet he plainly supposeth the misery and loss which they should certainly suffer who will not believe. Unless this be supposed, we make our Lord speak in a very unintelligible manner. For then the sense would be, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth," or not believeth, "in him should not perish," &c. And besides, it is contrary to reason, especially in serious discourse, to suspend that upon the performance of such or such a condition which may be enjoyed without any such performance. It being granted that our Saviour here supposeth the certain perishing of those who shall not believe, then the sense will be according to those who by "the world" understand the elect: "God so loved the elect, that whosoever" of them "believed should not perish;" but, on the contrary, that whosoever of them should not believe should perish. Which is as ridiculous as if a man should say, "Whichsoever of my sheep is no sheep, but a goat, shall have no pasture with his fellows." 3. They who by "the world" here understand the elect, suppose Christ to speak in the following unmeaning way: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," that whosoever did that which was not possible for him to do otherwise "should not perish," &c. Who would, being serious, ever require that as a condition of any man, for the obtaining of some important end, which he, of whom it was required, was under the absolute necessity to perform? So that the main design of this verse renders the interpretation we oppose a mere nullity in reason and truth.

The connexion in which this text stands will not bear that sense of the word "world" which we have opposed. It is introduced as a reason of that glorious effect mentioned in the preceding verses: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so

must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The effect here brought forward is the salvation and everlasting happiness of all those who should believe in Jesus Christ. The reason hereof our Saviour asserts in the words under consideration : "For God so loved the world," &c. If by "the world" we only understand the elect, the reason here assigned of the forementioned effect will be found inadequate to it. For God's love to the elect, and his giving his Son for their salvation only, is no sufficient cause to procure the salvation of whosoever should believe in him. For it is certain that there is salvation in Christ for no more than God intended. If there be salvation in him for none but the elect, then it is not true that whosoever believeth in him shall be saved. For it is evident that no man's believing puts any salvation into Christ for him : Therefore, if it were not there before he believed, or whether he believed or not, neither would it be there though he should believe.

And, lastly, that by the word "world" is not meant "the elect," is evident from the words immediately following : "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." The conjunctive particle *for* plainly shows that the word "world" is used in the same sense in this verse where the condemnation of it is spoken of, as in the former. Now to make our Saviour say that "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the elect, but that the elect," &c., is to make him speak as never man spake, but not for excellency of wisdom, but for weakness. To say, "that God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the elect," were but to beat the air or to fight against a shadow ; that is, solemnly to deny that which no man was ever likely to imagine. For how could it ever enter into any man's mind, that God should send his Son into the world to condemn

those whom, out of his infinite and sovereign love, he had from eternity decreed to save with a strong hand and invincible power ?

A second interpretation of this word by some is, that by "the world" is meant, mankind indefinitely considered, as neither implying all nor any individual persons, but only the specific nature of man common to all ; as when the Jews said of the centurion, that "he loved their nation," their meaning was, not that he loved all that were Jews, nor yet that he loved any particular person of them more than another, but only that he was lovingly disposed towards them, as they were such a particular people. But that this interpretation either falls in with the former, and therefore is already disapproved ; or else with the third and last, which discovers in it the love of God towards every individual of mankind ; or otherwise, that it vanisheth into nothing, may be thus demonstrated :—If by "mankind," indefinitely considered, be neither meant a determinate number of persons, nor yet all men universally, then it is only the nature of man abstractedly considered, not the persons of men, which God loved with the love whereby he gave his only-begotten Son. If so, then it undeniably follows, that Christ was given out of as much love to one person as another, or, which is the same, not out of any love to any at all. Therefore, according to this interpretation, God loved the reprobates as much as the elect, and, consequently, gave his only-begotten Son to die as well for the one as the other. Besides, if it were the human nature indefinitely considered which God is here said to have loved, it follows from hence, inasmuch as the reprobates partake of the same human nature as the elect, that Christ was as much given for the former as the latter. Again : On this supposition, the distributive particle "whosoever" will be found incongruous, and no ways agreeing with the former part of the

verse. For the human nature is but simply one and the same nature, not many natures under it; whereas a distributive cannot be used but in reference to some general which contains many particulars under it. Lastly: The Jews who said the centurion loved their nation did not suppose that he loved only a small number, and hated all the rest with an inconceivable hatred; nor did they, by "their nation," understand the Jewish lineage abstractedly considered, without reference to any person or persons whatsoever. So that this instance no ways suits the interpretation of the word "world," for the illustration whereof it is introduced. But the plain meaning of that saying of the Jews was this, that he was ready and willing to do any office of love to any person or persons, when opportunity served, because of their national relation.

The third interpretation of "the world" in this passage is, that it includes every individual of mankind without any exception. This exposition agrees best with the context, and magnifies the love of God in the freeness, fulness, and the extent of it, incomparably beyond either of the former. For,

The Greek word here rendered "world," frequently signifies the generality of men; all those who are in an unconverted state, who, in respect of their vast multitudes, and the small number of the godly, are by St. John termed "the whole world:" "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." Or, lastly, the whole of mankind, including both good and bad. We have lately given several instances of the latter signification of the word; and of the former there are many. "Ye are the light of the world." "And I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him." "But I have chosen you out of the world." "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world," &c., the word being never used in the Scriptures for the elect, considered

by themselves, but either for the wicked alone, or else for both taken together; and it would be very strange indeed if our Saviour should use it in an unheard-of sense, in so eminent a passage of the Gospel, and not in the most familiar and best known signification.

This interpretation of the word makes the sense of the whole verse clear and intelligible; for by it the proper use of the distributive "whosoever" is preserved, and proper distribution made between the general and the particulars contained under it. As, for example: Here is a distribution made of this general, "the world:" The occasion of this is to show who or what particular persons of mankind shall "not perish, but have everlasting life;" and, by way of consequence, to show who shall "perish," and not "have everlasting life." The former are such as are said to "believe on the only-begotten Son of God;" the latter are clearly implied to be such as do not believe. Now, if it should be supposed that there is no possibility of any such difference between the particulars into which the general is here distributed, as believing and not believing, the distribution would be altogether needless and vain; yea, and render the whole unintelligible.

This explanation of the word "world" gives a rational and pleasant connexion between this verse and that which follows, as also between it and the two preceding verses: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness," &c. Now, it is very certain, that Moses did not lift up the serpent with an intent that only such a certain determinate number should be healed; nor with an intention that none but this certain number should look upon it; but that whosoever would might look upon it, and that whosoever, being stung with the fiery serpents, did look upon it, should be healed thereby. This is evident from the

history: "Make thee," saith God to Moses, "a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." Therefore, all men being stung by that fiery serpent, sin, unless Christ had been lifted up on the cross with an intention, 1. That every man, without exception, might believe in him; and, 2. That every man that should believe in him, should be saved by him, he could not be said to be "lifted up, as," or, in the same manner, "Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness." Therefore, our Saviour, to give the world a satisfactory account how it came to pass that he should thus be lifted up, to procure salvation for all men, assigns the love of God to the world, as the grand reason, or first moving cause: "For God so loved the world," &c. Therefore, he must of necessity by "the world" mean all mankind who were stung and disordered with the disease of sin.

In the next verse he saith, "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world," &c. In these words our Saviour confirms what he had said before, respecting God's love to the world, in giving his Son for the salvation of it, by rejecting that reason of his sending him into the world, which men might imagine to be the occasion of it, namely, with an intention in God of "condemning the world" by him. Now, to make Christ say, that "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn mankind, as having sinned against him," is to make him say that which is savoury and comfortable, and that which is most likely to prevent that gloominess of mind so natural to men under a consciousness of the guilt of sin, namely, that if ever God should send his Son amongst them, it would be to condemn them. But to make him say, that "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the elect," is to make him speak in a very

trifling, low sense, inasmuch as no such idea as this were ever likely to give any person a moment's pain.

The sense of the word "world," which we have now given, magnifies that Divine attribute, the love of God, incomparably more than either of the former. They who by "the world" understand the elect only, allow but a very small and inconsiderable sphere for so noble and diffusive a principle as the love of God is, in comparison of those who extend it to the whole human race. As the sun diffuses his light and heat through every part of the solar system, so God pours forth his universal goodness in numberless streams upon all his creatures, from that infinite source of love which is in him. They who exhibit the love of God in the gift of his Son Jesus Christ, as confined to the elect, and preach this Gospel unto the world, do by men, in respect of their spiritual interests, as God would do by the world in their temporal, if he should keep the sun in a continual eclipse, and cause ten parts of his light to be perpetually obscured.

This interpretation for which we now plead is entirely consistent with what the Scriptures so constantly affirm concerning the nature of God; his mercy, love, and goodness towards all his creatures; his equal and impartial administration of rewards and punishments; his being no respecter of persons; his ardent desires that none should perish, but that even the vilest and most abandoned of men should return from the evil of their ways and be saved; his not delighting in the death of those who do perish; and much more of the same import. There is a manifest agreement between the sense we contend for, and all such places of Scripture as these; whereas the other interpretations absolutely contradict them:—

"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

That by "the world," which God is here said to "have been in Christ reconciling unto himself," cannot be meant the elect only, but all mankind, is evident on the following account: First, it is not here said, that God in Christ did actually reconcile the world to himself, but that "he was reconciling the world," &c.; that is, "God was," and is, and ever will be, "in Christ," prosecuting his grand and gracious design of "reconciling the world to himself." Secondly, by the "reconciling of the world to himself in," or through, "Christ," which is here ascribed to God, must be meant his gracious endeavours to gain the love and friendship of the world, which was, and is, full of hatred and enmity against him. Therefore, it is impossible that by the word "world" should be understood the elect only, or indeed any thing but the generality of men. For God doth not, by or "in Christ," held forth and preached in a Gospel ministry, seek to bring over those only to himself in love; nor doth he send the gracious message of the Gospel, by which this reconciliation is to be actually brought about, only to them; but promiscuously to the generality of men without any exception: "Go and preach the Gospel to every creature under heaven." And, therefore, St. Paul did but obey his commission, when he "preached Christ, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Again: It is evident, that in the ministry of the word God doth as much warn and entreat the obstinate, and many who never come to believe, as those who are overcome and persuaded. It is said, concerning the ancient Jews, that "the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place." And yet it follows: "But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and mis-

used his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy." So that God is every way as serious, as urgent and pressing in the ministry of his word, upon those who remain obdurate and impenitent to the last, as he is on those who in time come to repent and believe. And St. Paul preached the same sermon, used the same address and application of the word to those who mocked, which he did to those who believed. It is, therefore, evident, that God as sincerely seeks the reconciling of such to himself, by Christ, who finally perish, as he doth those who are saved. And that he vouchsafes the same inward and outward means to both, at least, remotely, shall be proved in a proper place.

A third text of this class, and the last that we shall enforce is, "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." To keep the light of the truth under consideration from shining forth out of the Scriptures into the understandings of men, some have attempted a threefold corruption of the sense of these words, "the whole world." By "the whole world," say some, St. John intends the elect, living in all parts of the world; others, men of all sorts and conditions; others, Jews and Gentiles.

That the text under consideration will not bear any of the three significations above mentioned, put upon the word "world," appears from the following considerations:—

If any of them be admitted, the apostle, or rather the Holy Ghost, must be supposed to speak in the following trifling manner: "Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of some few particular persons besides, both of Jews and Gentiles." They who say that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of Jews and Gentiles, by "Jews and Gentiles" do not mean the generality of these two great divisions

of men in the world ; but only that small and inconsiderable remnant of both, who in the end come to be actually saved. Much the same may be said respecting the other two interpretations. Now, what weight, or of what importance, or use, to the Christian churches, to inform them that Christ was the propitiation for some few men's sins besides theirs, I yet understand not.

The context naturally leads to that sense of "the whole world" which we contend for. For the apostle doth not simply say, that "Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world," but he saith it emphatically, by way of contrast to this, that he was the propitiation for their sins : "And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." This last clause, "but also for the sins of the whole world," is evidently added for the further strengthening of the ground of their faith and comfort. But there will be but little found in it for promoting this happy end, unless these words, "the whole world," be taken in their most extensive signification ; namely, for all men without exception. For to say thus to a believer, who doubts concerning the grounds of his faith, and is but weak in the comfort of it, "Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the elect, or of some few particular men," must rather increase their doubts than strengthen their faith, and augment their fears rather than their comforts ; yea, and would lessen that ground of consolation which he had administered in the former clause ; "and he is the propitiation for our sins." For when my mind is in suspense whether Christ died for me or not, how shall it any ways tend to my establishment to know that Christ died for some particular persons both of Jews and Gentiles, and for some only ? Hath not such a consideration fuel in it to increase the burnings of my fears, instead of water to quench them ? Or can I be any ways more encouraged to believe that Christ died for me, by believing

that he died for some particular men? or must not my unbelieving fears be increased by considering, that Christ died for some few particular men only? or doth this opinion, though ever so ingenuously proved, and ever so effectually believed, any ways enable me to believe that I am one of those particular persons for whom he died? Nay, rather must not the belief of such a sentiment, falling in with the weakness of my faith, and a consciousness of the corruptions of my heart and many infirmities, of necessity involve and perplex me with so much the more inextricable fears, that I am not one of those particular men for whom the Saviour died? Therefore, any of those restrained senses of, "the whole world," which we have opposed, do manifestly oppose the design of the Holy Ghost, which was the strengthening of the faith of weak Christians; whereas the interpretation of them we plead for is every way consistent with such a design. For the consideration that Christ, by his death, made a full atonement for the sins of all men, without exception; as it tends to magnify "the unsearchable riches of the grace of Christ," on the one hand, and therefore is a suitable encouragement of faith; so, on the other hand, it casts down every mountain, and fills every valley, removes all obstructions and impediments out of the way, and so prepares a plain and smooth path for every man to come to Christ by believing; yea, and takes away all occasions for any relapses afterwards. How it comes to pass, and how it can be consistent with the justice of God, that, notwithstanding the death of Christ for the sins of all men, yet all men are not saved, shall be taken into consideration in a proper place.

Concerning the distinction mentioned of Christ's dying sufficiently for all men, but not intentionally; it is built on a false supposition, viz. that intentions are attributed to God on the same terms in every respect, as to men; but the contrary hath been proved, that God may be properly said to intend whatsoever he vouchsafes

sufficient means to effect, whether the thing be effected or not. Therefore, to affirm that Christ died sufficiently for all men, and not intentionally, is to utter contradictions, and to pull down with the left hand what a man hath built up with his right. It is no dishonour to God, nor in the least unworthy of him, that he doth not always attain the ends intended by him; no more than it is that sin should be committed in the world, notwithstanding his opposing it by his authority and law; though in the strictest sense, God never fails of his intentions, if by them we mean such things as are absolutely intended by him. But in this sense the actual salvation of particular men, under any other consideration than as believers, is none of his intentions. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son," not that every man should be absolutely saved, or have everlasting life; but that whosoever believeth should have it. So that the absolute and positive intentions of God concerning the salvation of men, are not concerning the salvation simply of men as such, but of believers; and of such intentions as these he never fails, or suffers disappointment. Again: If Christ died sufficiently for all men, either God intended this sufficiency of his death or not. If not, then the death of Christ could derive none of its glory and efficacy from the intentions of God. And if God intended the sufficiency of his death for all men, why not the merit of his death itself accordingly? If God intended the sufficiency of Christ's death for all men, then he intended his death for all men; and, consequently, Christ died not sufficiently only, but intentionally also, for all men.

How can he who pays nothing at all for a man, nor intends to pay any thing, be said to give that which is sufficient for him? Suppose a man in debt, and in danger of imprisonment can a sufficient; payment be said to be made for him to keep him from prison, whe-

ther any thing at all be paid for him or not? Suppose a man should give a great sum of money to redeem John and Peter from captivity; by which money he might have ransomed me also, and a thousand more in the same condition, if he had pleased, can this man, by payment of such a sum as this, on the terms specified, be said to have paid that which is sufficient to ransom me? Or is that sufficient to ransom me, which was only paid for the ransom of another?

If there were a sufficiency in the death of Christ for all men, and God did not intend it for them, but for a very few only, then would the death of Christ be found to be a disparagement rather than an honour to the Divine character. Suppose a man possessed of vast riches, whereby he were able to relieve the necessities of all his indigent neighbours, and without that relief many of them must perish; if this man should only resolve to relieve two or three of these distressed objects out of his abundance, and squander all the rest away to no purpose, would not his riches, in this case, be rather a reproach than an honour to the man, and discover him to be a very unnatural and inhuman being? In like manner, if God be provided with an abundance of merit, sufficient to save the whole world, and shall purposely confine it to a very small portion of mankind, leaving myriads of souls to perish irrecoverably, and without mercy; would not this abundance of merit by Christ, on this account, appear in the eyes of considerate men, as a veil cast over the mercy and goodness of God, and induce the creature to conceive of him, as a God rather enjoining than desiring the peace and welfare of men?

If Christ died sufficiently for all men, and not intentionally, then he died as much for the devils themselves, as for the greatest part of men; because his death, in respect to its intrinsical value, was sufficient to have redeemed devils as well as men.

As there has no sufficient reason yet been shown for

this distinction, nor ever will be, therefore they who make it do not only go about to set lambs together by the ears, which will not fight, but also speak things most unworthy of God, and represent him as a derider of his poor creature, man, rather than a well-wisher to him, in his declarations and professions of love, in the gift of his Son Jesus Christ, to make atonement and procure redemption for him.

The second class of scriptures, exhibiting the universality of the atonement of Christ.—Jesus Christ “gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” If the context to this passage be duly considered, if it be granted that the apostle speaks good sense, it must also be admitted that it carries very powerful evidence of the doctrine asserted. He goes on with the confirmation of the argument laid down for making good what he had said: “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.” “This is good,” namely, the performance of that duty exhorted to. That “supplications, prayers, intercessions, giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for ALL that are in authority,” &c. Now, evident it is that by “ALL MEN” here, for whom prayers, &c., are to be made to God, is not meant some of all sorts or the like, but ALL of ALL sorts; for what follows fully proves it: “For kings and for ALL in authority.” Certainly if this be good and acceptable in the sight of God, that we should pray for ALL of one sort of men in the world, especially for all “in authority,” it must also be good and acceptable in his sight, that we should pray for ALL in ALL other ranks of life whatsoever. The apostle gives this reason for the extensiveness of the duty: That God “will have ALL men to be saved.” If we limit the word ALL to some of all sorts, it will entirely take away the force of the apostle’s argument; whereas, when rightly understood, it is pregnant with conviction. “It is good and acceptable in the sight of God” that we

should "pray for ALL men" without exception, because his will is to have ALL without exception saved. Now, to prove that God's will is, that ALL men should be saved, the apostle introduces this reason; namely, that "Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for ALL men." So that "all men" here must of necessity be of the same extent with the same phrase in the doctrine which was to be proved. Now, to accomplish this end by such an argument as this, that "Christ gave himself a ransom," either for ALL "his elect," or for some of ALL sorts of men, as well Gentiles as Jews, and for none else, is as if I should attempt to prove the liberality of a prince towards all his subjects, because he sent a special messenger with presents to two or three of them, but was resolved to do nothing at all for any of the rest. Therefore an universal, unlimited atonement by Christ is the most unquestionable doctrine of the apostle in this scripture.

The next passage in this class was: "Because we thus judge, that if one died for ALL, then were ALL dead; and that he died for ALL, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again." It is undeniably clear in this text, that the apostle's judgment is, that "Christ died for ALL" without exception; he first supposes it, and afterwards positively asserts it. The reply which is commonly made to this, by those who are on the other side of the question, is this: They pretend that both the word "world," and those other terms of universality, "all," "all men," "every man," &c., are in many places to be taken in a restrained signification; as sometimes for "many;" sometimes for "some of all sorts;" sometimes for "Jews and Gentiles." From hence they would infer, that the same terms in the scripture in hand, and others of like import, are to be taken in such limited senses; and not as extending to all mankind. To this we answer,

It is true, that these terms of universality are in some places of Scripture necessary to be understood in some such limited and restrained sense, as is affirmed. But then,

We add, first, that neither the terms we speak of, nor any other Scripture expressions, are, on any pretence whatever, to be taken out of their proper and best-known significations, but only when the context, or some particular circumstance, requires such a construction. Now, it is evident, from what hath been formerly said on these passages, that there is no necessity at all, either from the contexts, or from any other circumstances, to understand the said terms of universality any otherwise than in their most proper and extensive significations.

And besides this, we have evidently proved, that the very contexts wherein these passages are found do absolutely lay us under the necessity of understanding these terms of universality in such an extensive and unlimited sense, as hath been contended for; so that there can be no good sense made of the places, according to the rules of grammar, unless such a signification of the terms be admitted.

To reason after this manner: "Because words are taken in this or that sense, in such places of Scripture, therefore they must be so understood in other places," is to run into a thousand absurdities. As, for instance: It is said, that "Peter stood at the door;" by the word "door" is meant a material door. But would it not be most ridiculous to infer from hence, that it must be taken in the same sense where Christ saith, "I am the door?" So again, when St. Paul saith that Christ sent him "to the Gentiles to open their eyes," it is evident, by the word "eyes" he intends their understandings; but from hence to conclude, that when David saith, that "the idols which men make have eyes," the word "eyes" here, also, is to be

understood in the same sense, is to draw a conclusion which would be abhorred by common sense.

We will now attempt to prove beyond all contradiction, that the passage under consideration is full to our purpose, and that the word ALL, or ALL MEN, in it, cannot be understood otherwise to the credit of St. Paul, that great master of erudition: "Because we thus judge," saith he, "that if one died for ALL, then were ALL dead; and that he died for ALL, that they who live," &c. Observe the distributive, "that they who live," that is, that ALL they who are delivered from this death by Christ, "should not live," &c. Therefore, if by the word ALL, or ALL MEN, for whom the apostle here "judgeth that Christ died," we understand the elect only, we shall destroy the beauty of a most excellent sentence, and render it absurd and inconsistent with all the rules and principles of good sense; for then it would run thus: "We judge that Christ died for ALL the elect, that all the elect, who shall live by Christ, should not live," &c. Doth not reason, and common sense itself, disrelish the very sound of such a disposition of words as this? Yea, doth not such an exposition evidently imply, that there may be some of the elect themselves, who shall not be delivered from death by Christ, and, consequently, be under no such obligation "to live to him?" If by the word ALL the apostle here meant the elect only, he would not have added, "that they who live," but rather, "that these may live;" for these words clearly imply a possibility, at least, that some of those ALL for whom Christ died would not live, and, consequently, would be in no capacity of not living to themselves to live to him. Let us now take the word ALL, in its proper signification, for all the human race, and the sense will be clear, and have a peculiar sweetness and harmony with it: "Because we thus judge," upon the most evident principles of

reason, "that if one died for ALL MEN, then were ALL MEN dead," fallen creatures, dead in point of law, as good as dead; and we further judge, also, "that he died for ALL MEN," with this intention, amongst others, "that they who live," that is, are brought to the enjoyment of spiritual life by his death, "should," in consideration of such a signal favour, "not live to themselves" chiefly, only minding their own worldly interests, "but unto him who died for them and rose again," by endeavouring, as much as possible, to promote His interest in the world who hath died for them. In such an interpretation of the passage as this, there is a spirit and life, evidence of reason, commodiousness of sense, regularity of construction, no forcing nor straining of words; whereas in the contrary explanation, which contracts the signification of the word ALL, and limits it to a small number, there will be found an universal dissonance in the very sound of the sentence. By the way, we may observe, that the apostle, in saying that "Christ died for ALL MEN, that they who live should not live unto themselves," &c., doth not intend to confine the duty of gratitude for Christ's death only to the saints, as if wicked men were under no obligations to him at all on that account; but only shows that Christ expects no such denial of themselves, for his sake, of any, but of those who come to be made actually partakers of the great benefit of his death.

"That he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." This passage exhibits an universal atonement by the death of Christ, and is less liable to any evasion or shift than any of the former. To show that the Lord Christ, though clothed with a body of flesh, which rendered him capable of dying, yet he did not suffer death simply through the malice or power of his enemies; but the apostle attributes it to the grace of God, and this not towards some few, but towards all men distributively taken; literally, according to the

Greek, "for every one." It is evident, that the apostle, in these words, assigns a reason, or rather two, for what he had said a little before, concerning the incarnation and humiliation of Jesus Christ, to prevent any prejudice that either had already, or might afterwards arise in the minds of these Hebrews, on account of the strangeness of this manifestation of Divine favour. The apostle's grand design in these words was to satisfy the Hebrews concerning such a strange and wonderful event: As, 1. That the Son of God should be made man; and, 2. That, being made man, he should suffer death. It is certain that he would, 1. Assign such a reason as would carry the greatest weight in it; and, 2. Express himself with such perspicuity, that they might not easily mistake his meaning, lest they should first apprehend the reason to be more weighty than he intended it, and afterwards should find it less considerable, their prejudice, instead of being prevented, would be increased; as is usual in such cases. Now, it is evident that the apostle's words in this place, in their most obvious sense, hold forth the doctrine which we maintain for truth, there being not the least restraint put upon that term of universality "every man;" and it is also evident, that the death of Christ for all men, and the grace of God designing it, amount to a far more weighty reason of those great events, viz. the incarnation and humiliation of the Son of God, than his dying only for a few, and the grace of God proportionable hereunto. Therefore, there is not the least doubt to be entertained, but that the unlimited and not the limited sense was that of the apostle in these words. And when the Holy Ghost expresseth himself in words so pointed and clear, as he doth in this passage; for any man to say that for "every man" we are only to understand a very few, is not to explain, but to correct, and to exercise an unjustifiable authority over the Scriptures.

The scripture next brought forward in this class was, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." And we join with this last specified: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance." In the former passages we have clearly proved, that by "all men," cannot possibly be understood, either the elect, or some of all sorts; but of necessity ALL of ALL sorts, without any exemption, whether Jews or Gentiles. Any other sense of the words "all men" but this, renders the apostle weak and ridiculous in his reasoning. I now add, that if it may be said, that "God will have all men to be saved," because he will have some of all sorts to be saved; it may with as much propriety be said of him, that he will have all men to be destroyed, because not only a few, but a very great part, of all sorts of men in the world will in the end perish, living and dying in a state of impenitency and unbelief. Yet the Scriptures nowhere intimate in the least, that God will have all men to perish, and not to come to the knowledge of the truth; which is a powerful argument, that God is not said to will that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth, only because he will have some of all sorts saved, and come to this knowledge; but because his will is, that ALL MEN, without exception, (while the day of grace lasts,) should be saved, and in order thereto come to the knowledge of saving truth. Now, then, if it be the will of God to have ALL MEN, without exception, saved, &c., it is undeniably certain that Christ died for all men, and that intentionally on God's part; because it can never be imagined that God should be willing to have those saved for whom he was not willing that salvation should be procured. The latter of these two scriptures is in perfect unison with the former. It is

there said of the Lord Christ, that he "is not willing that any should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance." If so, then, there are certainly none for whom Christ was not willing to die, and procure repentance. So that his death was really and intentionally for all men, as well in reference to himself, as to God the Father.

I would ask of those who lean upon this broken reed, in opposition to the clear and direct sense given of the two last scriptures mentioned, what they mean by their "revealed will of God;" and wherein the difference lieth between this, and what they term his "secret will." If by his "revealed will" they intend only the precepts of God concerning man's duty, I do not understand how or in what respect God can be said to will the salvation of all men, or that none should perish. For, 1. Salvation, actively considered, is the work of God, not of men; and, consequently, cannot be said to be a duty enjoined, and therefore not to be willed by way of precept. 2. Salvation, passively considered, is not an act, but a state, and, consequently, is not a duty, and so cannot be said to be willed by God in such a sense.

If by the "revealed will of God" be meant the declaration which he hath made in his word concerning the eternal states of men, it is evident that in this sense neither can he be said to will the salvation of all men; because he hath declared unto the world that few will be finally saved.

If it be urged, that, "in this sense, God may be said to will the salvation of all men with his revealed will, because faith and repentance are enjoined upon all men, which are the means of salvation; and he that enjoys the mean, may, by way of consequence, be said to enjoy the end;" I answer,—

If God enjoin faith and repentance upon all men, it implies that the Gospel is preached to all; and, consequently, that they who have not the letter of the Gospel

preached by men, yet have the spirit and substance of it preached to them, in the sublime language of creation and providence, which corresponds with the written word.

I confess that no signification whatever, whether of what a man willeth to be done, or of what is the duty of another to do, can properly be said to be the will of the signifier; but yet that will, by which God commands our duty, is as properly his will, as that whereby he decrees things to be done. The above difference can have no place in the acts of the Divine will. Therefore, if the preceptive will of God be not properly his will; neither can any other will of his be properly such. If so, then that will of God whereby he enjoineth faith and repentance, and, consequently, salvation, unto all men, is as properly his will as that whereby he wills the salvation of any man. Therefore, if there be any secret will in God, by which he wills the destruction of any man, at the same time when he wills the salvation of all men, these two wills must needs be contradictory one to the other.

Again: If God enjoin faith and repentance to all men, and that in order to their salvation, then he cannot at the same time, with a secret will, will the condemnation of any. For it is undeniably evident, that to whomsoever these are enjoined, it is with a view to their salvation, and it is actually promised to the penitent believer. Therefore it is impossible that he should secretly intend the destruction of any who are commanded to repent and believe the Gospel. The consequence in this argument is so rich in evidence, that it needs no proof.

From the foregoing scriptures, it is evident, that Christ died intentionally for all men; and that there was nothing more procured for one man than another, personally considered. Only this was intended in his death, (in the general,) that whosoever, whether few or many, should

with a true and lively faith believe in him, should by his death be made an actual partaker of the great blessing of salvation; and, on the other hand, that whosoever should not believe in him with such a faith should be excluded from the enjoyment of salvation, notwithstanding it was as much procured and intended for him as for those who come to the enjoyment of it; as the marriage-feast in the Gospel was as really provided and intended for those who refused to come, as it was for those who came and actually partook of it.

The last scripture of this class was this: "Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." It is evident that the apostle, in this passage, compares the extent of the condemnation, which came by the sin of Adam, with the extent of the grace of justification, which came by Jesus Christ. The persons on whom the gift of justification came by Christ are made equal in number to those upon whom condemnation came by Adam. For as the offence of Adam is here said to have come "upon all men to condemnation;" so also is the "free gift" of justification of life, which is by Jesus Christ, said to come "upon all men" likewise. Now, to say that "all men," in the former case, is to be understood of "all men" without any exception, but in the latter to be limited to a very few, there being not the least reason from the context to vary the signification of the words, is to exercise an arbitrary dominion over the words of the Holy Ghost, and to invent and set up significations of words at pleasure.

The third class of scriptures, clearly affirming the important doctrine hitherto maintained.—"And him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." "He that believeth on me shall never thirst." "He that

believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish," &c. "That through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all that believe; for all have sinned," &c.

In all these scriptures, it is evident that salvation is exhibited and promised to all without exception, on condition of believing, whether they believe or not. So that upon such gracious declarations of God as these, towards all men, the ministers of the Gospel may with the greatest truth say to every individual person wherever they come: "If thou believest thou shalt be saved;" even as St. Paul saith that he preached Christ, "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Now, if God, in the Gospel, exhibits salvation to all men, and insure it to them on their believing, certainly he hath it to bestow on them, if they do believe; otherwise he would offer that to them which he is not able to confer on them, though they should believe. If he have salvation for them on their believing, he must have it in Christ; because he hath no other treasury of salvation, but only him. "Neither is there salvation in any other," &c. If God have salvation in Christ for all men, it must of necessity have been procured for them by the blood of Christ, inasmuch as there is no salvation otherwise, than by remission of sins; nor any remissions of sins without shedding of blood. Therefore, all those scriptures wherein God promiseth salvation unto all men, on their believing, are full of this highly important truth,—that Christ laid down his life to procure salvation for every man.

If it be here said, "But though God in the Gospel offer salvation to all men, and promise it to them, on condition of believing; yet knowing certainly before-

hand that none will believe, but only such and such by name; he may on sufficient ground promise salvation to all, on condition they will believe:” I answer,—

Though God, by reason of the certainty of his knowledge, may, without danger of falsifying his word, promise salvation to all men, though it be supposed that Christ hath not procured it for them; yet, upon such a supposition as this, he cannot either with honour or truth make any such promise. Not with honour; because for a man, who is known only to be worth a thousand pounds, to offer a hundred thousand to any man who would be willing to do him some particular service, though he knew certainly that no one would accept his offer, yet such an offer would be a disparagement to him, and render him ridiculous in the eyes of men of understanding. In like manner, if it be believed that Christ hath died but for a very few, and, consequently, that he hath salvation for none else; if God should promise salvation to all men without exception, on any condition whatever, it must of necessity turn out in the highest degree dishonourable to the goodness and truth of the Divine nature.

Again: Neither can God, nor any minister of the Gospel, with truth, say to every individual, “If thou believest, thou shalt be saved,” unless it be supposed, that salvation is procured for them all; because the truth of such an assertion cannot be remedied by saying, that all men will not believe. The truth of a hypothetical proposition, of which sort this is, “If thou, Peter, believest, thou shalt be saved,” doth not depend upon any thing that is contingent, but upon the essential and necessary connexion between the antecedent and the consequent. If this connexion be uncertain, the proposition itself is false, though in other respects, it should be well accommodated. For instance: In this proposition, “If Isaac were Abraham’s son, then was he truly godly,” both parts, con-

sidered separate, are true : For, 1. It is true that Isaac was Abraham's son ; and, 2. That he was truly godly ; yet the proposition is absolutely false, because there is no necessary connexion between being Abraham's son and true godliness ; therefore, the one cannot be truly inferred from the other. In like manner, when I say thus to a man, "If thou believest, thou shalt be saved," it is neither his not believing, nor the certainty of my knowledge that he will not believe, that proves the truth of such a proposition ; because neither of these relates to the connexion of the parts, nor contains the least reason why the latter should follow upon the former. But to make good such a proposition, there must be a certain connexion between such a man's salvation and believing, if he should believe. Such a connexion as this cannot possibly be, unless there were salvation for him, which he might enjoy on his believing. Now, it is certain, that if Christ died not for him, there is no more salvation for him if he should believe, than there would be if he should not believe ; there being no salvation for any man, upon any terms whatsoever, unless Christ hath procured it for him by his death. Therefore, there can be no truth in this assertion, addressed to a man who shall not believe, on the supposition of Christ not dying for him, "If thou believest, thou shalt be saved ;" it being certain that he could not be saved, though he should believe.

If it be replied, "But the truth of this saying, 'If thou believest, thou shalt be saved,' is sufficiently helped by this consideration, that Christ died sufficiently for all men, though not intentionally ; so that if any man, whoever he be, should believe there is salvation for him in Christ ;" I answer,—

That the vanity, or rather nullity, of this distinction hath been already sufficiently demonstrated. I here only add, If there be salvation ready in Christ

for all men, if they should believe, then this salvation must be in him, either naturally, in respect to his person, or by means of his death. I presume, no man will affirm the former, for he himself plainly denies it: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." If there be no salvation in him for men but by his death, then hath he none in him but what he hath procured by his blood; therefore, if Christ have salvation for all men, he must have procured it by dying for them: If so, he must either procure more than he intended, or else intend to procure salvation for all; and what is this, but to die intentionally for all? Therefore the above distinction is ridiculous, and unworthy the notice of any intelligent person.

The scriptures of the last class.—We associate these scriptures by themselves, because their meaning is, in effect, one and the same, all taking it for granted, that Christ hath died for those who may after all finally perish. And, certainly, if he died for those who, notwithstanding this, may perish, yea, and for those who will actually perish, as well as for those who will be saved, he died for all men without exception.

The scripture first presented to our view in this class is this: "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died."

That the destruction here spoken of, concerning which the strong Christian is so earnestly admonished by the apostle, lest he should expose his weak brother to it, is not any temporal destruction, but that of body and soul for ever, is too clear to require any proof. It is not easy to imagine how a strong Christian, by eating meat sacrificed to idols, should expose a weak brother to the danger of any other destruction, but of that only which is appointed by God for those who shall finally apostatize from the profession of Christ.

Whereas he chargeth men "not to destroy those for whom Christ died," though he doth not suppose that all those shall be actually destroyed whom another may be said to destroy, that is, to do things tending to their destruction; yet this he plainly supposeth, that such persons for whom Christ died may be destroyed and perish everlastingly. Otherwise, we should eclipse the zeal and tenderness of the apostle over the precious souls of weak Christians, expressed in this solemn charge, not to destroy them; yea, and make him speak in a very weak manner, and even ridiculously. To admonish men in the most serious manner to take heed of destroying those who are out of all possibility of being destroyed, is as foolish and weak as if a man should seriously and affectionately entreat a fowler not to present his fowling-piece too high, lest he should shoot the sun, and cause him to fall down out of the firmament of heaven!

If it be said, "Though it be supposed, that the persons admonished do know that they for whom Christ died are not under any possibility of perishing, yet they may not know whether those men whose destruction they are likely to procure, by the abuse of their Christian liberty, be of the number of those for whom Christ died, or not; and, consequently, the apostle may, on good ground, admonish them to take heed of destroying such;" I answer,—

It can in no wise be supposed, that the persons here admonished should be ignorant whether the men, concerning whose destruction they are so seriously cautioned by the apostle, be of that number for whom Christ died, because the apostle himself so plainly and positively asserts it: "For whom," saith he, "Christ died." Besides, the strength of the argument, by which he enforced the admonition, lieth in this, that those persons, whosoever they be, whose salvation they should endanger, are of the number of those "for

whom Christ died." Now, to enforce an admonition or dehortation upon the consciences of men, by a motive concerning which these men shall be supposed ignorant whether there be any truth in it or not, is to fight with a wooden sword ; especially when we consider that they are under an absolute incapacity of ever knowing whether there be any truth or not in this motive, which must needs be the case if there be any number of men for whom Christ did not die.

Therefore, it is undeniably certain, that there is a possibility for those to perish and be destroyed "for whom Christ died," notwithstanding his dying for them ; and if so, then Christ's dying for them doth not suppose a necessity of their salvation ; and if so, then Christ died as well for those who shall not be saved, as for those who shall, and, consequently, for all men.

"And through thy knowledge shall thy weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?" Some read the words with a note of interrogation, others affirmatively ; but this difference in the pointing makes none in the substance of the doctrine contained in the passage, only the interrogative is more emphatical and expressive of the truth implied. The general scope of this text is the same in effect with the last explained, and evidently supposeth that a person may miscarry in the great business of salvation, notwithstanding Christ's laying down his life for him.

The next in order proposed is, "But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." Here it is evidently supposed, and in the plainest terms, that men, bought by the Lord Christ, may, and that some of these will, bring upon themselves destruction. If so, then it is undeniably clear that the Lord Christ bought

those that perish with the price of his blood, as well as those who are saved ; and, consequently, all men without exception.

That which is objected against this interpretation and inference is very weak. First, some say, that “the Lord Christ is not here said to buy those here spoken of, who are said to bring destruction on themselves, in the same manner in which he is said to buy those who are saved ; these he buys with an intention to adopt for sons, those for slaves and vassals only.” I suppose the world seldom ever heard of such a purchase as this made by Jesus Christ, of men, only to make slaves of them. The Scriptures make Christ’s freemen and his servants, or bondmen, all one. “For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman ; likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ’s” servant, or “bondman.” And, indeed, it is the happy freedom which we obtain by Christ, that makes us his servants, that is, which engages us to be such to him. But if Christ buys men with his precious blood only for slaves, I would know whether they came to the actual enjoyment of this privilege by faith, or without it. It cannot be said that they enjoy it by faith ; for by faith men are brought into the happy relation of sons of God : “Ye are all the children of God by faith which is in Christ Jesus.” If they should come to it without faith, then would Christ be more favourable to his servants than to his sons.

Again : If Christ bought wicked men, such as perish, for slaves, I would ask whether they do the business of slaves, and so serve him in that capacity, or whether they act contrary to the nature of slavery. If they act as slaves, then they fulfil their Lord’s designs in the purchase, and so are not to be blamed. If it be said that they act otherwise, this must be either righteously or unrighteously. If by acting righteously they transgress the law of slavery, then may men prove better

and live more holily than Christ ever intended. If it be by acting unrighteously, then Christ intended that these slaves should be holy. Therefore his intentions towards those he bought for slaves were as gracious as towards those he bought for sons; his design concerning these being evidently this, that they should "serve him in righteousness."

Again: If Christ should purchase some men only for slaves, then if such should repent and believe, he would be disappointed in his bargain. To plead here, that it is impossible that any such should repent and believe, 1. Is absolutely false, there being no person, but only he who hath sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, who is not in a capacity of repentance. 2. Though it were true, it prevents not the force of the consequence mentioned in the proposition; namely, "that if such should repent and believe, he would be disappointed in his bargain."

I add, If Christ bought some for slaves, it must of necessity follow that he hath some servile work to do, not proper for sons. For they who have no servile work to do need no slaves. But Christ hath no work to do but what is truly honourable, and worthy of persons of the highest rank. "All the commandments of God are righteousness."

Now, Christ hath no work to be done by men in the world but what God requires; and this is clearly expressed in his commandments, and these "are righteousness," that is, require nothing but what is just and reasonable, and therefore proper for his sons to do. God hath no need of any man's sin whatsoever. Neither did Christ buy any persons for slaves.

If Christ bought the false teachers here spoken of, with other wicked men, who in the end perish, for slaves, in what respect may he be supposed to have bought infants, who, dying in their infancy before they commit actual sin, are supposed to perish, being not of

the number of the elect? Must we not have another device to regulate the intentions of Christ in his purchase? For it can never be said with any reason at all, that he bought these for slaves, inasmuch as he never intended that they should live in a capacity of doing any work for him. If the maintainers of this interpretation should say, that it is not necessary that Christ should regard the work of such children in his purchase, but only to leave them as he found them in this respect; I would only further ask of them, On what account do such children enjoy the benefit of life, though but for a short period, together with its necessities and comforts? If no consideration at all be had of such in the death of Christ, I would gladly know what other friend they had to mediate with God in their favour for such things; or whether God be so far well-pleased with them, without any mediation, as to indulge them with such mercies and comforts.

Nor can it with any show of reason be said, that Christ bought these persons for servants to the saints; because, 1. According to the general course of this world, the saints are more frequently servants to the wicked. "Thy seed," saith God to Abraham, "shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs; and they shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years." And, 2. Though there be a sense in which all things are said to be the saints', yet wicked men are in no other sense said to be theirs, than that in which Paul, Apollos, and Cephas are said to be theirs. Therefore, as it no ways proves that Paul, Apollos, and Cephas were bought by Christ for slaves, because they are said to be the saints'; so neither doth it prove that wicked men were bought by him for slaves, because they are here said to be theirs also. Some appear to grant that Christ did buy some reprobates; "but," they say, "this determines not the question in hand, unless it can be shown that there is the same reason for all

reprobates. For the thing to be proved is, that Christ died equally for all and every man ; and it is one thing to die for the reprobate in some sense, and to die for them with an intention to save them ; and if Christ died for some, and but some, that perish in a manner not common to all and every man, it is manifest he died not equally for all men."

Is it reasonable to demand a proof, that there is some reason in all reprobates that Christ died equally for them all ? Suppose some of them exceeding great sinners, and some of them less, and that it can be sufficiently proved that Christ died for the greatest sinners among them ; can it reasonably be denied that he died for the rest, who are less sinners than they ? Or suppose that some reprobates could differ from others in a thousand circumstances, yet if none of them were sufficient to prove a difference in the intentions of Christ, concerning his dying for them, all of them, put together, would not amount to any consideration at all, to prove that he did not die equally for them ; nor in the least violate their assertion who affirm he did.

Whereas this is the state of the question proposed alone,—whether Christ died equally for all, and every man, or not ;—I am confident that this is a very gross mistake ; especially if by "equally" be meant the intention of procuring for them the actual enjoyment of equal opportunities, privileges, and means of salvation. For surely no remonstrant was ever so far carried away, as to believe that Christ intended to procure by his death such an uniformity of Divine dispensations at the hand of God, that every man should enjoy a ministry of the same efficacy and power, for conversion, edification, &c., or that all should be so situated as to be equally free from, and equally subject to, temptations, occasions of sinning, &c. Nor was ever any contra-remonstrant engaged by any adversary, to remonstrate against any such opinion

as this. But the question between them, respecting the intentions of God, and of Christ in his death, was, whether God did not as really and as cordially intend the salvation of one man as another, considered as men, by the death of Christ. That God, in the dispensations of his providence, makes a difference between one man's spiritual privileges and another's, doth not prove any different intentions in him towards the one and the other, in the death of Christ; but may flow from various other causes, as either from a different use of men's original stock of grace; or from a different interest that may be made with God by others, in prayer, &c., in their behalf; or from some different respects in God to the parents of some, on account of their signal piety and usefulness in their generation; or, lastly, from the Divine wisdom and goodness in the government of the world, according to which he judgeth it most expedient, and most for his own glory, as well as the comfort and happiness of the saints, to permit such a variety, in the spiritual advantages men enjoy, some men's proportion being but one talent, others' two, and others' five. From some or all of these considerations, that inequality in the enjoyment of the means of grace may very possibly arise; so that there is not the least appearance of any necessity to resolve it into any difference in the intentions of God, in the death of Christ. And if a difference of means vouchsafed to men would prove a difference in the intentions of God, respecting their salvation, and the atonement made by Christ's death, it would follow, that Christ died not equally for the elect themselves. Nay, if we estimate the intentions of God in the death of Christ by this rule, it would appear that he had more gracious intentions toward many reprobates, than toward some of the elect. For nothing can be more evident, than that many perish under greater advantages and means

of salvation, than are vouchsafed to others, who yet are saved thereby. Therefore, it is a reasoning not to be regarded, which makes this inference, that "Christ died not equally for all men, because all men have not the same means of salvation granted them."

"For if, after they have escaped the pollution of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." Here it is evidently supposed, that men who have been truly regenerated and sanctified may yet turn back to the world and sin, so as finally to perish. For, to deny that this expression of "escaping the pollution of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," doth imply true sanctification, is as flagrant a mistake, as to deny that the sun is up at noon-day. For if the persons here spoken of should not be supposed to be truly and inwardly sanctified, but only externally, they must be supposed also, 1. To have been all this while in the midst of that greatest pollution of the world, unbelief. 2. To have been as much as ever addicted to all the other pollutions thereof, in the inward frame of their minds. 3. And all this time to have been the most dreadful hypocrites and dissemblers. Now, that the Holy Ghost should say, that such characters as these have "escaped the pollutions of the world," especially "through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," is to me the greatest of incredibilities. Can a man be said to have escaped his enemies, when he still remains under their power? Or is not he, who, being enlightened, "holding the truth in unrighteousness," only covering himself with the mere profession of holiness, as much under the power of sin, and as likely

to perish everlastingly for it, as ever he was before his illumination ?

The knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which is here said to be the mean of their escape from the pollutions of the world, plainly showeth it to have been an escape which is inward and real, connected with true sanctification, and not external, or in pretence only. There is scarcely any thing more frequent in the Scriptures, than to ascribe justification, sanctification, and salvation to the knowledge of God and of Christ. St. Paul speaks of the "knowledge of the Son of God" as one of the principal ends of the evangelical ministry, which was by special favour given unto, and is continued in, the church, and joins it with the "perfection of the saints." St. John scruples not to pronounce him a liar who shall say that he "knoweth Christ," and yet "keepeth not his commandments." That of our Saviour to the same purpose is well known : "This is eternal life, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Therefore, certainly, that sanctification and conformity to the word and will of God, which is produced by the "knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," is real sanctification and conformity to his will.

If this escape from the "pollutions of the world," here spoken of, were not real, and connected with true sanctification, &c., how could the persons be in danger of any after-entanglement therewith, or of being overcome ? At least, how could their situation be rendered more dreadful by any such entanglement, than it was under their escape, as the Holy Ghost plainly intimateth ? If the escape here mentioned do not imply real sanctification, the persons escaping must, all the time, have been in the "gall of bitterness, and the bonds of iniquity ;" yea, in particular, both hypocrites and unbelievers. Now, our Saviour himself supposeth

such as these to be the first-born children of hell, and of the "lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever:" "The Lord of that servant," saith he, "shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." And, "The Lord of the servant will cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with unbelievers." If hypocrites and unbelievers be first and originally designed for hell and eternal destruction, they cannot easily, through any apostasy whatever, involve themselves in any worse condition than their present. The truth is, that I know of no apostasy of which a hypocrite or unbeliever is properly capable, but only that which is from Belial to Christ, or from Satan to God.

Another scripture, ranked in the same class with the former, is of much the same import: "Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace?" To say that this passage doth not speak of true and real sanctification, but of that which is apparently and hypocritically such, is to arrogate an unreasonable and arbitrary power of interpreting scriptures.

The word here translated "sanctification" is the same which our Saviour useth, where he prayeth in the behalf of his disciples: "Sanctify them through thy truth: Thy word is truth." If neither reason nor religion suffer us here to judge that Christ prayed unto the Father, to sanctify his disciples outwardly only, but really and in truth, I would gladly know which of the two leads us to understand any other sanctification, in the place under consideration.

Not one instance can be produced from the Scrip-

tures, where men are said to be sanctified by Christ, by his blood, by his knowledge, or the like, but what is to be understood of a true and saving sanctification.

A powerful reason that the passage before us speaks of real sanctification is, that the sin of the person said to have been sanctified, "in counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing," is aggravated by this consideration, that he was sanctified by it. The general scope of the verse shows this beyond all contradiction. Now, then, if we suppose that this person had received no greater benefit by this "blood of the covenant," than only to be made a hypocrite by it; this is so far from aggravating his sin in despising it, that it doth very much, if not altogether, extenuate and excuse it.

Nor can it here be said with any reason, that it was not from any want of efficacy in the blood of the covenant, that he was not truly sanctified, but from his own negligence. For though it be true, that the reason why he proves an hypocrite is not any deficiency in the remedy provided for his purifying, but his own negligence and unfaithfulness; yet the sanctification spoken of in the scripture before us is not attributed to the defect or deceitfulness of the person in whom it is found, but to the blood of the covenant itself. Now, that which is the proper and genuine effect of this blood cannot be any hypocritical or mere external thing. And however were this sanctification merely external, and so an occasional effect only of the blood of the covenant; yet would the consideration thereof be no sufficient reason whereby to aggravate the sin of him who should despise this blood. Therefore, certainly, the apostle would never introduce a counterfeit, unsound sanctification, effected by the blood of the covenant, to be an aggravation of the sin of the person who should despise it, by apostatizing from the profession of it.

But, suppose this passage should be conceived to speak of an outward sanctification, which consists in a reformation of morals; yet it amounts to the same thing, in point of proof, of what is intended from it, viz. "that Christ died for those that perish." For this sanctification, let it be of what kind it may, is attributed to the blood of the covenant, as the efficient cause of it. Therefore this blood was shed for those that may and do perish.

If it be said, "It is true, it was shed for such persons, with an intention on God's part, that they should be externally cleansed and sanctified, but not really and internally, or finally saved by it;" I answer, If God intended only an external sanctification by the death of Christ, for these mentioned in the objection; then were his intentions, in reference to those men, rather painful than gracious; bent on the aggravation of condemnation, not on the promotion of their salvation; and Christ himself would come to them, not that they might have life more abundantly, but that they might have hell and death more abundantly; whereas it is most certain, that "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world," much less to increase its condemnation, "but that the world might be saved." Again: If Christ died for these men to invest them with an external holiness, I would know, whether, together with this, he procured for them by his death an inward principle answerable to it, out of which it should flow. If he intended to procure an inward principle for them, out of which that outward sanctification should flow, then certainly his intention was to procure for them real sanctification. For what more can we imagine to be contained in true and real sanctification, than a blameless conversation, proceeding from an inward principle suited to it. If it be said, "No; Christ never intended to procure for these men any such inward principle as you speak of, but only an outward confor-

mity to the rules of the Christian religion ;” then it would follow that Christ died with an intention to make men hypocrites. Because a fair show in the performance of religious duties, without a suitable inward principle of grace in the heart, is hypocrisy in the most obvious signification of the word. Christ, in dying for men, intended nothing but what is true, real, and saving in its own nature and tendency. Intentions of making men hypocrites, or Christians by halves, are more suitable to the nature of Satan than to Christ.

The last scripture produced to prove that Christ died even for those who perish, was, “ Then his Lord, after he had called him, said unto him ; O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou desiredst me : Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee ? And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother his trespasses.” In these words we are informed of a servant to whom his lord had freely forgiven him all his debt, even the vast sum of ten thousand talents ; and yet we hear also, that this same servant, by unmercifulness to one of his fellow-servants, so provoked his gracious Lord, that he retracted his former act of forgiveness, seized him, and delivered him to the tormentors, or prison-keepers, “ till he should pay the whole debt.” What was designed by all this, is clearly expressed by our Saviour in the application which closes the parable : “ So likewise shall my heavenly Father,” &c. From which words, it is evidently the design of this parable to give the world to understand, that if men who have obtained forgiveness of sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, should so far sin against the freeness and richness of this grace, as to deal cruelly and unmercifully with men, this act of grace towards them

should be revoked, and the guilt of their sins return upon them again. Yea, he plainly tells his disciples themselves, that they need not expect to be exempted from this law of the righteousness and equity of God. "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you," or even to you; he will neither deal better nor worse with you, but just as this lord did by his most ungrateful servant, if you provoke him after the same manner. That special grace of forgiveness of sins, which you now enjoy, will be retracted by him who hath given it you, if you should so far trample its glory underneath your feet, as, in consideration of the greatness of it, not to be open-hearted and generous in forgiving one another such injuries as are done to you. This is the righteous and royal way of that God with the world, who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work.

When the apostle affirms "the gifts and calling of God to be without repentance," his meaning may be: 1. That he never gives any thing to any person, or people, but that he knows beforehand all the inconveniences connected with it, either in reference to his own glory, or to his creature. Insomuch that, whatever be the consequence of any of his gifts, if they were to be [given again, he would give them. Nor doth the expression concerning him, "and it repented the Lord that he had made man upon the earth," &c., imply, but that if man had now been to make, he would have made him. The passage only implies a purpose of mind in God to destroy him from off the face of the earth for his extreme wickedness.

2. "The gifts and calling of God" may be said to be "without repentance;" because, let men continue the same persons which they were when the donation was first made by God to them, and he never changeth his dispensation towards them unless it be for the better; in which case he cannot be said to repent of

what he had given. But if men should change and notoriously degenerate from what they were when God first dealt graciously with them, and deprive themselves of that very qualification on which God bestowed this benefit on them: In this case, though he take away his gift, he cannot be said to repent of the giving it, because the terms on which he gave it still please him; only the persons to whom he gave it have rendered themselves incapable, according to the rules of his righteous dispensations, of any further enjoyment thereof. This is the case between God and such men, who, having once obtained remission of sins through a faith which wrought by love, afterwards, on the degeneration of their faith, are divested by him of that great and glorious privilege, and fall back into their former state of condemnation.

Therefore, from this parable in St. Matthew we learn, that persons who, by virtue of a sound faith, received remission of sins through the death of Christ, may, through negligence in not persevering in this faith, so far provoke their glorious Benefactor as to cause him to repeal his act of grace towards them, and permit their former guilt to return, like the unclean spirit, with seven worse than himself upon them. From hence it undeniably follows, that Christ hath procured remission of sins by his death for those who, notwithstanding, may, through their own folly and wickedness, everlastingly perish.

If Christ died not for all men, without exception, then no man whatsoever, in his unregenerate estate, stands bound to believe in him, or to depend on him, at least with any certainty of faith or hope for salvation. This is evident, because no man stands bound to that which is simply impossible, or to do that which in the nature of the thing itself cannot be done. Now, if Christ died not for all men, but for a handful only, or a very few, comparatively, as our brethren teach, no person, being yet in

an unconverted estate, hath any ground to depend upon him with any certainty, yea, or so much as with any probability, or comfortableness of faith or hope, for salvation. Where twenty men have equally deserved death by committing treason against their prince, and a declaration shall be made by this prince, that only one of the twenty shall be pardoned, without the least intimation given who this one should be, no one of this number can have any certain, no, nor yet any probable, ground of hope, that he is the person that shall be pardoned. But that all men, without exception, as well unregenerate as others, have ground sufficient, and stand bound, to believe or depend on Christ for salvation, hath been formerly proved. And if they stand bound to believe, certainly they stand bound to believe not faintly, not haltingly, not imperfectly, but with all strength and fulness of assurance.

We know that without hope of obtaining what is sought after, all motives or grounds of persuasion amount to nothing more than beating the air; the hearts of men are not at all wrought on by them. Despair of salvation quenches all thoughts and endeavours after believing. Therefore, if an unregenerate person have no sufficient ground of hope that he is one of those who are under a possibility of being saved, he is not capable of any impressions from any motive whatsoever to believe.

If it be here said, "Though an unregenerate person have no sufficient ground of hope that he is one of God's elect, and, consequently, that Christ died for him, yet he hath sufficient ground of hope that he may be one of these, and so, that there is a possibility that Christ may have died for him; and on the account of such a hope as this, he hath encouragement to apply himself to the means of believing;" I answer,—

1. It is not so clear a truth (according to the principles of our opponents) that an unregenerate man hath

a sufficient ground of hope, that he may be one of the elect. For if he be not one of these at present, there is no possibility that ever he should be such. So that it is very improper to say, that an unregenerate man hath ground of hope that he may be at present one of God's elect.

2. Do not the Scriptures constantly represent unregeneracy, or an unbelieving condition, joined with an habitual practice of known sins, a ground of fear that a man is not at present one of the elect of God; or rather a ground of certain knowledge that a man is not, at present, one of the elect of God? According to the principles of the party opposed in the question in hand, all the elect shall certainly be saved, and inherit the kingdom of God; but the Scriptures uniformly teach and affirm, "that unbelievers, and unregenerate men, especially living in known sin, shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Therefore, unless we shall say that the Scriptures are divided in themselves, it is impossible to prove, that they any where exhibit any ground of hope to such persons as we now speak of, that they may be, at present, the elect of God.

3. If such unregenerate persons have any sufficient ground to hope that they may be, at present, the elect of God, then they have the same ground of hope, that they are, at present, of this number. The reason is plain; because what a man is, and what he may be at present, are one and the same; it being impossible that he should be, at present, any thing else than what he is. Now, if any one unregenerate person have a sufficient ground of hope that he is at present one of God's elect, then have they all and every one the same; for we cannot imagine any ground of difference between them in this case. But how this accords with some of the principles of our adversaries, to affirm that all the world, which (St. John saith) lieth in wickedness, should have sufficient ground of hope that they are, at present, the

elect of God, I leave with themselves to consider. Therefore, certainly, no unregenerate person hath any sufficient ground of hope that he is, at present, one of the elect of God; and consequently the doctrine we oppose for denying that Christ died for all men leaves no room for any such hope to unregenerate persons, which is likely to provoke them to any Gospel inquiry, or induce them to use the means of believing.

4. In case unregenerate men should, by the sufferance of the said doctrine, possess such a hope as is asserted, yet would not this hope be likely to animate them to such duties as those specified, nor yet suffer them to be much affected with, nor wrought upon, by any other motives whatsoever. This shall suffice for the illustration of the philanthropy of God, avouched in the Scriptures.

When, with the Scriptures, we affirm that "Christ died for all men," we do not mean, either, 1. That he died only sufficiently for all men; or, 2. That God, or Christ, did in every respect, viz. both antecedently and consequently, intend the salvation of all men, by his death. 3. Nor do we suppose that Christ died on such terms, for all men, that all men shall be in the end actually redeemed, or eternally saved by his death. 4. Nor do we suppose that God intends the salvation of all men by the death of Christ, with intentions properly so called, such as are found in men. 5. Nor do we suppose that Christ by his death procured the gift either of faith or repentance for all men, or any numbers of men, personally considered. 6. Lastly: Nor do we mean, that by his death he procured pardon or forgiveness of sins for all men, or for any number of men, simply considered, or as such and such men by name. But,

Affirmatively: We believe, 1. That there was a real intention on God's part, inasmuch as there was a valuable consideration in the death of Christ, fully sufficient

for the redemption of all men, so it should be equally applicable to all men, in order to their redemption, without any difference or limitation of it to some more than others.

2. We believe, that God did only antecedently intend the actual redemption and salvation of all men by the death of Christ; but, consequently, the redemption and salvation of some, viz. those who believe. What it is to "will" or "intend" a thing antecedently, and what consequently, hath been already considered, and shall be further opened in this chapter.

3. When we say that Christ died for all men, we mean that there is a gracious possibility for all men, without exception, considered as men, to obtain actual salvation by his death; so that if any man perish, his destruction is wholly of himself; the death of Christ being as much intended to procure his salvation, as the salvation of those who come actually to be saved.

4. When we affirm that "Christ died for all men," we mean, that God intends the salvation of all men by his death, only in such a way as is consistent with the infinite simplicity and perfection of his being.

5. When we affirm the universality of the death of Christ, we mean, not only that he put all men into a capacity of being saved; but also that he wholly took away the guilt and condemnation which was brought upon all men by Adam's transgression. So that now no man shall be condemned, but for his own personal sins, actually and voluntarily committed by him, or for such omissions of duty, as were in his power to have prevented.

6. Again: We believe that Christ, by his death, procured for all men a sufficiency of grace to enable them to repent, and to believe the Gospel, and to persevere in both to the end; and that in this sense, and no other, he may be said to have procured the grace of faith and repentance for man.

7. We further believe, that Christ by his death procured this transcendent grace and favour also, for all men without exception, that on their repentance and faith they should be justified and receive forgiveness of all their sins ; and that, on their perseverance to the end, they should be eternally saved ; and that, in this sense only, he may be said to have procured justification, redemption, and salvation, &c. for men ; yea, and in this sense, for all men.

It hath been frequently said, that, as we hold an universal atonement, we must necessarily hold universal salvation ; which reproach, the above explication is designed to wipe away. That such an opinion as this is no consequent of the doctrine maintained in this discourse concerning the extent of the death of Christ, evidently appears from that ground which we have already laid and built upon ; namely, that such intentions and desires in God, and in Christ, which are real and cordial, may yet very possibly never take place or be fulfilled. This being supposed, it is easy to conceive, that God may intend the salvation of all men by the death of Christ, and yet all men not be saved. It appears to me very strange how any man professing subjection of judgment to the Scriptures should ever embrace the idea of universal salvation ; for how frequently do they represent the smallness of the number of those that will be saved, in comparison of those that perish, and also the perpetuity of the misery of the damned ! Nor do they give the least intimation or hope of release from that misery to those who die in their sins. "Enter in at the strait gate," saith Christ, "for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat ; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." "Wherefore, if thy hand cause thee to offend, cut it off ; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than

having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched ; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Our Saviour's meaning in these words is, that their worm cannot die, nor their fire be quenched ; that is, their torment can never have an end ; namely, because the counsel and will of the Almighty have determined it, and judged it meet to make it so. On this account John the Baptist saith, concerning Christ, that " he hath his fan in his hand, and will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner ; but will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Again : St. John tells us respecting the worshippers of the beast, that " the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever," &c. And afterwards we read, that " the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." This expression, " for ever and ever," in the two last passages, plainly implies that the duration of the punishment of those who die in their sins is not commensurate with the continuance of the Mosaic dispensation, which in the Old Testament is frequently signified by the term " for ever ;" but commensurate with the existence of God, of Jesus Christ, and of the kingdom of God ; for these in respect of their duration are said to be " for ever and ever," that is, without end. The notion of the " bottomless pit," frequently used in the book of the Revelation to signify the condition of the damned, evidently implies the endless duration of their misery.

When we say that God did only antecedently intend the actual redemption and salvation of all men by the death of Christ, and not consequently, our meaning is, that he so far intended the salvation of all men, as to afford them all a sufficiency of grace and means for their salvation, not purposing to interpose by any particular providence, but that every one without excep-

tion may so use the grace and means vouchsafed to them, as to obtain salvation thereby. This (with some of the primitive fathers) I call, his "willing or intending the salvation of all men, antecedently." Of this intention or will of God, the apostle speaks plainly: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." But, notwithstanding this antecedent intention, he may and doth likewise intend, that whosoever shall not use the grace and means vouchsafed to them shall perish everlastingly: So that, according to his consequent intention, he intends the salvation only of those who shall believe and persevere to the end. This I call his "consequent" will or intention.

I suppose these dimensions here spoken of (Eph. iii. 17, 18) do denote four special things, considerable in the mystery of the love of Christ.

The breadth of it, I conceive, imports the extent of the love of Christ, as it is held forth and declared in the Gospel, in reference to the persons to whom it is vouchsafed and born. As concerning this dimension, the breadth or extent of it, he had a little before—namely, in the former part of this chapter, and all along the second—taught them that it was commensurable unto the world, and that it did not contain itself within the bounds of the Jewish nation, but dilated and spread itself over the whole world, and rejoiced over all the nations of the earth.

The length of it seems to note the duration of it, which reacheth from eternity to eternity, or, in the Scripture expression, "from everlasting to everlasting." It was conceived in his breast of old before the foundations of the world were laid; from thence it broke forth, and discovered itself in time; and now it runs along, and hath continued in and with the world, and will continue, together with the glorious fruits and effects of it, to eternity.

The depth of this love may point at either the

great and most profound condescension whereunto Christ was drawn by it for the benefit of men, as when he stooped from the height of all glory in the highest heavens to seek for a lost world in the heart or lower parts of the earth, having undergone by the way a most dolorous, painful, and ignominious death; or else, at the peculiar manner of the efficacy or working of this love, in that it wrought downwards, even to the depth and bottom, as it were, of that misery wherein the world lay plunged, and out of which there had been no redemption for it, had not the love of Christ we speak of, by its most adorable virtue, strength, and vigour, made its way to it, and wrought the cure.

By the height of this love, the apostle, questionless, signifieth, either the lifting up and magnifying of itself over and above the high misdemeanours and provocations of the world, by which it was not turned out of its way, nor so much as put to the least stand; or else, the efficacious and successful tendency of it to raise the blessedness of those that should reap the fruits of it exceeding high.

Now, to put you into a capacity to comprehend these dimensions of the love of Christ, to comprehend them, I say, as they may be comprehended by you to your unspeakable comfort and joy, you must be rooted and grounded in love.

VI.—REPENTANCE.

THE Scripture testifieth that God vouchsafed unto some persons, who yet repented not, means for repentance every whit as gracious and effectual as his wisdom permitted him to do. "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" From whence we argue, that no man's impenitency or unbelief any ways proveth a want of means sufficiently enabling him to repent and believe; unless we shall say, that God is not able to give any such sufficiency unto every man; which, we presume, is no man's thought. Nor can we judge but that if God vouchsafeth a sufficiency of means of repentance unto some, who, notwithstanding, repent not, he doeth the same unto all others, being not able to satisfy ourselves why God should make a difference in this kind; although, by the way, we do not hold that God vouchsafeth either an identity of means or equality unto all.

The Scripture oft mentioneth, that God most graciously, most affectionately, most earnestly, invites such persons to repent and to believe, and this in order to their salvation, who yet never come to repent or believe, but in conclusion perish. Now, if it shall be supposed, that the men thus graciously, thus affectionately, thus earnestly, invited, called, importuned, by God to repent and to believe, have no sufficiency of power, neither mediate nor immediate, to do either, God, in such gracious invitations, and pathetic applications of himself unto them, must be conceived only to insult over them in their extremity of misery, and not to intend any thing truly gracious or of a saving import towards them. Whether such a conceit as this be any ways worthy the ever-gracious and blessed God, or so much as in proba-

bility comporting with those passionate wishes and desires of the peace and safety of those who perish, frequently ascribed unto God in the Scriptures, we leave to the Christian reader to give sentence.

God certainly knoweth that men cannot repent or believe, but only by grace and means received from himself in order to the performance of these actions. And yet we know that he threateneth damnation unto all those who shall not repent and believe. Now, we cannot but judge it a strain of extreme weakness, and altogether unworthy and unbecoming the infinite wisdom of God, to threaten men with the most horrid punishment that can be imagined, for the non-performance of such things which he knows that himself only is able to perform, and that the persons threatened by him neither are nor can be in any capacity to perform them, but only by strength and means from himself, which, notwithstanding, he refuseth to grant unto them.

When men have wrought righteousness for many years together, and have heaped up prayers upon prayers, and hearings upon hearings, with great constancy, intermixing, it may be, now and then, fasting with some alms-deeds, or other works of charity, without making any scandalous digression from the ways of God all their days; it requires more spiritual strength and wisdom than are found in ordinary believers, for a man not to look upon so much beauty with an adulterous eye, and not, in secret at least, to think that God, in consideration of so much, such long and faithful service done unto him, may well forgive him his sins and trespasses, and so not to wear somewhat flat and superficial in their esteem of, and dependence upon, the mere grace of God in Christ.

VII.—FAITH.

As HE that freely foundeth a hospital or alms-house out of his own proper estate, and endoweth it with revenue and means for the relief of those that are helpless and poor, hath in equity the right and power of making what laws he pleaseth concerning the persons that shall be admitted to partake in the benefit and comfort of either of these houses, as how they shall be qualified in order to their admission, how regulated after their admission, &c.; at least, there is no colour of reason, that the persons themselves who stand in need of, and accordingly desire, the benefit of such charitable foundations should prescribe laws for their own admission and government; in like manner, God, of his free grace, mercy, and bounty, affording the blessed opportunity of justification unto the sinful and lost world of mankind, hath a most equitable right and power, and claims and exerciseth it accordingly, to nominate, ordain, and appoint what laws, terms, and conditions himself pleaseth and judgeth meet, for all those to be subject unto who desire part and fellowship in this great and blessed business of justification, before they come to enjoy it. And it is a most preposterous thing to imagine or conceive, that he should suffer or permit men themselves, who are sinful and vile, and stand in the utmost necessity to partake of his bounty in that royal blessing of justification, to make their own terms, how they will be justified.

As in the Olympic games of old, he that was the person who, at his proper charge, bestowed and set forth the prize or reward by which men were invited to try masteries in those games, was always allowed to nominate and prescribe the laws or rules by which these exercises were to be performed, and according unto which the prize set forth by himself was to be awarded

and given ; in like manner, saith the apostle in effect, God freely, of his mere grace and bounty, inviting and calling men to the high prize and privilege of justification, or sonship unto Abraham, and not being necessitated hereunto by any obligation or rule of justice, most reasonable and meet it is that he should please himself, not men nor angels, in appointing the terms and conditions upon which this blessed investiture should be actually conferred upon men.

Whereas many say and acknowledge that they believe the truth of all the promises and declarations that God hath made throughout the Scriptures, and this with the greatest confidence that may be, and without the least hesitancy or regret in their faith, and yet complain, withal, that they cannot, with any semblable confidence, trust or depend upon God for justification or salvation ; the reason of this irrational and unnatural discord in the soul must needs be, either their ignorance of the mind and true meaning of God in those promises, which they say and think that they believe, or else a strange defectiveness in their reasons and understandings, by means whereof they do not see and apprehend that which is as clear as the light at noon-day, that they who do truly, and with their whole heart, believe the promises of God, are *ipso facto* by this their believing actually invested in a right to all the good things mentioned and contained in them ; and, consequently, have a clear and sure foundation for a steadfast expectation of these things, whatsoever they are, from the hand of God.

Believing on Christ is no natural means of any man's preservation from shame ; it produceth no such effect as this by any native or inherent virtue or property in it, but by the irresistible efficaciousness of His will who hath instituted and appointed it for such a purpose. Naaman was cleansed of his leprosy upon his washing seven times in Jordan. But his cure depended not,

save only sacramentally, upon the waters of Jordan, nor upon his seven times washing in them ; neither the one nor the other of these had any native property or virtue in them to accomplish such a cure. That which healed him was the glorious operativeness of His will and pleasure who prescribed the use of those means unto him. In like manner, the walls of Jericho fell down flat upon the compassing of the city seven days together by seven priests, having the ark of the covenant with them, and blowing with so many trumpets of rams' horns, together with the shouting of the people ; yet that which produced this great and wonderful effect,—the utter demolishing of these walls,—was not any property or force either resident in or issuing from any of the said means,—ark, priests, trumpets, compassing, shouting, or the like,—but the most potent energy, force, and power of the will of God, who prescribed all the said means, not so much in order to the effecting of the end mentioned, the bringing down the walls of Jericho, as to the making of his own will actually efficacious to the effecting of it. For it is no ways probable, either that Naaman would have been cleansed of his leprosy, unless, according to Divine prescription, he had washed seven times in Jordan, although this washing, as was said, had nothing in it able or likely to effect the cure ; or, that the walls of Jericho would have fallen down flat on the ground, had not all the particulars specified been performed by Joshua and the children of Israel ; however, these neither *divisim* nor *conjunctim* contributed any thing considerable of themselves towards the effect. The reason of both probabilities is this : Had God absolutely and without the performance of such things as he enjoined Naaman in reference to his cure, and the Israelites for the bringing down the walls of Jericho, intended the said gracious effects, or had it been meet for him to have effected either the one or the other without the said performances respectively ;

doubtless he would have required neither the one nor the other upon the said accounts. For it is as true in divinity as philosophy, that God and nature do nothing in vain. And what can more apparently be done in vain than to prescribe such or such means for the effecting of such an end, which should certainly be obtained or accomplished whether any of these means be used or no? As the case hath been represented in Naaman's cure, and in the bringing down of the walls of Jericho, so is it in that great and blessed concernment of men, expressed, in the clause in hand, by their not being ashamed. God hath enjoined the world to believe on Jesus Christ in order to the attainment of this transcendent blessedness; not as if there were any thing in this believing, either of any natural or moral consideration, sufficient to invest men with such a blessedness, but because his most gracious and good pleasure is to confer this blessedness upon them, upon and by means of such their believing, not judging it meet or worthy his wisdom or righteousness to grant such an investiture upon any other terms, or in any other way.

Considering that faith unto which the justification mentioned is ascribed, the Scripture describeth it with much variety in respect of its object. Sometimes it calleth it a "believing God;" sometimes, a "believing on God;" sometimes, a "believing in God," or, "in the Lord." Once it is called, "the faith of the operation of God, who raised Christ from the dead;" sometimes, a "believing on Christ," or, "on the Son of God," or, "on the Lord." Sometimes, again, it is called a "believing in Christ;" and so, "in Jesus." Otherwhile, it is expressed by "believing Christ," or "the Son;" sometimes, by believing that Christ is Christ, "the Son of God which should come into the world;" and again, a "believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Sometimes it is called a "believing in Christ's name." It is very possible that yet there may be in the

Scriptures a greater variety of denominations or expressions of that faith which justifieth, in reference to its object, than that now represented. But all these that have been mentioned, and I doubt not but those others also, supernumerary unto these, if any such there be, are of an easy and ready reducement into one and the same notion and import. But that distinguishing character, one or more, of the justifying faith which we are at present inquiring after, respecteth not the object, but the intrinsic nature or complexion of it. The Scripture, in reference hereunto, sometimes describeth it to be a "believing in the heart;" otherwhile, a "believing with the heart;" sometimes, again, a "believing with all the heart." It is twice called a "faith unfeigned." The faith of a spurious kind, and which differs in nature, worth, and value from it, is termed "a dead faith." And, by consequence, the true faith which justifieth must be understood to be a "living faith." But the most appropriate nature of this faith, or the property of it which is most considerable, and which, indeed, upon the matter, includeth all the other now mentioned, and most emphatically differenceth it from all other kinds of faith which want the seal of God to make them justifying, is that declared and asserted by the apostle Paul, where the Holy Ghost guided his pen to these words: "For in Jesus Christ," that is, in the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and by the tenor and import of the Gospel, "neither circumcision availeth any thing," namely, towards any man's justification before God, "nor uncircumcision; but faith," effectually operative, or throughly "working by love." His meaning is, that such a faith in God, which is raised or wrought in a man by means of Jesus Christ, as given by God unto men for a Saviour, and which, withal, is spiritfult, lively, and active in provoking the soul in which it resides to the love of God and men, and to ways and works suitable to such an affection, is the only thing or

means designed, authorized, and appointed by God to bring men into part and fellowship of that justification or remission of sins which hath been purchased or procured by the death of Jesus Christ for men. A faith of this genius, temper, and complexion borroweth no aid, help, or assistance from any of her children; I mean from any of those good works which proceed from her, for or towards that justifying of men with that justification which standeth in remission of sins: She is, by virtue of that authority derived unto her by God, self-sufficient to give this great and happy investiture unto men; yea, should she die before she had opportunity to bring forth, she would do that worthy service to him that had conceived her. It is true, as concerning that justification of which the apostle James speaks so much in his second chapter, which is a justification of a person testified, declared, published, or made known, the faith we speak of standeth in need of the help and co-operation of her children. God himself will not report any man justified; I mean, any man capable of good works; nor would he have any man, of this capacity, judged or reputed by others a justified person, who hath not justified or commended his faith by such works. But this by the way, to vindicate and clear the interest of faith in the great business of justification, and to sever it from that of works, not more contended for than confounded with it by some.

The Scriptures report that the Lord Christ marvelled both at the unbelief of some who did not believe, as also at the faith of others who did believe. From the former we cannot but infer, that certainly Christ knew that they at whose unbelief he marvelled had sufficient power to believe; inasmuch as no man, consistent in his wits, marvelleth at a man, because, being in danger of his life, he doth not fly in the air like a bird to make an escape, or doth not vanish out of sight like a

spirit or angel. The non-performance of known impossibilities is no sober man's wonder.

The Scripture, likewise, frequently resolveth the unbelief and impenitency of men into the stubbornness of their wills, but never, to our best remembrance, into a deficiency or want of means or power for repenting or believing, especially not till after long and voluntary obduration. "And ye WILL not come to me, that ye might have life." So to Jerusalem: "How often would I have gathered thy children—and ye would not:" "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye WILL not believe;" with many the like. From whence we cannot but conclude, that the cause of every man's impenitency and unbelief resideth in his will, and not in want of means sufficient for his enablement to repent and believe, or to make him willing to do both.

The Scripture frequently upbraideth those who believe not with the example of others who do believe: "For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and YE BELIEVED HIM NOT: But the publicans and harlots BELIEVED HIM: And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him." "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall CONDEMN it: Because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here." "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he CONDEMNED the world." From such passages as these it is evident, that the faith of the saints is just matter of condemnation to those who believe not, and represents them as inexcusable. But this blessed exercise of mind, in whom it is found, would be of no weight for shaming or condemning the unbelieving and disobedient, unless it be supposed that these have, or, at least might have, had the same ability whereby they might believe and obey as they do. Now, we judge it a thing

clear and evident, that the repentance of those who repent, and so the faith of those who believe, can be no matter of shame, disparagement, or condemnation unto those who repent not, and so who believe not, unless it be supposed that they who repent not, and so who believe not, have a like sufficiency of means enabling them to repent and believe with the other. The casting great matters into the treasury by great men was no disparagement or shame to the poor widow that cast in two mites only; because these two mites were her whole substance; she was not able to cast in more: In which respect our Saviour himself gives her this testimony, that she had "cast in more than they all." Their casting-in great matters would have been matter of just disparagement unto her, in case she had been as wealthy as they, and should have cast in her two mites only. Nor is the flying of a fowl in the air any disparagement to a man, in that he doeth not the like: Nor is the speaking of Greek and Hebrew by him who hath been seven years at school to learn these tongues, and hath had the help of men expert and skilful in them to direct him, any matter of disparagement to an infant of days, who is not as yet capable of such education, though he speaketh them not. And generally, where there is not an equality of strength, means, and abilities, for the performance of an action that is commendable, the performance of it by him or them who have the advantage of strength and means in this kind doth no ways reflect disparagement upon the others, though they perform it not. If those who do believe have the omnipotency of heaven to assist them in believing, nay, to necessitate them to believe, certainly their believing is no matter of disrepute or disgrace unto those who believe not, especially if it be supposed that they have no power at all to believe.

The Scripture frequently ascribeth the condemnation and perishing of men to their non-believing; and, con-

sequently, supposeth it to be a sin. "But he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Now, if men have not a sufficiency of power given unto them by God to believe, but the act of believing, according to our brethren's doctrine, necessarily requires the unbaring, or some extraordinary stretching forth, of the omnipotent arm of God to effect it, in their being condemned for non-belief, they should be condemned for not acting or doing that which is proper only for God himself to do, and, consequently, for not being God, or omnipotent, as he is.

The Scripture placeth that unbelief of men which is condemning in this,—that it maketh God a liar. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." So then, if men generally have means and power sufficient from God to justify him in his sayings, as being a God of truth, or to refrain and forbear the horrid blasphemy of making him a liar, or charging him with untruth, they have a sufficiency of means to believe, and this to salvation. But that the light of the knowledge of God, which shines from Christ in the hearts of all men, without exception, is sufficient to preserve and keep them from dashing their foot at this stone of condemnation,—the making God a liar,—we suppose no man hath any sufficient cause to doubt or question.

The Scriptures, times without number, affirm, that God is very gracious, merciful, bountiful, &c.; and in one place very plainly, that he accepteth a man "according to that" which he "hath, and not according to that he hath not." But if he should require faith

and repentance of men, as he doth of all men, and not give them wherewith or whereby to raise and exhibit them, he should be rather like to those cruel Egyptian taskmasters set over the children of Israel, who denied them straw, and yet exacted of them their tale of brick, and beat them if they made it not; or like the hard man in the parable, charged by his servant to gather where he did not strew, and to reap where he did not sow; than unto a tender, gracious, and bountiful God. That men never received power in Adam to repent or believe; and that, in case it could be proved they did here receive them, yet that it stands not either with the equity or graciousness of God's proceedings, nor with the tenor of several declarations made by him in the Gospel, to judge men upon that account: Both of these have been demonstratively proved.

The Scripture taketh notice of the unbelief of the Jews, under so many miracles as Christ had wrought amongst them, as a thing very remarkable and strange. "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him." If he had wrought ten thousand miracles more and greater amongst them than those which now he had wrought, their non-believing on him had been no ways strange or considerable, if it be supposed that no man can believe but by an irresistible working of the power of God. It is no strange thing, nor much to be minded, that a man stark blind should not read on a book, though there be twenty candles burning bright before him on the table, it being generally known that no proportion of light whatsoever is any advantage at all to help or cause a blind man to see. Nor is it strange that a child who hath learned to spell English, should not understand a chapter in a Hebrew Bible, though the letter and print of it be never so fair. The non-performance of such things which are known impossibilities is no man's observation or wonder.

If God doth not vouchsafe sufficient means to all men, whereby they may repent, believe, and be saved, then will he condemn far the greatest part of mankind for that which is no sin. For, 1. I suppose that it is no sin not to do that which is only proper for God himself to do, or which requires the omnipotency of his arm to effect it. 2. I suppose,—which hath been lately proved,—that God doth and will condemn men for impenitency and unbelief. So, then, if to repent and believe be such acts in the soul which cannot be produced by means of that strength vouchsafed to them, but require the omnipotent power of Jehovah to effect them, it is no more sinful not to repent and believe, than it is not to be God; and, consequently, if God should punish men for not repenting and believing, he would punish them for that which, on such a supposition, would not be sin; or, for not making themselves equal in power to God.

If God have not vouchsafed a sufficiency of power to believe to those who do not believe, then did our Saviour, without any just reason, wonder at the unbelief of many in the Gospel, and at the faith of others: "And he marvelled because of their unbelief." On the other hand, "He marvelled and said, Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." There is not the least cause why any man should marvel, that creatures should not act above their common sphere. As, for instance: Though the year be ever so seasonable, yet there is not the least reason to think it strange the thorn should not produce grapes, or the thistle figs. In like manner, if men be supposed to be utterly destitute of a power of believing, there is not the least shadow of reason to wonder that they should not believe. Again: When causes which are known to act necessarily and uniformly do move and act so, there is no reason why any man should wonder at it. When the sun shines,

or fire burns, when birds fly, or fishes swim, no man is tempted to the least degree of astonishment. Nor is there any more reason to marvel that any person should believe, though labouring under the greatest disadvantages, if it be supposed, that the cause which produceth faith in men, namely, the power of God, should always work invincibly in the production of it. Possibly, the grace of God, by which men, under peculiar disadvantages, are brought to believe, may be just matter of admiration; by the vouchsafement of such grace supposed, the act of believing in men is no ground of admiration at all, any more than it was under the law to see a man making haste to his city of refuge, being closely pursued by the avenger of blood. However, I am inclined to think that the reason of our Saviour's marvelling at the centurion's answer, was not simply and absolutely the greatness of his faith discovering itself thereby, but, in part, the uncommon stupidity and unmanliness of spirit in the people of Israel, which came peculiarly under his notice by that extraordinary faith in a man who was a Pagan, a soldier, and an officer of particular rank, all which in their nature, and according to common experience, are obstacles in the way of believing; the very words themselves appear to import something of this kind. If believing, as our opponents seem to intimate, depend on the invincible power of God, our Saviour could have no sufficient reason to marvel, either that it should be found where it was, or not found where it was not; unless this be matter of astonishment to him, that God by his omnipotency should be able to work faith in whom he pleaseth; or that man should not do more than he hath power to do, I mean, to believe.

If God's design be to stop the mouths of all such persons, and to leave them without excuse who shall persist in impenitency and unbelief, then doth he afford a sufficiency of power and means to repent,

believe, and be saved. But the consequent is true, and most undeniably evident from the word of God. Therefore, the antecedent is also true; namely, that God doth afford a sufficiency of power to all men to enable them to believe, &c. That God intends to stop the mouths of all unbelievers, so that they shall have nothing to plead for themselves why the sentence of eternal death should not be passed upon them when they come to appear before his awful tribunal, is a truth as clear as the light at mid-day, from such passages as these: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse," or that they may be without excuse. So, again: "Now we know that whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God," or, subject to the judgment of God, that is, found guilty on such terms, that the judgment of God, in their condemnation, may appear every ways equitable. To omit other passages, it is evident enough from these above quoted, that God intends to leave all impenitent unbelieving persons without any excuse.

On this ground I build this inference, that, therefore, a sufficiency of power must be afforded by God to all men to repent and believe. The reason of this consequence is plain; namely, because the plea of inability to attend to what is commanded, is the first-born of apologies in case of neglect; yea, it is an excuse that will satisfy men of the most severe principles, if they be not absolutely infatuated with the senselessness of express tyranny. The man whom the king found among his guests without a wedding garment, being asked by him how he came thither without one, "was speechless." Doubtless, if he could with any degree of truth have made such an answer as this,

that he had it not in his power to procure a wedding garment, he would have pleaded it, and certainly would have been excused by the king in consequence of it; whereas now he must be "bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness." Likewise, in the parable of the talents, if the "unprofitable servant" could have given up his account to his master, and said with truth, that he had not a sufficient power granted him to improve his talents as the rest of his fellow-servants had, it would have been another kind of plea or excuse, than that which he produced to his further entanglement.

In this case our adversaries are wont to take sanctuary under Adam's wing; but this is too scanty to cover them. "All men," they say, "received sufficient power in Adam to believe, and on this account God may justly hold them inexcusable, if they do not believe." This plea is like a commodity fetched from a far country, which turns to no account when it is brought home. For, there hath nothing yet been produced like a rational proof, that all men were in Adam invested with a power of believing. There is this reason against it: If Adam in his innocency had a power of believing, then might he actually have believed, if he pleased. But it was not possible that Adam, during his innocency, should actually believe; because all this while there was no word of revelation from God concerning Jesus Christ, without which there was no possibility of actually believing. To pretend that Adam (and so all men in him) had a power vested in him, whereby he was able to believe what God should at any time reveal to him, and, consequently, to believe the Gospel, is to speak very much wide of the point. For, suppose, that to believe the Gospel were justifying faith, (as I believe it is,) and that Adam had power to have believed it, in case it had been revealed to him, without doubt all men

now are invested with a power of believing it on such terms ; namely, if it should be revealed to them so that they shall know that the revelation comes from God. For, though St. John represents unbelievers under the Gospel as men who "make God a liar," because "they believe not the record that he hath given of his Son," yet his design is not to charge them with offering this indignity to God knowingly, as if they knew well enough that this record was given by him, and yet would not believe him ; but through their unbelief they are said to "make him a liar" in this sense,—namely, because they reject that as a falsehood which hath been spoken and confirmed by God himself for truth ; yea, and that in such a way that, by a diligent and strict inquiry, they might come to a certain knowledge that it was spoken and affirmed by him. Therefore, if men received no other power in Adam to believe than only in case of such a revelation of the Gospel made to them in him by God, which they must needs know came from God, they received no other power of believing in him whilst he stood than what they receive from Christ since Adam's fall.

If all men received power in Adam to believe to justification, then must Adam himself necessarily be supposed to have this power ; if so, then must it be supposed also to have been some ways useful to him for some special end. If the power we speak of were any ways useful to Adam, it was either to enable him to believe while he remained innocent ; or, in case he should fall, that he might by it be enabled to believe accordingly. But that it was not useful to him in the former situation, is evident, because during his state of innocency he remained under a covenant of works, in which case he had no necessity of believing in order to his justification, having not yet sinned. Nor could it be useful to him in the latter situation ;

for he carried nothing saving with him out of his state of innocency into this lapsed condition, which was a state of sin, misery, and condemnation, especially until the promise of a Saviour was given, and that trumpet of the great jubilee had sounded, that "the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head."

It is no ways probable that men received any such power in Adam as would render them inexcusable under the sin of unbelief, in the times of the Gospel, because the Holy Ghost assigns other reasons for their inexcusableness, but no where gives the least intimation either of any such power to believe, received in Adam, much less of any tendency which this power should have to render unbelievers inexcusable under the Gospel, which God hath provided for on other terms.

Therefore, suppose it should be granted, that men did receive in Adam such a power of believing as is contended for, yet God, having made a new covenant of grace and mercy with them, it is not agreeable either to the wisdom of God, or to the unsearchable riches of his grace in the new covenant, that he should proceed in judgment against them, on any advantage taken from their condition under the first covenant.

The Scriptures themselves, as they are wholly silent respecting any purpose in God to judge or condemn men for any thing for which they seem accountable from the first covenant made with them in Adam, so do they frequently mention the purpose of God to proceed in judgment and condemnation of men by the Gospel, according to such articles of the covenant of grace, wherein they shall be found guilty of a neglect: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." He doth not say, "The word that I have spoken

shall judge him," &c., but, "The same shall judge him," &c., which undoubtedly implies, that the word which he hath spoken, and no other but this, shall judge him.

As for all that the apostle spoke, and what other ministers now say, so far as they preach the truth of the Gospel, or that which, being neglected, will render men liable to judgment, is, in effect, but the same word with what Christ taught and spake in the days of his flesh.

When with the Scriptures we affirm, that "faith is imputed for righteousness," our meaning is plainly this, that as God, in the first covenant of works, required absolute obedience to the whole law in all things, for every man's justification, which perfect obedience, had it been performed, would have been a perfect righteousness to the performer, and so would have justified him; so, in the new covenant of grace God requires nothing of any man for his justification, but faith, which faith shall be as available to him for his justification as a perfect righteousness would have been under the first covenant; and this is nothing but what is generally taught by divines, both ancient and modern.

What we deny is this,—that God looks upon a believing sinner in his justification, and accounts him one that has himself done all that Christ did in obedience to the moral law, and hereupon pronounces him righteous; or, which is the same, that God imputes to him those particular acts of obedience which Christ performed, so that he stands as righteous before God as Christ himself, and is righteous with the self-same righteousness wherewith Christ was righteous. In a word, this is what we deny, and what we affirm, concerning the righteousness of Christ in the justification of a sinner,—that this righteousness of Christ is not that which is imputed

to any man for righteousness, but is that for which righteousness is imputed to every man that believeth.

Faith doth not add in the least to the nature, value, or efficacy of Christ's satisfaction, it only interesteth men in the value and efficacy of it; both which were in it in as ample and full matter before men believe, as they are after. The fire whilst a man keeps at a distance from it doth not warm him; when he comes near it, it doth; yet his coming near doth not make the fire any whit hotter than it was before, only it gives him interest and communion in the heat of it, which he had not before. So the applying of a plaster to a sore doth not add any healing virtue to it, nor make it any whit more healing in the nature of it than it was before; only it interesteth him that hath the sore to which it is applied, in that healing virtue which it had before it was applied. Thus, then, you see how men's sins may be said to be fully satisfied for and atoned by Christ, yea, as fully as it is possible for them to be; and yet men remain under the guilt of them, and perish everlastingly because of them, and that without the least touch or shadow of disparagement to the justice of God.

We all know that faith and unbelief are matters of the highest and most weighty consequences of all things whatsoever relating to the condition of the creature, man; a great matter of his present comfort and discomfort, well-being and evil-being, depend upon them; but the whole and entire sum of his everlasting condition, his well-being or evil-being for ever, depends upon them. "He that believes," saith our Saviour, "shall be saved;" that is, shall be everlastingly blessed; and "he that believes not," namely, either sooner or later, first or last, "shall be damned;" that is, everlastingly miserable and accursed. So that this is clear; unbelief is, amongst all the irregularities, unworthinesses, and miscarriages of men, of the most grievous and formidable con-

sequence unto him. As to believe is an act of more value, worth, and consequence unto men than a thousand virtuous and commendable actions of another kind, so is unbelief, at least continued and persisted in unto death, of a thousand times more sad and grievous consequence, than the committing of ten thousand sins of the greatest provocation otherwise.

1. The sin of unbelief is, above all sins whatsoever, of the most dismal and dreadful consequence unto men. 2. There is light enough for men to come to the clear knowledge of it, I mean, that it is of that dreadful consequence. 3. Men have a sufficiency of means, a price put into their hand, wherewith to redeem themselves out of the hand of it. Now then, that man, or that woman, that in the face of three such considerations as these, shall either sit still or quit themselves but loosely and carelessly to recover their souls out of the snare of unbelief, commit a sin, doubtless, of the greatest and most desperate opposition to all principles of reason that can be ; and, consequently, a sin of the greatest demerit, and highest provocation, in the sight of God.

Thus you see, what between the demerit of sin in the general, I mean, of all other sins wherewith men defile themselves, and the great demerit of unbelief in particular, the righteousness of God in punishing and destroying wicked and ungodly men appears in perfect beauty ; there is nothing hard, nothing unequal, in it ; yea, there is nothing in it but what commends the wisdom of God itself, as well as his righteousness, or perfect hatred of sin.

VIII.—JUSTIFICATION.

How God justifieth, or what he contributeth towards justification.—God is the first and great Father and Founder of that blessed estate into which a sinner is translated by believing, and which the Scripture commonly terms “justification.” There was no necessity, either of justice or equity, much less of constraint, lying upon God ever to permit such a thing as the justification of a sinner to be, or such a state to be so much as once heard or thought of in the world.

God contributes to the said happy effect of the sinner’s justification contrivement also; and this, 1. In respect of the nature or form of the thing itself. 2. Of such things or means which render it feasible or producible with the salvage of his own honour, as well in point of wisdom as of justice. 3. In respect of such means by which it may be actually attained by the sinner.

God contributeth yet further towards the justification of a sinner, by his sovereign authority. For by means hereof, that law or decree, according to the tenor and by virtue of which the sinner is justified, (of which somewhat more presently,) becomes inviolable, uncontrollable, and not liable to any over-rulement or nullification, by any power or authority whatsoever; according to that of the apostle Paul, “It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?” meaning, that there is no person or creature whatsoever that hath any authority or power to rescind or make invalid that act, or rather that law of God, wherein, and according unto which, he justifieth a sinner; which, nevertheless, might be done, and so the justification of the believing sinner fall to the ground, and his person, notwithstanding his justification by God, be liable to condemnation, if the authority of God by which he is justified were subordinate, and not sovereign or supreme.

God contributeth towards the justification of a sinner that real help and assistance by his Spirit, in conjunction with other means of an external nature, by which the sinner is enabled to believe in Jesus Christ, and this with a living and operative faith; and so by virtue of that decree or law of his concerning justification, "He that believeth in my Son Jesus Christ is or shall hereby be justified," he comes to be interested in that state of blessedness, as David terms it, I mean, justification.

How the grace of God contributeth towards the justification of a sinner.—The grace of God, as it importeth the Divine attribute commonly known by that name, (for sometimes the word signifieth the act or acting of this attribute, and otherwhile the happy success or effect of this acting,) contributeth towards the justification of a sinner, as it effectually disposeth him to show kindness and do good where there is no preceding merit; nor any provocation, motive, or inducement administered why he should either show the one or do the other; and more particularly, as it thus disposeth him to give his only-begotten Son unto those to whom he was no ways indebted or engaged for any courtesy, and to impute faith for righteousness unto, that is, to justify, a believing sinner, who hath deserved no favour or respects of love, either in this kind or any other, from him, but the contrary.

How the decree of God worketh towards justification.—Justification may be attributed to the decree of God, I mean, to the decree of God concerning it, because or as this ratifieth and establisheth it according to the terms on which it is granted and taketh place. This is that which maketh faith in Jesus Christ available and effectual unto justification, which giveth virtue and force unto it, I mean, unto faith, for the production and raising of so glorious and blessed an effect as the justification, and, consequently, the salvation, of a sin-

ner is. "This is the will," that is, the pleasure, purpose, or decree, "of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life," which includes his justification.

How Christ justifieth.—Christ, as God, may be said to justify in all those considerations or respects wherein justification hath been ascribed unto God; yea, being one and the same God in nature and essence with the Father, he acteth and doeth all the same things, in reference to the creature, in conjunction and communion with him.

Being God and man, or man subsisting in the human nature personally united to the Godhead, by the willing offering up of himself as a Lamb without spot in sacrifice unto God the Father, he made atonement for sinners in such a sense wherein the Scripture is to be understood, when it so speaketh, notwithstanding his justice and perfect hatred of sin; yea, notwithstanding his threatening of Adam and all his posterity with death, in case of his sinning. The death of a person of that transcendent worth and dignity was in true esteem, and so judged, by the unerring understanding and wisdom of God, a valuable and equitable consideration why he should actually, and without any other thing intervening, pardon the sin of the world; that is, the sin of Adam, as imputed or communicated in the guilt of it unto all his posterity, together with all the actual sins of all such of his posterity as should believe in him.

Christ neither desired nor intended to make satisfaction by his death for the sins of unbelievers any otherwise, nor upon any other terms, than that God the Father should, upon the account thereof, justify such persons from their sins in case they should have believed; and, in this sense, he doth accept it as a satisfaction for them, being, for the sake thereof, most ready and willing to pardon all the sins, and so to justify the persons, of all men, without exception, as well theirs

who never will believe, in case they should believe, as theirs who shall believe and be actually justified thereupon. So that God, in causing or compelling unbelievers to suffer or to satisfy for their sins, doth not require or exact a second satisfaction for them after a former received, but only puts them upon payment of their debt themselves, who despised his grace in providing for them that which was indeed intended for the actual and real satisfaction hereof, upon condition of their believing, but was never upon these terms accepted by him, by reason of their non-performance of the said condition of believing.

How the active obedience of Christ justifieth.—What the active obedience of Christ contributeth towards the justification of sinners hath been in part declared already. Under the Mosaical law the beast that was to be offered in sacrifice, to make any of those Levitical expiations, was to be perfect, and without blemish; it was neither to be blind, nor broken, nor maimed, nor having a wen, nor scurvy, nor scabbed, not having any thing superfluous, nor any thing lacking in his parts, &c. If it had any of these or the like imperfections in it, it was not accepted. Now, that which the soundness, perfection, and freedom from blemish, in the legal sacrifices, contributed towards their acceptation, and, consequently, towards the efficacy of their respective atonements or expiations, the same or the like in proportion doth the active obedience of Christ contribute towards the acceptation of his sacrifice of himself, in order to the efficaciousness hereof for the justification of sinners.

The active obedience of Christ, in conjunction with the absolute holiness and inward purity of his person, rendered his death, or the oblation of himself, a sacrifice every ways meet and worthy acceptance with God, and, consequently, accepted with him for the expiation or atonement of the sins of all men.

If Christ had been so much as touched with the least tincture of defilement with sin, he had not been a Priest after the order of Melchisedec, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners," &c., but rather after the order of Aaron, who needed to offer sacrifice for their own sins. Neither had he been in any condition or regular capacity to have made atonement for the sins of others until he had first fully expiated his own.

How the passive obedience of Christ justifieth.—It rendereth that great act of God, in the justification of a sinner, every ways comely and honourable unto him and worthy of him, and, consequently, makes him most willing and free to it. The Holy Ghost speaks plainly enough of that comeliness which the sufferings of Christ put upon the justification of a sinner by God, giving some intimation, withal, that unless this act had by one means or other been made thus comely for him, he would never have lift up his heart or hand unto it. "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things," meaning God, "in bringing many sons unto glory, to consecrate," or make perfect, "the Captain of their salvation through sufferings." That meetness or comeliness for God here spoken of, intending the salvation and glorification of many, to effect it in no other way than by the sufferings of him who was to be the Prince or Captain of their salvation, respecteth mainly, if not solely, his act in justifying them, in order to their salvation and glorification. For, otherwise, supposing them already justified, there needed more the life than the death of Christ to save them.

How the resurrection of Christ from the dead justifieth.—The resurrection or raising of Christ from the dead, in conjunction with his glorification which followed upon it, advanceth the business of justification by the assurance given hereby from God unto the souls and consciences of men, that he is well apaid and fully satisfied concerning that great debt of the sin of the

world, the discharge whereof was undertaken by Christ in his death; hereby encouraging men who had incurred his displeasure by sinning to believe in him accordingly for their justification.

Whilst the surety, or he that hath undertaken the payment of a debt, is kept in prison, there is no likelihood that the debt is paid, or the creditor satisfied. And upon this ground the apostle Paul reasoneth first thus: "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." And again: "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins;" meaning, that they could have no reasonable ground to believe that they were discharged or acquitted by God from the debt or guilt of their sins by means of the death of Christ, if he should be detained in the prison of death,—the grave,—until now, and not have been raised again and set at liberty. So, then, the rising again, or rather the raising again, of Christ from the dead by God the Father justifieth believing sinners, as it were, argumentatively, and as exhibiting a rational ground unto them whereon to build their faith, of a full and perfect atonement made by Christ in his death for them or for their sins; by which faith, according unto and by virtue of that promise made, or the law enacted by God in that behalf, they come to be justified.

How the knowledge of Christ justifieth.—The prophet Isaiah bringeth in God the Father, speaking thus of his Son Christ: "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." By "his knowledge," the knowledge of Christ, is meant the knowledge of himself, which he shall propagate in the world by the ministry of the Gospel, and by means of this knowledge of him many shall be justified; according to that of the apostle: "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the

works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ ;” that is, by Christ believed on.

How the Spirit of God is or may be said to justify men.—Justification may be ascribed to the Holy Ghost, as he hath a special and appropriate hand in raising the work of faith, by which men are thus justified, in the hearts of those who do believe ; in which respect faith is registered by the apostle Paul amongst the fruits of the Spirit ; and by his fellow-apostle Peter they who believe are said to, “obey the truth,” speaking of the obedience of faith to the Gospel, “through the Spirit ;” and the Christians in Achaia are said to have “believed through grace,” that is, through the grace of God in his vouchsafement of his Spirit unto them, by whom they were enabled to believe, yea, and actually believed.

How faith justifieth.—That faith justifieth, is the constant assertion of the Scripture, and the architectural doctrine of the Gospel. “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” Again : “Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”

That justification which the Scripture attributeth unto faith is precisely that which consisteth in remission of sins. Now certain it is, that no kind of works whatsoever, enjoined in the moral law, have any thing at all, little or much, to do about remission of sins, or in the procurement or obtaining of it. For in case a man should transgress the law, or sin, only once, and this in the lightest manner, and should for ten thousand years together afterwards, with all possible exactness, observe and keep this law, yet this long tract or series of obedience or good works would not make his atonement for that sin, nor bring him off from the guilt of it with peace and safety.

The virtue or power by which faith justifieth, it

receiveth from the designation, ordinance, appointment, or decree of God ; and the manner how it justifieth is, by the giving of men interest or part in the great benefit of remission of sins purchased by Christ, according to the tenor of God's ordinance or decree in that behalf.

How, or in what respect, repentance is or may be said to justify.—God, not judging it meet to invest a person who yet retains the love and liking of sinful and wicked ways, with so great and sacred a privilege and grace as forgiveness of sins, was pleased to establish it for a law,—that no man or woman remaining impenitent, and without unfeigned remorse of soul for their sins past, should ever be admitted into part and fellowship of that unspeakable grace of his in Jesus Christ which consists in pardon or remission of sins.

How good works are and may be said to justify.—Good works have no part or interest at all in justification, as it standeth in remission of sins, being excluded herefrom by the same law by which boasting also is excluded ; which the apostle termeth “the law of faith.” “Where is boasting then ? It is excluded. By what law ? of works ? Nay : But BY THE LAW OF FAITH.” By this law faith hath the office or work of justifying men in this sense, and with this kind of justification, settled upon and confirmed unto itself alone. There is another kind of justification which the Scripture also frequently speaks of under this name, which consists in the approbation, commendation, or vindication of a person from guilt or blame, whether justly or unjustly imputed unto him. Of this kind of justification, when it is duly and justly given or pronounced, good works in one kind or other, and for the most part those of the moral law, have a special and particular interest in it, being the only regular ground upon which the act or sentence of such a justification can or ought to proceed.

How the Scriptures, or word of God, justify.—As sanctification is ascribed unto the word of God : “ Sanctify them through thy truth : Thy word is the truth ; ” by the intervening and mediation of faith, or the belief of it ; so may justification by the same mediation be ascribed unto it likewise. Yea, faith itself, which justifieth more immediately and directly, and, consequently, justification, may be ascribed unto it, not only as it is the subject-matter or object of that hearing by which the faith which justifieth is produced, as hath been already said, but as it is such a word, or the matter of it so qualified and conditioned, that it is very apt, pregnant, and potent, to work or raise that faith in the hearts and minds of men which, by divine institution, as we have heard, is justifying.

The Scriptures also, or word of God, are operative in their way towards the justification of a sinner, and may be said to justify : They instruct and teach men the way that leadeth unto justification ; yea, they most effectually persuade, urge, and press men to walk in this way, I mean the way of believing ; and, by their innate property to convince the judgments and consciences of men of the truth of what they teach and say, they do much facilitate or make easy both men’s entrance into and their walking, likewise, in this way. And as the law is said to have constituted or made men high priests, because it directed and taught men how to make them ; as, namely, by the performance of all those observations, rites, and ceremonies prescribed in this law, to give this great and sacred investiture to a person capable, by God’s appointment, of the dignity, and then by declaring and authorizing them for such in the name of God : In like manner the Gospel, or word of God, may be said to constitute or make men righteous, that is, to justify them, both because it teacheth and prescribeth unto them what they ought to do and must do that they may be justified ; and then, by

authority derived from God, and in his name, pronounce, avouch, and declare them for such ; I mean, for persons justified, when they have performed and done that which they prescribe on this behalf.

How the minister of the word may be said to justify.

—When he openeth unto them the counsel of God in the Gospel, concerning the justification and salvation of men by Jesus Christ, so effectually, so throughly, and with that evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, as the apostle speaks, that men's reasons, judgments, and consciences are so far convinced, or persuaded of the truth of what is delivered upon such terms, that they truly, unfeignedly, and with the whole heart believe it : Now, and upon this account, he may be said to justify them.

How a person may be said to justify himself.—

When a man doeth that upon which, or by means whereof, he shall certainly be justified, this fruit or reward of his action,—his justification,—may, without the violation of any rule, either of grammar or of rhetoric, be ascribed unto him. Hence it follows, God having, by a perpetual and inviolable decree, settled the great benefit and privilege of justification upon believing, that whensoever any person, man or woman, shall lift up his heart hereunto,—I mean, to believe,—by this action he may be said to justify himself ; not, indeed, after any such manner, or upon any such terms, as God is said to justify men upon their believing, as, namely, authoritatively, or as having a sovereign right to justify whom, or upon what terms, he pleaseth, or the like ; but in such a way or sense only wherein a person may be said to do that which, upon his action, is done unto him by another.

When a man is said, by believing, to justify himself, the meaning is not, that he absolveth himself from his sins, or pronounceth a sentence of absolution over himself, or that he imputeth righteousness unto himself,

or the like ; but only that he levieth, puts forth, or performs such an act whereby he prevaileth with God, according to his gracious covenant and promise to justify him, and therein to do all these things to him, or for him. As when a man is said to save himself, which, as we heard, is the apostle's own expression, the meaning is not either that by a strong hand, or by any physical power, he over-matcheth the devil, and keeps himself out of his clutches, and from being carried or thrust by him into hell ; or that he invests himself with the state of blessedness and glory, which is signified and meant by "salvation ;" but that he takes such a course, as, namely, by believing and persevering in it unto the end, whereby he shall find favour in the sight of God, to do these things for him. Now, to say "a man by believing takes an effectual and direct course to prevail with God to forgive him his sins, to impute righteousness unto him," &c., are as proper and convenient expressions, as to say that "he prevails with him to justify him."

Thus we have showed how great a number, and what variety, as well of things as of persons, there are, all, both of the one kind and the other, joining hand in hand, and making, as it were, one shoulder to bring the great blessing of justification upon the head of a poor sinner. God, who is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working," judged it meet that a matter of so gracious and rare, of so profound and wonderful, a contrivance should pass through many hands before his creature, man, to whom it was meant and intended, should be invested with the actual possession and enjoyment of it. There is scarce any thing of a more humbling consideration to the height and pride of the spirit of a man, than to be subjected to a multiplicity of dependencies, especially upon such, either persons or things, which he either judgeth but equal unto, but most of all if beneath, himself, for the obtain-

ing of that of which he stands in need, and without which he fully understands that it cannot be well with him.

In what sense the righteousness of Christ is imputed in justification.—The terms “justifying,” “justification,” &c., are not to be taken in this question either, 1. In a physical sense, as if “to justify” signified “to make just,” with any habitual or actual, any positive or inherent, righteousness. Nor yet, 2. In a judiciary sense, properly so called, where the judge hath only a subordinate power of judicature, and is bound to give sentence according to the strict rule of the law; as if “to justify” were to pronounce a man just, or to absolve him from punishment, according to the strict terms of that law whereof he was accused as a transgressor. But, 3. In a judiciary sense, less properly so called, namely, where he that sitteth judge, being the supreme magistrate, hath sovereign power to moderate and dispense with the law, as reason or equity shall require: So that “to justify,” in this question, imports the discharging a man from the guilt and punishment of those things whereof he either is, or justly might be, accused; not because he is clear of such things, or justifiable according to the strictness of the law, (for then he could not be justly accused,) but because the judge, having sovereign power, is willing, upon sufficient considerations, to remit the penalty of the law, and to discharge him as if he were innocent.

In that very act of God whereby he justifies a sinner, as there is a discharge from all punishment due to him, so there is a plain intimation of the guiltiness of the person now to be justified, and that he is not acquitted upon any consideration that can be pleaded for him according to the law, but upon the consideration of somewhat done for him, to relieve him from the curse and appointment of it. He whose justifica-

tion stands in the forgiveness of sin can in no construction be said to be justified according to the law, because the law knows no forgiveness of sins, neither is there any rule for any such thing there. The law speaks of the "curse," "death," and "condemnation" of a sinner; but for the "justification" of a sinner, it gives no hope.

It is evident from Scripture, that God, in every man's justification, doth impute righteousness unto him, or, rather, somewhat for, or instead of, a righteousness, (the Scripture useth both expressions,) by means of which imputation the person justified passeth in account as a righteous man, (though he be not properly such according to the law,) and is accordingly invested with those great privileges of a man perfectly righteous,—deliverance from death and condemnation, and acceptance into the favour of God. The reason why God is pleased to use such an expression of righteousness imputed in the justification of a sinner seems to be this,—the better to satisfy the natural scruple of the consciences of men, who can hardly think of being justified (especially by God) without an express and perfect legal righteousness. Now, the purpose of God in the Gospel being to justify men without any such righteousness, (being a righteousness indeed whereof man, in his lapsed condition, is wholly incapable,) the better to salve the fears of the conscience touching such a defect, he is graciously pleased so far to condescend to men as, in effect, to grant and say to them, that though he finds not any proper or perfect righteousness in them, yet if they truly believe in him, as Abraham did, this believing shall, in the consequences of it, be as good as a perfect righteousness to them, or that he will impute righteousness to them upon their believing.

The question is not, either, 1. Whether faith as separated from Christ be imputed for righteousness;

for such a faith, in the point of justification, was never dreamed of by any man in his senses. Neither, 2. Is it the question, whether faith be the meritorious cause of a man's justification; for both they that affirm, and they that deny, the imputation of faith for righteousness, deny the meritoriousness of faith. Neither, 3. Is it the question, whether Christ be the sole meritorious cause of the justification of a sinner; for we are all agreed in this. Neither, 4. Do we dispute, whether the active obedience of Christ with the passive, considered in conjunction with it, contributeth towards the justification of sinners; for this also is acknowledged on both sides. But, 5. The question in precise terms is this,—whether the faith of him that truly believes in Christ, or the righteousness of Christ himself, that is, his obedience to the moral law, be that which God imputes to a believer for righteousness, in his justification: So that he that believes is constituted and made as perfectly, as legally, righteous as Christ himself is; the justified and the Justifier both being righteous with the self-same righteousness, only the justified wears it by imputation; the Justifier, by inherency. That the Scriptures no where countenance any such imputation of the righteousness of Christ, I trust, the Spirit of truth assisting, to make manifest in this discourse.

The letter of this scripture speaks what we affirm plainly; yea, speaks it once and twice; yea, the third and fourth time: "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness." Again: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted unto him for righteousness." So again: "We say that faith was imputed to him for righteousness." And yet again: "And therefore it was imputed unto him for righteousness." Certainly there is not any truth in religion, not any article of the Christian belief, that can boast

of the letter of the Scripture more full and express for it.

The scope of the place shows that the word "faith" is taken properly in all these passages. Apparent it is, that the apostle's main drift in this whole discourse of justification was to hedge up with thorns, as it were, that false way of justification which lay through works and legal performances; and to discover the true way of justification, wherein men might attain righteousness before God, that is, to make known to them what God requireth of them to their justification. And this the apostle says is faith, or to believe, in the proper and formal signification. He doth not require of us the righteousness of Christ for our justification. This he required of Christ himself for it; that which he requires of us for this purpose is our faith in Christ himself, not in the righteousness of Christ, as hereafter is showed. Therefore, for Paul to have said to men, that the righteousness of Christ would be imputed for righteousness to them, had been quite beside his purpose; which was plainly this,—to make known the good pleasure of God concerning that which was to be performed by themselves (though not by their own strength) to their justification. This he affirmeth, from place to place, to be nothing else but their faith, or believing. To have said, that they must be justified by Christ, or by Christ's righteousness, and withal not to have plainly signified what it was that God required of them, to give them part in that righteousness, or justification, which is by Christ, had been rather to cast a snare upon them, than to have opened a door of life and peace. And therefore he is careful, when he speaks of justification, or redemption by Christ, often to mention "faith" as the means whereby this is communicated.

That the active obedience of Christ, his fulfilling the

moral law, was never intended by God to be that righteousness wherewith we are justified, may be further demonstrated, from all those scriptures where the works of the law are excluded from justification: As, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law:" So, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law." Again: "Therefore by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight." For if a man be justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, he is justified by the works of the law, because that righteousness of Christ consists of those works, as every man's personal righteousness would have done, had there been a continuance in the first covenant. Therefore, this righteousness of Christ cannot be imputed to any man for that righteousness whereby he is to be justified.

If a man's sins be once forgiven him, he hath no need of the imputation of any further righteousness for justification, because forgiveness of sins amounteth unto a full justification with God. "The gift," saith Paul, that is, the gift of righteousness, (as it is explained in the next verse,) "is of many offences unto justification;" that is, when God hath given men their offences, or forgiven them, (for to give a debt, or to forgive it, is all one,) he hath fully justified them. For that righteousness which God imputes to men through faith is nothing else but the forgiveness of sins, or the acquitting them from that death and condemnation which are due to them. And this is all the justification the Scripture speaks of, the forgiveness of our sins, or acquitting us from condemnation. The not observing this has been the chief occasion of the present mistake. For men reading in the Scriptures of the justification of sinners, or of their being made righ-

teous by Christ, they have conceived that such a thing cannot be but by a positive righteousness someways put upon them ; and there being no such righteousness to be found but the righteousness of Christ, hence they have apprehended, that justification must needs be by this righteousness of Christ imputed unto them. Whereas that righteousness which we have by Christ, and wherewith we are justified by believing, is a negative righteousness, not a positive ; it is nothing else but a non-imputation of sin, which we, therefore, call a "righteousness," as having the privileges, though not the nature, of a perfect legal righteousness.

This is the most usual and proper signification of the word "justify," both in the Scriptures, and other authors. It does not signify, the giving a complete positive righteousness, but only an acquitting or discharging a man from the guilt and penalty due to such things as were laid to his charge. In the Scripture, it is usually opposed to condemning, or condemnation.

That what God imputes for righteousness in justification is not the righteousness of Christ, but faith in Christ, may be proved from all those scriptures where justification is ascribed to faith. Not to heap up places of this kind : "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith." "Therefore we being justified by faith." Now, when men say, that faith justifieth, I demand what it is they mean by "faith." Do they not mean their believing, or the act of faith, usually so called, which by the assistance of the Holy Ghost is raised within them, and put forth by them ? If by "faith" they mean any thing besides either the habit or act of believing, I confess my soul hath not yet entered into their secret. The Scriptures in the matter of justification seem rather to speak of that we call the "act of believing ;" and so learned divines, as far as I have observed, generally conceive. Now for men to say that

“faith justifieth,” and yet to condemn it for an error, in another that shall say it is “an act of faith that justifieth,” hath in my apprehension as much inconsistency in it, as if a man should grant, that Jerusalem once was the joy of the whole earth, and yet should censure him that said, the city Jerusalem was ever so; or that should grant, that Paul laboured in the Gospel more than all the apostles, but would not endure him that should say, that Paul the apostle did so. As Jerusalem, and the city Jerusalem, are the same; and Paul, and Paul the apostle, the same; so are faith, and the act of faith, the same; and if one justifieth, certainly the other justifieth also.

Perhaps it will be here said, that they who confess that faith justifieth do not conceive of it as divided from its object, Christ. No more did ever any man in his senses. For a man to say, that he seeth, and yet to affirm, that when he seeth he seeth nothing, is to profess open enmity against common sense. Neither is it any other in him who shall conceive of any act of faith, that is not exercised upon its object, either Christ in person, or Christ in promise. It is impossible that any man should believe, but he must believe something, or in some person; and so when any man speaks of faith or believing, he must of necessity imply the object with or in the act, though he names only the act, and not the object, as the usual manner of the Scripture is; where faith or believing is forty times mentioned, without addition of the object, Christ, or the promise of God in Christ, or any thing equivalent to either.

The righteousness which will not furnish all believers with all parts of that righteousness which the law requires, cannot be imputed to them for justification:

But the obedience that Christ performed to the moral law will not furnish all believers with all parts of righteousness which the law requires:

Therefore, it cannot be imputed to believers for their justification.

The reason of the former proposition is, because a perfect and complete legal righteousness—and such, certainly, that which justifieth must be—requires a punctual and thorough obedience to all things in the law, which any way concern a man to do. If there be but a letter, jot, or tittle wanting in any man's righteousness of all that was his duty to do, that righteousness is not for his justification. The curse of the law will break in upon a man, body and soul, as well through the smallest defects of a legal righteousness, as through wider breaches; in case a man hath not wherewith to secure himself otherwise. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the law to do them." Therefore, there is no escaping the curse of the law by the law, except a man's obedience be absolute, as well for constancy as universality, in all things that are written; namely, with reference to him, and to his calling. For, otherwise, there may be a complete, legal righteousness, without doing many things enjoined in the law, in case they have no relation to a man's calling. For instance: Adam might have been still justified by a complete, legal righteousness, and yet never have performed many duties, which the law required of Eve, for the continuance of her justification. So Christ fulfilled all righteousness, and, consequently, held an exact conformity with the law, so that neither man, nor God himself, could rebuke him of sin; and yet the law requires many things of many others, both men and women, which Christ never performed.

How many duties do servants owe to their masters after the flesh, by the obligation of the law, which Christ never performed, as that they should be obedient unto them with fear and trembling. Again: Wives are charged, by the law, with many points of

obedience to their husbands ; yea, and husbands, with some towards their wives, which certainly Christ never performed for them. Yea, he expressly declined doing some things, as lying without the verge of his calling, which the law requires as matters of special duty from others. When he was desired to do justice between a man and his brother, his answer was, "Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?" implying, that he would meddle with no acts of righteousness that lay without the precincts of his calling. And, indeed, if he had, (though it was impossible that he should,) it had overthrown the infinite benefit that now redounds unto the world from those acts of righteousness which were performed by him in his calling. So when the people would have taken and made him King, he absolutely refused ; and, refusing the office of a king, doubtless he would not take upon him the execution of it. Therefore, what righteousness should kings and magistrates have imputed unto them from Christ, to make them just and righteous in their callings, when Christ himself refused to perform those acts of righteousness which are proper thereto ? That which never was done or acted by Christ cannot be imputed ; that which never had a being is not capable of an act of imputation to pass upon it.

A man, methinks, must have a rare faculty, who can conceive, that Christ's preaching on the mount, ordaining disciples, reproving the scribes and pharisees, working miracles, and the like, (which were parts of his obedience to the law,) should be imputed to a woman, for example, instead of her obedience, and love, and faithfulness to her husband ; and that she should be reputed before God to have performed all these duties according to the strict form of the law, because Christ performed the fore-named duties, and these by imputation are made hers.

A second reason why the active obedience or right-

eousness of Christ cannot (in the propriety of it) be imputed to any man for righteousness may be proposed thus :

That righteousness which is precisely fitted to the person and office of Him that is Mediator between God and man, or Redeemer of the world, cannot be imputed to any other man for his righteousness :

But the righteousness of Christ is precisely fitted to the person and calling of a Mediator :

Therefore, it cannot be imputed to any other man for his righteousness.

The second proposition, I conceive, will be yielded without much striving. If any man will undertake to find any such flaw in the righteousness of Christ as doth amount to the least degree of inconsistency with his office of Mediator, he attempts no less than the undermining the foundations of the peace of the world, and laying the hope of the salvation of men in the dust. "Such an High Priest," saith the apostle, "it became us to have,"—that is, that it was necessary we should have, if we looked for salvation by him,— "that is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." And woe unto the world, if the least spot or blemish could be found in this High Priest or his righteousness.

The whole generation of disputers for that imputation which we oppose interpret the phrase of "having the righteousness of Christ imputed," by being clothed with this righteousness of Christ, or with the robes of his righteousness. He, then, that assumeth this righteousness of Christ to himself, and apparelleth himself with it, represents himself before God, not in the habit of a just or righteous man, but in the glorious attire of Him that makes men just and righteous, the great Mediator of the world, whose righteousness hath heights and depths in it, a length and breadth, which infinitely exceed the proportions of all men whatsoever. And

as John, speaking, it seems, of his transfiguration in the mount, useth these words, "We beheld his glory, the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father;"—meaning, that the glory wherein Christ then appeared was so super-transcendently excellent, that it exceeded the rank and quality of the creature, whether angel or man, and was meet only for Him to wear that was "the Only-begotten of the Father;"—so must it be acknowledged of the righteousness of his life, that it was peculiarly appropriated to him that was the Only-begotten of the Father, the great Saviour and Redeemer of the world. Neither did that glory of his which John saw farther transcend the condition of the creature, than the glory of this righteousness doth. Now, then, for a silly worm to take this robe of unmeasurable majesty upon it, and to conceit itself as great in holiness and righteousness as Jesus Christ himself, (for that is the spirit that rules in that opinion, to teach men to assume all that Christ did unto themselves, and that in no other way, nor upon any lower terms, than as if themselves had personally done it,)—whether this be right, I earnestly desire men would seriously consider. All the parts of this righteousness, all the acts of obedience that he performed, he performed them as one that had received the Spirit without measure. There was a weightiness and worth in them which did fully answer the fulness of that grace that was given unto him; yea, those acts of obedience, though he wrought them in human nature, yet, by reason of the combination of the Godhead in the same person, could not but receive excellent impressions from that also: The righteousness was, in all the parts and circumstances of it, such as became God himself in personal union with the human nature. Now, whether that be not to be accounted robbery, (and that of a high nature,) for the creature to assume an equality of righteousness (whether by imputation,

or however) with God himself, I leave to the sober and impartial to consider. At least, there are some strains in this righteousness of Christ that cannot be applied unto any other without notorious impiety. All that Christ taught and preached on earth was part of his righteousness and obedience: "For I have not spoken of myself," saith he, "but the Father that sent me gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak." Therefore, when he speaketh these and many such like words, "I am the light of the world: Come unto me, all that are weary and heavy laden, and I will refresh you;" is it meet for any other to conceive them as spoken by himself in his own person? Those which were words full of grace and truth in that mouth that spake them, and for which they were fitted, would be words of presumption and blasphemy in any other.

So that you see one main reason why we deny the imputation of Christ's righteousness, in the propriety of it, in justification, is, not because we deny the righteousness itself, nor because we deny the necessity of it, nor yet because we less honour and magnify it than others; but, on the contrary, because we desire to establish it upon better foundations, and show a plainer and greater necessity of it, and give more honour and glory to it, than the adverse opinion can do.

A third reason against this imputation of Christ's righteousness is, there is no necessity or occasion for it. Neither God the Master, nor nature the servant, ever maketh any thing in vain. If God hath provided otherwise for the justification of his people, certain it is he doth not impute this unto them for that end; which yet is the only end for which the necessity thereof is pretended. Now, that a believer is justified without any such imputation, I thus demonstrate: He that is completely justified by having his sins forgiven, is justified without the imputation of this active obe-

dience or righteousness of Christ. This proposition is generally granted ; for no man contends for this imputation in the sense we speak of, in regard of forgiveness of sins ; neither is there any colour for it, but for another purpose. But a believer is justified by the forgiveness of his sins ; therefore, there is no need of this imputation of Christ's righteousness for his justification.

Fourthly, if men will have the active righteousness of Christ imputed to them for one part of their justification, and the death of Christ for another part, and so divide the benefit of his active obedience from that which we have by his passive, in justification, that is a way to destroy and lose the benefit both of the one and the other. For if men subtract the righteousness of his life upon a conceit, that it will do them service alone, then must they want it in his death, or in his blood, and so that will be ineffectual, too. Neither will the active obedience of Christ profit men, if they separate it from the passive. Neither will the passive be an atonement for sin, according to the will of God, except we bring in the active to it ; for, as it is most true, "without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins," so is it that without shedding of righteous blood there is no remission. And howsoever the personal union of the human nature with the Godhead in Christ was the great qualification to make his sacrifice completely satisfactory for the sin of the world ; yet was it but a remote qualification in this respect, there being a necessity—not only in respect of the purpose of God, but of other ends also—that this qualification we now speak of,—“the fulfilling of the law,”—should come between that union and his sacrifice. Meantime, though I would not have the active obedience of Christ separated from the passive, nor, again, the passive from the active, in respect of this joint effect, justification arising from a concurrence of them both, yet would I

not have Christ, in his mystery, tumbled up together on a heap ; I would have every thing that Christ was, and every thing that Christ did, and every thing that Christ suffered, to be distinguished, not only in themselves, but also in their effects respectively flowing from them. All that Christ was, and did, and suffered, meet together in that common effect,—the salvation of them that believe ; yea, many of them meet by the way, in the justification of such, before they come to their journey's end ; yet to justify the wonderful wisdom of God in bringing about this great work, the salvation of the world, we must find out distinct ends for all that variety of things which is to be found in or about Christ ; as, why he should be God, and why he should be man, what both the one and the other of these contributes towards the salvation of men ; why he should be born, why born of a virgin, why he should grow up and live till he came to the perfect age of a man ; why he should be circumcised, why fulfil the law, why preach the Gospel before his death, why at last he should suffer death, why die upon the cross, why he should be buried, why he should rise again ; with many more particulars that might be mentioned, all which have their special and peculiar working towards the great work of salvation. And for men not to distinguish these in due manner, as well in their effects and purposes, as in their natures, is not only to confound themselves, but, which is worse, to confound that most exquisite and admirably-beautiful frame of the Gospel, and, as it were, of a defenced city to make a ruinous heap.

Such an imputation of the righteousness of Christ as is contended for frustrates the end and use of adoption.

This is evident from the express declaration which they make who are the maintainers of it ; for wherefore is this imputation of Christ's righteousness intro-

duced into the business of justification? The introducers say, with one mouth, "The righteousness of Christ must be imputed to us, that so we may have a right and title to life or heaven. For by remission of sins," say they, "a man is only delivered from death and condemnation; but there accrues thereby no right or title to heaven." And so, apprehending nothing else about a believer fit to make a title of thereto, they have compelled the righteousness of Christ to take this office upon it, in a way of imputation. Neither is it easy to conceive what other service this righteousness of Christ imputed should do in justification. Now, this being the proper end, use, and intent of adoption, to invest a believer with a capacity for heaven, it evidently follows, that whoever shall offer to set any thing else upon this throne, seeks to frustrate the counsel of God concerning the grace of adoption.

God is not the author of confusion, but of peace. There is no plant of his planting, that hurts any other plant which himself hath planted; much less, that plucks it up by the roots. Now, repentance is a plant of his planting, and of absolute necessity to salvation. "Except ye repent," saith our Saviour, "ye shall all likewise perish," &c. But such an imputation of the righteousness of Christ as is pleaded for, wholly cuts off the necessity of repentance. For he that hath a perfect righteousness so imputed to him, that it shall be as much his as if he had personally wrought it himself, cannot stand in need of any repentance. If Adam had kept the law, he had needed no repentance more than Christ needed: And those that keep the law in Christ, as perfectly as he did, what need of repentance have they, more than he? For if the perfect obedience of Christ be the reason why Christ himself needed no repentance; and this obedience of his, in all its perfection, be as truly theirs by impu-

tation, as it could have been by personal performance ; if it was a sufficient ground of a non-necessity of repentance in the one, it must be the same in the other. He that is as righteous as Christ is (which those must needs be that are righteous with his righteousness) needs no more repentance than Christ himself needeth.

A sixth reason against such an imputation of the active obedience of Christ is, it takes away the necessity of his death. If men be as righteous as Christ was in his life, there was no more necessity of his death for them, than there was either of his own death or of the death of any other, for himself. If we were perfectly just or righteous in him or with him, in his life, then the just would not have died for the unjust, but he would have died for the just, for whom there was no necessity he should die. This reason the apostle expressly delivers : " If righteousness be by the law, then Christ died in vain." I desire the impartial reader to observe narrowly the force of this inference made by the Holy Ghost. " If righteousness," or justification, " be by the law, then Christ died in vain." Men cannot here betake themselves to their wonted refuge, to say that by " the law " is to be understood the works of the law, as performed by a man's self in person. For if by the word " law," in this place, we understand the works of the law, as performed by Christ, the consequence will rise up with the greater strength against them. If righteousness were by the works of the law, as performed by Christ, that is, if the imputation of them were our complete righteousness, the death of Christ for us had been in vain, because the righteousness of his life imputed had been a sufficient and complete righteousness for us.

That opinion which makes men perfectly righteous, as righteous as Christ himself, leaves no place for for-

givenness of sins, in persons so made righteous: It evacuates that high and sovereign power of God whereby he forgiveth sins. God, we know, forgave Christ no sin: Why? Because he was perfectly righteous, and "in him was no sin." Therefore, if men be righteous with the same righteousness wherewith Christ was righteous, as completely righteous as he, they have no more sin to be pardoned than he had.

Let us observe yet another demonstration. If the meritorious cause of our justification be imputed to us, (in the sense controverted,) then the effects themselves of this cause may be imputed to us also; and so we may be said to have merited both our own justification and salvation: Thus we are in the midst of Rome, instead of Jerusalem. For if I may be accounted to have wrought that righteousness which is meritorious of my justification, why may I not be conceived as well to have merited my justification? I know not the least difference between meriting and doing that which is meritorious. Nay, farther, if I may be conceived to have wrought that righteousness in Christ whereby I am justified myself, I may be as well conceived to have wrought that righteousness also by which the whole world is justified. For I cannot be conceived to have wrought any other righteousness in Christ than that which Christ himself wrought; and this, we know, is the very same righteousness by which the world is justified.

IX.—REGENERATION.

ANOTHER great work of the Gospel is the changing of men's hearts and dispositions; the turning, as it were, the course and frame of nature upside down within them; the fulfilling of those and such like prophecies in Isaiah, in a spiritual sense, where he saith, that "in the wilderness waters shall break out, and streams in the desert; that the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; that in the habitations of dragons," which commonly are the hottest, sandy, and most barren places, "there should be grass with reeds and rushes." And again: "I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, the pine, and the box tree together." And in another place, "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree," &c. Such a kind of change as these doth the Gospel make in the natures, and spirits, and hearts of men. When it first comes unto them, it finds them like so many wildernesses and deserts, full of thorns and briars, but no fruit-bearing, useful, or pleasant tree growing in them; full of distempers, lusts, vile affections, corruptions, and inclinations unto evil, as covetousness, uncleanness, pride, deceit, cruelty, &c.; but no holy or righteous affection at all; but the Gospel comes, and makes waters to break out in these deserts, makes the fir tree and the myrtle tree to grow instead of thorns and briars; that is, it pours the grace of God, and sheds the influences of heaven, upon the souls of men; by means whereof, instead of those distempers, and base affections of pride, covetousness, uncleanness, &c., there spring up holy affections and heavenly dispositions, as of love, meekness, purity, chastity, humility, liberality, &c.,—these take place in men, and fill the soul.

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” that thou and every man knows. And dost thou not know, how a man shall be born again of the Spirit? It is even as it is with those that be born of the flesh, they partake of the same nature, and receive the impressions of the flesh; so it is with the Spirit, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit; such as is the nature of the Spirit of God, such also is that which is born or begotten of it; that is, those principles, whatsoever they are that he who is born of the Spirit doth receive, by means of the Spirit of God, must answer and be like unto those which the Spirit of God himself hath, of which he is born or begotten. Now, you know that the Spirit of God is full of the love of God, and full of zeal for God, and set upon the magnifying of him in the world, and promoting his interest in the hearts of the sons and daughters of men. Now, he that is born of the Spirit must needs act and be inclined after the same manner; he will be zealous for God, bestirring himself in his way, as the Spirit of God doth in his way.

“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” The work of regeneration is here plainly, and in expressness of words, attributed to the Holy Ghost, or Spirit of God. We are said to be saved by “the washing of regeneration, and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost;” and be “washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God.” The parts, likewise, of regeneration, the several graces, or holy dispositions, of which the body of regeneration is made up, are attributed to the Holy Ghost. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering,” &c. From the scripture then propounded, with the rest consorting, as ye have heard, with it, I reason thus: If the work of regeneration be the appropriate work of God; appropriate, I mean, so that it cannot be effected by any

mere creature without him ; then must the Holy Ghost, to whom this work is attributed, needs be God. But such is the work of regeneration. *Ergo*. This latter proposition, I suppose, will not be denied ; because evident it is, both from the Scriptures, and from the consideration of the nature of the work itself, which we call regeneration, that it is not, cannot be, effected without the interposure of the hand and power of God. True it is, God may use creature instruments about the raising and production of it, as he commonly useth men, his ministers, and their gifts, together with his word, I mean his written word ; but yet all these without his interposure will not do the deed, will not reach the blessed effect of regeneration. The Scripture is very express and clear in this : “ I have planted,” saith Paul, “ and Apollo watered, but God gave the increase : So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.” When he saith, “ that neither is he that planteth nor he that watereth anything,” he speaks not absolutely, as if their agency in the business were simply nothing ; for he had said of himself and Apollo, a little before, that they were “ ministers by whom they believed ;” but he speaks this comparatively, meaning, that that which they did in the work of their conversion to the faith was nothing in comparison of that which God did in it. God could have effected it, if he had so pleased, without them ; but all that they did, or were in a capacity of doing, was nothing unless his hand had been with them. Elsewhere, those that are regenerate, or born again, are said to be born of God : “ Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.” And again : “ Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world,” &c. So that evident it is, that regeneration is a work which is appropriate unto God, and cannot take place without him.

If the operation or efficacy of the Holy Ghost, in and about the work of regeneration, were subordinate, or instrumental, we could not be said to be begotten or born again of the Spirit, but only, by or through the Spirit; as we are not said, nor can in any tolerable propriety of speech be said, to be begotten of men, as of the ministers of God, though they be instrumental in our regeneration; but only by men, according to the apostle's expression: "Who is Paul, who is Apollo, but ministers BY whom ye believed?" So as the word of God is instrumental or subordinate to our regeneration, we are said to be begotten by it, "being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by or through the word of the living God." And, elsewhere, God is said to "have begotten us with, or through, the word of truth."

In respect to the frequent repetition of regeneration, there is no inconvenience in it, nothing unworthy of God or of Christ. When the Scripture speaks of the impossibility of renewing some by repentance, if they fall away, it evidently supposeth that there is such a thing as being renewed again by repentance. And what is regeneration, but a renewing again by repentance? And if men may be twice spiritually dead; why may they not live twice, or twice receive the life of grace opposite thereto? As it is agreeable to the righteousness and holiness of God, to denounce the sentence of exclusion from his kingdom against men, whoever they be, when they turn adulterers, &c., and so to leave them no ground to expect salvation by Jesus Christ, but only on their repentance; so it is no less agreeable to the mercy, patience, and goodness of God, to promise to backsliding sinners, a re-enjoyment of his favour and love, which is in Christ Jesus, on condition of their renewing again by repentance; and to exhibit unto them accordingly the full fruits thereof, in the salvation of their souls, if they persevere in holy obedience to the end. As for the term "regene-

ration," according to the grammatical and proper signification of the word, it implies a re-iteration or repetition of some generation or other. It cannot imply a repetition of natural generation; the sense of Nicodemus, in this point, was orthodox, who judged it impossible: Therefore, it must imply a repetition of a spiritual generation. That regeneration which the Scripture appropriates to those who are come to years of discretion, who generally have degenerated from the innocency of their childhood, and corrupted themselves with the principles and ways of the world, relates to the spiritual condition of men, in respect of their natural generation and birth; in which they are, if not absolutely, yet comparatively, innocent, harmless, free from pride, malice, &c., and in respect of these qualifications, in grace and favour with God, on account of the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ for them; as we shall, in a proper place, prove more at large. In the mean time, what we now offer as most probable, touching regeneration, our Saviour includes in the following passage: "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be CONVERTED, AND BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven;" that is, unless ye recover that state or interest in the love and favour of God, which you are in danger of losing by your ambition, by returning to such a humility and simplicity, wherein, whilst you were children, you were accepted of him, "ye shall not enter," &c. Nothing that hath now been said supposes children to be born without original sin; it only supposes, that that sin which is in children is taken away by the death of Christ, so that they are, whilst children, in the favour of God through Christ, notwithstanding that sin which is in them.

X.—THE HOLY SPIRIT.

MANY of you that are present, I suppose, know that there is an antitrinitarian spirit that hath broken prison of late, and gotten abroad amongst us, very busy in making proselytes: And as in the days of old this spirit laboured to fill the world with this doctrine,—that only one of the three, which John saith, “are one;” namely, he that is known unto us by the name of the Father, is truly God; and that the other two, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, or the Spirit, are but the Father’s creatures, receiving, though very excellent, yet only finite and limited, being from him.

We only intend at present to plead the cause of Him, whom we, with the ancient Christians, call the third Person in the Trinity, or the Holy Ghost; and briefly from the Scriptures to demonstrate him to be an infinite, an uncreated Spirit, and truly God. Amongst very many passages, as well in the Old as in the New Testament, which with greatest evidence demonstrate the Holy Ghost to be God, we shall only insist upon some few, which we judge to be most clear and convincing. “Jehovah,” translated LORD, speaketh thus to Moses, “Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.” From hence it appears, that it is only proper for Jehovah, or him that is God, to be in the mouth of the prophets, and to teach them what to say. Add hereunto, that which we have, Numbers xii. 6: “And he said, Hear now my words, If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord,” or, I Jehovah, “will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.” Now, most evident it is from hence, that he who spake by the prophets, and other holy men of God, as the apostles, was true Jehovah, true God.

Now, the Lord Christ himself affirmeth, that it is the

Spirit of God, or the Holy Ghost, that thus speaketh in men, "Take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaketh in you." Therefore, now, if it was God that spake by the prophets then, and is interpreted by Christ to be the Holy Ghost, then Jehovah, or the Lord in the Old Testament, is the Spirit, or the Holy Ghost in the New. And the apostle Peter expressly affirmeth that it was "the Spirit of Christ that spake in the prophets." And he saith, that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Thus David also, a little before his departure, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue: The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me." And so, Ezekiel ii. 2: "And the Spirit entered into me when he spake unto me." So that evident it is from these scriptures, diligently compared and laid together, that the Holy Ghost, who is from place to place said to have spoke unto the prophets, and holy men of God, was none other but Jehovah, God himself.

If it be proved, and granted, that the Holy Ghost, so called, in the New Testament may be the same with Jehovah in the Old, this reacheth so far, at least, as to abate the confidence of that opinion which denieth them to be the same, or that the Holy Ghost is truly God. For if it be true, that the Holy Ghost may be Jehovah, or true God, then is not the contrary demonstrable by any argument or proof whatsoever, namely, that he is not God. For that which is demonstrably so or so, such or such, there is no possibility that it should be altered, or not so or such as it is demonstrated to be. So that though it should be granted that the exception made against the proofs insisted upon to prove the Holy Ghost to be God, doth so far take off the validity of them that they do not conclude the affirmative, namely, that the Holy Ghost is God; yet do they remain in so much strength, this exception

notwithstanding, as to conclude that he may be God ; and, consequently, that the negative, which saith he is not God, may be false.

Thus, He which the Old Testament styles "Jehovah," God, which is a general name common to all the three subsisting in the Divine Nature or Essence ; the New Testament, speaking of him, terms him "the Holy Ghost," which is the name appropriate to the third person there subsisting. And if we shall suppose that the Old Testament ascribes such things plainly, expressly, and without parable, unto Jehovah, or God himself, which the New Testament ascribes unto such a creature which no man knows what to make of him, nor what kind of creature he is,—for such must the Holy Ghost needs be supposed to be, if we make a creature of him,—it is a plain case, that the Old Testament shall be light where the New is dark, and what the Old speaks plainly the New shall speak obscurely ; which is contrary, as hath been said, to the nature of it, and the counsel of God in it.

"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went straight-way out of the water ; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending, and lighting on him ; and, lo, a voice from heaven," &c. In Mark it is said, that he saw the heavens "rent or cloven, and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him." Luke also mentioneth the opening of the heavens, and the coming down of the Holy Ghost "in a bodily shape like a dove upon him." From these passages compared together, the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, who is said to have come down upon Christ, upon his being baptized, may be clearly evinced.

The opening, renting, or cleaving of the heavens, expressly mentioned in all these places, plainly proves the Holy Ghost, that is said to have come down upon Christ, to be no creature, no created angel, but true God. Let the Scriptures be searched from first to last,

we shall nowhere find the rending, cleaving, opening, or bowing of the heavens to be mentioned upon occasion of any created angel coming down, but very frequently upon any solemn or more than ordinary appearance or coming down of God himself unto men.

This Spirit is not only said to have descended or come down upon Christ, but also, as we heard from John, to have continued or remained on him. Now, no created angel whatsoever is said, or reasonably can be said, to remain upon him. Created angels are said to minister unto him, to stand by him, to ascend and descend upon him, are commanded to worship him, &c. ; but are nowhere said to remain on him.

When the evangelists report, that Christ, soon after his baptism, "was led of the Spirit to be tempted of the devil in the wilderness," they speak, doubtless, of the same Spirit which came down from heaven upon him immediately upon his baptizing. Now, it is marvellous, improbable, at least, that He, whom all the angels of God are straitly commanded to worship, should be acted and led by one of them into the wilderness, and this for such an end and purpose as to be tempted by the devil.

If we look throughout the Scriptures, we shall not find any angel that ever appeared unto men in any other form, likeness, or shape of any other creature but only of a man ; whereas we read of appearances of God himself in the forms of several other creatures besides men.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Concerning this place I suppose these two things :—

1. It is spoken of that baptism which is unto remission of sins, that is, which was given and appointed by God to secure or seal unto men the forgiveness of their

sins upon their repentance, whether they have already repented or no.

2. That He, into whose name any person is baptized with such a baptism as this, a baptism of this import, must be in a capacity of forgiving sins upon repentance.

These two things supposed, I argue thus: If the Holy Ghost be such a person, in whose name, together with the name of the Father, and of the Son, it is meet for men to be baptized, then is He truly God: But such a person He is, &c. This latter proposition is unquestionable from the words of the scripture before us; for doubtless the Lord Christ would not have commanded his apostles to baptize in his name, were he not a person meet in whose name baptism should be administered. The other proposition cannot reasonably be denied neither; because He, in whose name it is any ways meet for a person to be baptized, for the remission of sins upon repentance, must in reason be in a full capacity to give such a remission, and this not ministerially or declaratively only, but originally and authoritatively. For, questionless, it is the appropriate privilege or prerogative of God thus to forgive sins; it being He against whom all sin is committed, and to whom men become debtors by sinning. And as there is no reason or equity in it, that one man should have power to forgive another man's debt, especially that the inferior should have power to remit that which is due to the superior: So is there much less reason to conceive that any mere creature whatsoever hath power to forgive another creature what it oweth unto God.

It is not here said "names," but "name:" "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" which likewise implies, that all the three here mentioned have but one and the same name, that is, one and the same power and authority amongst them.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost,

whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." And: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." The very name or title, "the Comforter," or, as some, "the Advocate," here given to the Holy Ghost, is no light argument that he is truly God. The office or work of comforting is here in special manner attributed to the Holy Ghost, where he is called "the Comforter." This implies, that, how many ministerial or subordinate comforters soever there are, whether angels or men, yet there is one supreme, who doth oversee, order, and direct the whole negotiation of comforting all the world over; who issues forth commissions unto, and furnisheth with abilities and means for, the work, all those that are employed in a ministerial way about it. Now, he that is capable of such a high and excellent dignity as this, that is able to stand under the weight of such an important affair, which at one and the same time is to be expedited and put in execution in all the four winds of the heaven, in places without number, and these very far distant one from another, and to provide that the work should be done regularly and effectually in all these places at once, must in reason, upon a diligent consideration of the business, be judged to be greater than any creature, to have an arm far more outstretched than any angel in heaven; therefore, certainly our Saviour's Paraclete. The Comforter here said to be the Holy Ghost must needs be greater than a finite angel, and, consequently, God himself, even the most high God.

Our Saviour undertakes for the Holy Ghost, that when he comes he shall teach his disciples "all truth." To be able to teach "all truth," is a royalty too rich to be vested in any creature; it is most worthy God him-

self, and meet only for him. The angels learn many things from the church, and from the ministry and dispensation of the Gospel there. And the apostle Paul himself professeth of himself, and the rest of his fellow-apostles, who knew more than all the world besides of the mystery of Christ and of God, that they knew but in part: Therefore, no angel was in a capacity to teach them all things, whenas they themselves were in a condition to learn some things of them.

He that shall be able to teach all that was necessary for the apostles to know for the discharge of their great office, must be supposed to know all the heights and depths of the Scriptures, all things that are contained and comprehended there; for, doubtless, there is nothing in the word of God but what was fitting and necessary for the apostles to know and understand: As, namely, the fitting and applying of all the figures, shadows, and ceremonies under the law, to and with the Gospel; and so, likewise, to know and understand all obscure prophecies; for, otherwise, they might have been foiled and entangled by their adversaries, which would have been matter of prejudice to them in the fulfilling of their office. Now, then, to be able to do this certainly, doth prove sufficiently that he must needs be God. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him?" It is the spirit within a man who knoweth all the motions of the heart, all the purposes, counsels, hopes, sorrows, &c. No man knows all these things but the spirit of a man which is within him, which is intimos to him, and, upon the matter, himself: Even so, after the same manner we may say, "No man knows the things of God but the Spirit of God:" "The Spirit of God searcheth the deep things of God." As the spirit of a man is privy to the most secret things of a man, even so the Spirit of God is privy to the secrets of God: So there is no man, and, consequently, no spirit

besides, no creature, no angel, though never so great and near unto God in point of office and ministry, that is able to search the deep things of God, but only the Spirit of God, which is intimately acquainted with the deep things of God.

He that was able to bring to the apostles' remembrance whatsoever Christ had said unto them, must needs be God, because he must know their hearts, and their thoughts, and what of themselves they did remember without him, and withal to know what was worn or blotted out of their memories. For, I suppose, the meaning is not, that when the Spirit comes he should be a remembrancer unto them of such things which they remembered already; and therefore it supposes that the Holy Ghost, of whom it is said he should remember them of all things that Christ had formerly spoken unto them, did know the state of their minds and inward parts, and that he knew what things they had or did remember, and what things they had forgotten and lost, and accordingly should supply them: Which is another consideration that doth argue that certainly this Spirit of God, this same great remembrancer of the apostles, can be no other but God.

“And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.” When Christ, breathing upon his disciples, said unto them, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” is it tolerable to imagine that his meaning should be, “Receive ye an angel, or the supreme angel?” That by “the Holy Ghost” here he doth not, cannot, mean the gifts of the Holy Ghost, so called, but the gift of the Holy Ghost himself, appears from the nature of the symbol, or outward sign, which Christ useth in communicating or giving the Holy Ghost unto them, namely, that inflation or breathing upon them. The

Holy Ghost himself is elsewhere compared unto the wind, which is a kind of breathing, or moving of the air; and fitly so may be, partly, because his manner of proceeding from the Father and the Son is by way of spiration or breathing, that is, the ineffable and inexplicable manner of his proceeding amongst all created things, or things intelligible unto men, is best resembled by, or comes nearest unto, a spiration or breathing; partly also, because as the original or first cause, and so likewise that which becomes of the wind, or that which is done by the wind, is very secret unto men: So the first spring or original of the Spirit's entering or coming into men, as, likewise, the end which the Spirit makes with men, into whom he cometh, are great secrets, hidden mysteries unto the generality of men; very hard and difficult, and of an abstruse definition and demonstration. This our Saviour describes by the name of the wind. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." It is very likely that God made this same material world in such a shape as he hath now done, and such and such creatures, as now are made; and so, such laws for these creatures to act and move by, and furnished and endued them with such properties and qualities as now he hath done; that so there might be fit resemblances to train and nurture up the minds, understandings, and reasons of men in the knowledge and apprehension of the mysteries of Christ, and the great things of eternity. And I make no question but that God in nature hath contrived and ordered the matter so with that creature which we call the "wind," that it poseth and troubles all the philosophers, that, though they hear the sound of it, yet not any one of them can give an account of it, what it should be, and whence it should come, and, when once it is up in motion,

why it should fall. Nay, God hath so ordered the original of the wind, and things appertaining to it, at least, to the understandings of men, that they should not be able to give so steady an account of the rising and falling of it, as they are to do of the rising and setting of the sun; that so there might be a kind of rising advantage administered unto men to conceive the better of the Holy Ghost, or Spirit of God, and of his transactions and manner in doing matters with the creatures. So that now we see the Holy Ghost himself is resembled with the wind, and very aptly so may be; but the gifts of the Holy Ghost neither are in Scripture, nor, with any commodiousness of resemblance, can be resembled by breathing, or by wind; therefore, by "the Holy Ghost," in the place in hand, cannot be meant the gifts of the Holy Ghost, but the person of the Holy Ghost himself.

The Scripture seldom hath any occasion to mention or speak of the Holy Ghost, but there is somewhat or other near at hand which bewrayeth him to be, that which indeed he is, God blessed for ever.

We might further argue and prove the Deity of the Holy Ghost from Acts v: "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back," &c. That which he calls "lying to the Holy Ghost" in this verse, he calls "lying unto God" in the next: "Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." And he expostulateth with Sapphira, his wife: "Why have ye agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?" Now, to speak an untruth unto persons, in whom there was so manifest and great a presence of the Holy Ghost, as was in Peter, and the rest of the apostles, was more properly a tempting him; namely, whether he were omnipotent or no, and could tell when or whether men spake untruth or not; and, again, whether he were so severe

to discover it in case he knew it, &c.; in these respects, I say, to lie unto the Holy Ghost is more properly a tempting him, than to pretend a motion from the Holy Ghost which was not from him. Besides, it no ways appears, that either Ananias or Sapphira did, in our adversaries' sense, counterfeit the Holy Ghost, or pretend that what they did, in denying they sold their possession for so much, they did it by motion from the Holy Ghost; neither is there the least probability of such a thing.

The last scripture we shall insist upon assertively to prove the Holy Ghost to be God, shall be, "Above stood the seraphims, each one had six wings, &c. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." It is evident, 1. That he whom the angels worshipped was the Lord of hosts, and, consequently, the true, yea, the most high, God. And, 2. That it was the same Lord of hosts, or the most high God, who put the words mentioned into the mouth of the prophet, saying to him, "Go tell this people," &c. Now, that he that put the words of this prophecy into the mouth of Isaiah was the Holy Ghost, and, consequently, that the Holy Ghost is the Lord of hosts, and he that was worshipped by the angels, is as evident as evidence itself can make it; and this by the unquestionable testimony of the apostle Paul: "And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear and not understand, and seeing ye shall see and not perceive. For the heart of this people is waxed gross," &c. What can be more plain than that he who was worshipped by the seraphims, and is termed "the Lord of hosts" by Isaiah, is by the apostle Paul's interpretation the Holy Ghost? And if he was worshipped by

the angels, certainly he was no angel, no created angel himself, but truly God.

John prays for mercy and peace for the seven churches of Asia, not only from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ, but also from the Holy Ghost, signified by the seven Spirits before the throne of the Father for the multiplicity of his distributions and gifts given unto men.

It hath been manifest unto us by the Scripture, that the greater and more honourable agent God shall send unto men to persuade them unto godliness, to transact affairs of any such kind or import with them, especially the greatness of this agent being made known and apprehended by men, he is so much the more likely to prevail; men being naturally more inclined and disposed to mind and consider what is spoken unto them by persons of eminency and greatest worth, than what is spoken by those of an inferior line. Now, then, whether he that is really, naturally, and substantially God be greater in wisdom, worth, and dignity than a creature, take it where the glory of creation shineth with the greatest brightness, is, I presume, no man's question; every man, without any hesitancy or debate in himself, or doubtfulness of disputation, subscribing the pre-eminence of the Divine Being, in all manner of perfection of dignity and worth, above the creature. If it be thus, then it is a clear case, that that opinion or doctrine which affirmeth the Holy Ghost, sent by God the Father abroad into the world unto and into the hearts and consciences of men, to negotiate with them about the great business of godliness, to be truly and substantially God, equal with God the Father who sendeth him,—is a doctrine of a far richer and of a more glorious tendency, hath ten times more spirit and life in it to promote and carry on the cause and interest of godliness in the world, than the contrary doctrine hath; I

mean, that which denieth the Holy Ghost to be God, and affirmeth him to be a creature only.

The work which the Spirit hath to do for the saints is not in heaven since the ascension of Christ into heaven; heaven is not the stage or theatre where the Holy Ghost acteth and bestirs himself on the behalf of the saints; but now he is come down upon the earth, and his great business which he hath to do lieth in the earth, even with the hearts, minds, understandings, and wills of men, stirring and moving there.

The Holy Ghost doth intercede with groans, because he doth fill the saints with his wisdom and power, and so putteth them into a posture to conceive inward groans, and secret motions and desires in the soul, which the creature, indeed, is not able to utter, or come to God withal in his lips: The creature cannot utter itself, when the heart is full of the Spirit of God; yet such persons are acted beyond their own ability, and very well may be, because the Spirit is directing, guiding, and strengthening unto this work. And this is the property of an intercessor.

How, and by what means, may we engage or prevail with the Holy Ghost to act with us, and to assist us in such occasions of our spiritual concerments as have been mentioned?

To this I answer, This may and ought to be done by disclaiming, when we go about any thing, any spiritual duty or service, our own strength and sufficiency, as to the performance of it in an holy and acceptable manner, as of ourselves without the presence and assistance of God; I say, when men and women shall present themselves in all their works and services as weak and impotent, unless they be endued with strength from on high; this is one special strain that doth marvellously comport with the Spirit, and that which is in the first place to be done by us, if we

desire to do any thing, if we desire his help and assistance at any time. Now, to present ourselves altogether weak, without some such presence and assistance we speak of, this is that which will awaken us to do things by the Spirit; for the way to do things by the Spirit is, not to forbear the doing of things or duties ourselves, or not to perform any services; I say, it is not to forbear the doing of things until we find the Spirit of grace, and feel it to work upon us; but to go about that which is our duty to do, in the season of it, with a serious and humble acknowledgment and deep sense of our own inability for this work we are about. "Arise," saith David to his son Solomon, "therefore, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee;" he doth not say, "Stay until the Lord doth come unto thee," but, "Arise and be doing." So that this is the first thing to be done; we must lay all thoughts of confidence aside, of any sufficiency as of ourselves.

We must turn ourselves towards the Holy Ghost with the like serious, and thorough, and unfeigned acknowledgment of a sufficiency in him; that strength which we disclaimed in ourselves we must ascribe unto him. We know that the Lord Christ still requireth this acknowledgment from those who obtain any great request as to any great matters: "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" saith he to the blind men that came to him to be healed. So again: "If thou canst believe, all these things are possible," &c. The father of the child answered, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief." So, then, here is another thing whereby to interest the Holy Ghost in what we go about; namely, that we do acknowledge a sufficiency in the Holy Ghost.

We must acknowledge a readiness, and willingness, and a gracious inclinableness in the Holy Ghost to help and assist us in those things wherein it is any ways meet for him to interpose on our behalf. He

who doth unfeignedly acknowledge his own weakness, and doth address himself unto him, shall be sure to find his assistance: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities," &c. There is a very rich and compassionate inclination in the Holy Ghost towards the saints, in respect of the great infirmities which he discerneth in them, to assist, stand by, and relieve them in their holy endeavours; to help them to perform things in an holy and humble manner upon terms of acceptance.

You must pray unto God, or unto the Spirit of God; for prayer itself is a means which we are to make use of, in order to our being filled with the Spirit. We do here mention it as a part of that method which should be observed by him who is engaged in the drawing in of the Spirit, in order to a being acted by him. Now, then, if this be agreeable to the will of God, namely, that men should pray for the gift of the Spirit, and that in the lowest measure; then there is no question to be made, but that prayer is as profitable means to effect it in the highest, in the one as well as the other; and that there is no more unlawfulness in the one than in the other.

Another means whereby we may come to be filled with the Spirit of God, is, to sow unto the Spirit. This denoteth fruitfulness in good works, especially in such good works wherein more particularly the glorious goodness and power, &c., of the Spirit may be discovered unto the world; and when men are addicted unto such ways and such works which have a proper and clear tendency to discover the goodness, bounty, power, and excellency, &c., of the Spirit of God; then they may be said to sow unto the Spirit; especially when they do these things with an intention to commend his goodness and power unto the world.

Another means whereby the temple of your souls may be filled with the glory of the Spirit of God, is, to

be "led by the Spirit." You know there are some horses will not be led, but a man must pull and haul them after him ; but there are other horses that are obedient and tractable in your hand ; so where there is a tractableness and teachableness in men, that the Spirit of God leadeth them, as it were, by the hand this way and that way, when men are easy to be taught by him, —this is another ready and pregnant means whereby to be filled with the Spirit. My brethren, you may be said to be led by the Spirit when you go along with him, or are willing to go that way wherein he would lead you by every good motion. The Spirit doth take, as it were, every man and woman by the hand, and doth upon the matter desire them to be willing to be led. Now, when men and women are willing to accept of the Spirit of God for their leader and guider in such ways and courses as he doth like to lead them unto, these are they that are led by the Spirit of God. It is no great difficulty, no great master-piece, to know when and in what cases we are led by the Spirit of God, and when not : For if we know but so much as to be able to distinguish between good and evil ; if we can but distinguish such motions that be good from those that be evil ; we may know by this alone when we are led by the Spirit of God, and when not ; for most certain it is, that all motions to good, which are either mediate or immediate, are from the Spirit of God ; therefore, if it be a good motion, it is easy to know what parent it hath, namely, God.

It is not like, the Spirit will advance to the filling of the soul with his presence so long as lust remains in heart and strength in men ; for this is to be remembered, and taken along by way of caution at this turn, that though there be a contrariety in all the lusts of the flesh unto the Spirit, yet all kinds or degrees of these lustings are not so, or upon such terms, repugnant and contrary to the Spirit and his growth in men, but that

this may proceed and go forward, some of them notwithstanding. For as it is in the comings-in of the tide and flowings of the waters, whilst the waters are increasing, and the banks filling, there are some smaller refluxes or fallings back of the water, which are presently recovered, and this with advantage, by the next reflux and bearing up of the tide, so that the tide holdeth on its way, maketh good its course, until it cometh to its height and fulness, these lesser refluxes notwithstanding: In like manner, though there be at times some lesser yieldings and givings-back of the Spirit in the soul, meeting with the current or stream of the flesh, yet he may be brought on again, *toties quoties*, and that with power, to the overbearing and breaking the motions and current of the flesh, and so keep still upon the advance, and be filling of his channels and banks daily.

The next thing mentioned, which must needs satisfy any man of his atonement with God, is the direct and immediate testimony of the Spirit of God himself in man, testifying together with a man's own spirit,—that is, with his heart, soul, and conscience,—that this atonement is made, and he accepted by God; this is the apostle's express doctrine: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." "The Spirit itself," or the Spirit himself: The apostle, by this emphatical expression, "the Spirit himself," seemeth to imply, that the thing or act which he speaketh of is of a most worthy nature and import, of a sacred consequence, and such as well becometh him who is the Agent or Actor of it, the Spirit of God himself. But what is that worthy thing which the apostle here attributes to so great an agent as the Spirit of God? It is a witnessing with our spirits "that we are the children of God;" which signifies as much, as that our atonement is made, and that we are at peace with him.

The Spirit of God is famously known throughout the Scriptures, by the great attribute of holiness; he is more frequently termed "the Holy Spirit," than spoken of under any other name, or expressed by any other character whatsoever. Without any moving or obliging cause whatsoever from without, or on man's part, he is pleased to entreat him sweetly and lovingly, and to come unto him, as it were, from heaven, to visit him, to converse with the children of men in the secret of their hearts and souls, to instruct and teach them the things of their eternal peace, to admonish and excite them to the embracing and prosecuting of them, yea, and to follow them with his promise to look after them, and assist them. And these things he doeth to all men without exception, to a certain degree, when they first come, by the use of their judgments and understandings, and by the putting-forth of their consciences, to be capable of them; yea, and doth increase, and advance these his gracious workings in them, until either by a long-continued neglect of his presence with them, or by some higher hand of sin and wickedness practised in opposition to such gracious motions and transactions of his within them, they weary him, and quench those gracious operations which his presence affordeth unto them, and bring it so to pass, that he taketh no pleasure or delight in them. It is, therefore, the duty of all Christians "to be filled with the Spirit;" because if they be not filled, or do not endeavour to be filled, with the Spirit of God, they will certainly be filled with some one or other worse spirit, which will lead them aside into the ways of sin and vanity, and of darkness and death.

There is an eminent and clear necessity for the interposure of the Spirit of God, both to enable and make us willing, to nurture and keep under the flesh, that it moves orderly and regularly, so as not to be troublesome unto us with craving any thing that is sinful and

inordinate, or which intrencheth upon the glory of God, and honour of the great Lawgiver, Jesus Christ ; or at least to make us resolute and peremptory to reject with indignation all dishonourable and unseemly motions that it shall make unto us, and to hearken unto it in nothing, in our condescension whereunto any of our great interests or spiritual concernments are like to suffer in the least. Even this is an high and holy privilege, and not to be obtained or enjoyed by men without the high exertions and workings of the Spirit of God in them ; and by the careful and constant exercise and use hereof, we spin such an even and strong thread of obedience to the commands of God, whereby we shall be able to draw the world unto him.

“ Quench not the Spirit,” carrieth in it some such affirmative and commanding precept as this : “ See that you be prudently industrious, and careful, with all diligence, to nourish and advance the life and vigour of the Spirit of God within you ; entertain him with all worthy and honourable respects in your souls, let him have all the obedience that he desireth or requireth of you ; by this means you shall be so far from quenching him in his motions and operations, that he will burn like a bright flame of heavenly fire within you, and work wonderfully in your souls.”

The Spirit, through the ungrateful, disobedient, and unworthy behaviour of men towards him, is said “ to be grieved,” when by such means men have wrought him, if we may so speak, to the like listlessness of acting, and putting forth the excellency of his power in their hearts and souls as formerly he did, and doth sometime in others. On the other hand, a man is never in a right posture for action, or for the doing of any thing that is of any good or great concernment unto others, but when he enjoyeth himself upon the highest and richest terms of satisfaction and contentment ; so then, the Spirit of God is said “ to be

grieved" by men, when they shall deal so unkindly with or by him, as to reject and neglect his heavenly motions and inspirations, by giving over such and such ways of honour, Christian excellency, and worth, which they had sometime lift up their hearts and hands unto, and walked with delight in them: When men, I say, shall cease to go on in such ways as these, and prefer the ignoble and base motions of the flesh, or of the world, before those that come from him, and which are all honourable and heavenly; such a demeanour of men towards the Spirit of God grieveth him; that is, maketh him listless unto action, and causeth him to abate, and to fall lower in his operations, and to give out himself more faintly than before: Whereas he had been active, and ever and anon stirring and provoking them, and this with efficacy and power, unto this and that good way and work; now he withdraweth by degrees, and declineth these motions and operations, upon which the soul of man becomes listless and dull to any thing of a spiritual concernment; like a ship becalmed on the seas, whose sails a little before were filled with fresh and pleasant gales of wind, carrying her amain to her desired port.

"To be fervent in spirit," especially in the service of God or of Christ, requires a great presence or fulness of the Spirit of God in a man; for the spirit of a man, acted only by itself, or by its own strength, wisdom, or goodness, will never rise so high in any true and real service of God as "fervency of spirit" doth import. Neither will an ordinary presence or assistance of the Spirit of God himself carry the heart of a man up unto any such pitch of devotion; he that will have an ear to hearken to the voice of this exhortation, of "being fervent in spirit," in the service of the Lord, must find out a way how to engage and how to comport with the Spirit of God, that he may vouchsafe unto him a measure of his presence heaped up, to make him capable of

so great and worthy an undertaking. Yea, men, I suppose, cannot "be fervent in spirit" in doing any thing which they call, or judge to be, the service of God, although it be a service of their own fancy, or genius, or of some worse deity, unless they be acted therein by a spirit more active than their own.

These kind of corruptions, and distempers, bitterness, and malice, &c., are contrary to the Spirit of grace, and those gracious dispositions and inclinations of his to do good, and to show kindness and love where there is no merit; yea, even unto those men who have rather merited sorrow and hard measure from him; but much more when men, without any provocations, shall be in bitterness of spirit, and full of wrath and anger, and shall entertain and admit malice, evil thoughts, and intentions of hardness, cruelty, and blood into their hearts, this being so extremely contrary to that gracious and sweet property of the Spirit of God, in reason must needs be signally obstructive unto him in his way of filling men with himself.

When the Holy Ghost shall come unto men and offer them life, and shall be ready to lead them into the faith, knowledge, and love of God; when he shall talk and discourse with men and women about heavenly things, and they answer him with their carnal and their sensual things; when he discourseth unto them of faith and holiness, and the things of their eternal peace and blessedness, and they shall have ears only to hear of silver, and gold, and wealth, and grandeur, and power, and honour, and the like; certainly, if lusts of this nature be made much of, and harboured in the soul of a man, there can be no expectation that ever the Spirit of God should take pleasure or delight to put forth or to give out himself in his glory in such a soul.

Though it may be somewhat difficult for persons of a lower growth in Christianity, who have not their senses much exercised in discerning good and evil, and

withal have only some more faint and soft workings of the Spirit, clearly to discern the motions of the Spirit of God within them, from the movings or workings of their own hearts and spirits; yet is the discovery we speak of no such matter of difficulty unto Christians of a more raised stature and pitch, in whom the Spirit of God much delighteth, and acteth at a higher and more excellent rate. Towards the beginning of a feverish distemper in the body, it may be not so easy to determine whether the working and beating of the pulse be from nature, or from the distemper; but when the distemper hath prevailed to any considerable degree, the dijudication is obvious. Men and women that have suffered and given up themselves, especially for some good space of time, to be "led by the Spirit of God," cannot lightly be so unacquainted with their Leader, as not to be able to know whether it be he that taketh them by the hand, or some other guide; especially if attempting to lead them in ways contrary unto those wherein they have been familiarly accustomed to be led by the Spirit.

The animations, motions, and encouragements of the Spirit of God in men are, in many cases, I might say in most, and particularly in such as that of the apostle now under consideration, clearly enough discernible from those which proceed from any other principle or author. There is no other difficulty to distinguish between the motions of the Holy Ghost within us, and the motions of our own spirits, than there is of distinguishing between the lawfulness and expediency, and the unlawfulness or in expediency, of an action. For, whensoever any man is stirred up or moved to do that which is lawful and expedient to be done, there is little question to be made but his excitements in this kind are from the Spirit of God within him. The reason is, because, as the apostle James informeth us, "every good giving, and every per-

fect gift, is from above, and from the Father of lights."

"And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." It is evident that our Saviour doth not, in this place, oppose the abiding of the Holy Ghost to his own departure from the souls of men, but to his departure out of the world by death, which was now at hand.

By the abiding of the Comforter with them for ever, he doth not mean his perpetual residence in their hearts, but his constant abiding in the world, in and with the Gospel, and the children thereof, until the consummation and end of it; in respect of which permanency of his Spirit with them and their spiritual posterity, he saith of himself elsewhere, "And lo, I am with you always, to the end of the world." And, to put our Saviour's meaning into the plainest words possible, it was as if he had said to his disciples, "The counsel and purpose of my Father, in sending me into the world, required that I should not stay long in it; and now I am about to return, and so must leave you; but when I am come to my Father, I will intercede for you, and 'he will send you another Comforter,' the Holy Ghost, who shall not visit you as a transient guest; for he shall not be sent to be taken out of the world by death, as I must be, but to make his residence with and amongst you, my friends and faithful ones, for ever." Now, from such an abiding of the Holy Ghost with them as this, cannot be inferred his perpetual abiding with any one person, much less with every one.

This promise must either be made to the apostles, personally considered, or else to the whole body of the church. If the first of these be admitted, then it will not follow, that, because the apostles had the perpetual residency of the Spirit with them, and in them, therefore, every particular believer hath the like; no more

than it will follow that, because the apostles were infallible in their judgments and doctrine, therefore every believer is infallible also. If the latter be admitted, it will not follow, that every true believer must needs have the residence of the Spirit with him for ever. The church may have the residence or the presence of the Spirit of God with her for ever, and yet every present member hereof lose his present interest in him. Yea, that the abiding for ever of the Spirit, in the apostles themselves, was not absolutely promised to them, appears from such passages as the following: "If ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love," &c. "If a man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and will dwell with him."

It hath been noticed before, that the particle "that" doth not always imply the certainty of the thing spoken of, but frequently the intention only of the agent. According to this, those words, "That he may abide with you for ever," do not imply the absolute necessity of his abiding with them for ever, but only that that was the design of him that sent him; and that, if they were not wanting to themselves, they might retain him and enjoy his presence with them for ever. Turn the words what way you please, and you will find that the doctrine of perseverance hath no place in them.

XI.—SANCTIFICATION.

HOLINESS may be described after some such manner as this: It is an honourable impression, property, or quality in the rational nature or being, which disposeth the subject to an absolute and utter separation and abhorrency in affection from whatsoever is sinful, as such;—I mean, so far as it is sinful;—and such ways and actions which proceed from such a principle as this may be called “holy.” We shall not now stand to examine or scan the description, it being not so proper to the business in hand. Holiness in God seems to be that nature, attribute, or property in him which inclines him to move and act in all his ways and dispensations, at the greatest elongation and distance that can be imagined from all unrighteousness whatsoever. In men and angels, it imports such a principle which inclines them to an absolute conformity with God, in his ways and actions. That passage of the psalm,—with many others, where we find righteousness and holiness in conjunction,—“The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works,” gives some testimony to the truth and propriety of the description. We shall not, for the present, lead you any further out of the way, by following it, or by any narrow inquiring into the nature or property of holiness, or how it differs from other graces. It is sufficient, as to the point in hand, to know, that the holiness which the Scriptures strive with so much importunity to engage the world unto, as we shall see presently, is a conformity or likeness unto God, in that attribute or perfection of his nature which inclines him to do all things that he doeth like unto himself, like unto God; that is, not only after the most exact and absolute manner in all points, without the omission or neglect of the least, or least considerable, circumstance, that might add

beauty and perfection to it, but all this, also, with the greatest alienation of mind and affection from doing otherwise.

See how instant the Scriptures are upon the world, with precepts and commands for holiness. "For I am the Lord your God," saith he that speaketh out of them unto the world; "ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy." And again: "For I am the Lord which bringeth you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God; ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy." Injunctions expressed in the future tense of the indicative mood, "Ye shall be holy," &c., are most emphatical and authoritative, importing, not simply the will or desire of the commander, nor simply the duty of the commanded; but also the peremptoriness of the one, and the imminent danger of the other, if neglected. If we should transcribe and argue all the passages, you would clearly see how strong and sore the Scriptures are in their injunctions and commands for holiness upon the world. So that, if the authority and interest of him who seeks to order and umpire the world by the Scriptures can do any thing, men and women shall not be profane or unclean, but holy: These are at work with all their might, and with all their power, to make all holy.

Take we into consideration, also, with what potency, height, and variety of motive, and argument of persuasion, the Scriptures bow and bend themselves; yea, turn themselves this way and that, and every way that lightly can be thought of, to commend the grace and exercise of holiness unto men; to interest the hearts and affections of men and women, in the love, desire, and study of it. There are scarce any of the commands lately pointed unto, which call for holiness, but are attended and guarded with their motives and incitements proper to them.

The Scripture presseth and persuades unto holiness, by this consideration,—that God himself is holy. “Be holy, for I am holy,” saith he that speaketh in the Scriptures, as we heard before from Moses. Now, supposing, for the present, being yet but upon the proof of it, that it is God himself who thus speaketh, of how sovereign an influence must this consideration, that God is holy, needs be upon the hearts and souls of men capable of it, to persuade unto holiness! What! a mortal man, who is by nature but dust and ashes, and by miscarriage a thousand degrees more embased than so, to be like unto God! to have communion with him in so darling an attribute as his holiness! What! he that was descended so low, to ascend thus high! The Heathen themselves, when they studied and set themselves to speak at the highest rate they knew how, in way of honour and commendation, whether of persons, or of actions, usually expressed themselves, by affirming the one to be like unto God, and the other, to render men like unto God.

The Scripture persuades and presseth unto holiness upon this ground, namely, that men and women are brought into a capacity of being holy, by so high a hand of grace and vouchsafement from God as the death of his only-begotten Son. The apostle Peter, having enjoined Christians to “be holy in all manner of conversation, even as he that had called them was holy,” and to “pass the time of their sojourning here in fear,” immediately he subjoins this by way of motive or engagement: “Forasmuch as ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as with silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot,” &c. This, also, is a motive of wonderful importance and power, where it is thoroughly resented, and takes kindly upon

M

the spirit to persuade unto holiness: It supposeth, 1. That it is a privilege, yea, a great prerogative, for men that had been in such a condition of bondage and slavery under sin as they had been, to be so far brought off from those terms of shame and misery, as, if they be willing to enter in by it, to have such an effectual door open unto them, whereby to pass into the glorious liberty of holiness. The angels that are fallen have no part or fellowship in such a privilege as this; the iron gate of the irreversible decree of God is fast shut upon them; they are in no capacity of coming forth out of their dungeon of sin and misery, into the light and blessedness of holiness. And, 2. It asserteth, that this privilege, or capacity for them to become holy, was not procured or bought, not procurable or to be bought, for them, by such mean and contemptible things as silver and gold,—for which yet we know things of greatest worth and consequence, in matters appertaining to this life, may be had,—but “by the precious blood of Jesus Christ,” &c.; implying, that the greatness of the price, by which a privilege, liberty, or commodity in any kind is purchased for a man,—especially by those who are of wisdom and understanding sufficient not to over-purchase, not to “give their silver for that which is not bread,”—is a proportionable engagement upon the man, for whom this purchase is made, to improve this privilege to the uttermost, as well for his benefit and advantage who hath made the purchase for him, as for his own. The price that hath been given to put the world into a capacity of holiness being no less than “the precious blood of Jesus Christ,” that only sacred treasure which either heaven or earth could afford or furnish the Almighty with for such a purchase, duly considered, is an astonishing weight of engagement upon the world to be holy.

The Scriptures call upon the world for holiness by

the great voice of this consideration,—that God, when he was free, hath yet made himself a mighty debtor, a debtor of infinite sums of treasure unto the world, especially by those great and precious promises which he hath given unto it, concerning the life, and glory, and great things of the world to come, the everlasting enjoyment and fruition of himself, and that upon the most desirable terms that it is possible for a creature to enjoy him ; namely, so as that he will become all in all unto it ; that is, not communicate himself by any means or mediation whatsoever, or join any creature whatsoever with himself, to make the blessedness of him that shall enjoy him a compounded blessedness, consisting partly of the benefit received from a creature, partly of what is derived unto it by the Creator ; but will fill the whole capacity of him that shall enjoy him, with nothing but himself ; so that his blessedness shall have no ingredient at all in it to allay or qualify it, but it shall be wholly, purely, and entirely God, all God ; who, as he contains all things whatsoever, by way of eminency, in his essence or in himself,—angels, men, joy, strength, life, peace, glory, and whatsoever is named not in this world only, but in that also which is to come ;—so will he be this “all things,” after a far more excellent, after a far more incomparably excellent, manner to those that shall enjoy him, than the things themselves would be if they were enjoyed by him. This is the last and most complete estate and condition of blessedness, whereunto the creature shall be brought ; and wherein, being once entered and brought into it, he shall abide for eternity. But before his coming or bringing hither, he shall pass through the accomplishment and sweet enjoyment of many other the great and precious promises of God, as of being raised again from the dead, of having his vile body made like unto the glorious body of Christ, of living and reigning with Christ a thousand years, with many other of like

glorious and blessed importance ; all which notwithstanding shall at last run into that immense ocean of blessedness and glory which we speak of, and there be swallowed up, and lose themselves and their names, as the fairest and goodliest rivers do, when once they are fallen into the main sea. But this by the way. But that the Scriptures do, as it were, adjure the world unto holiness, by the "great and precious promises" which God hath made, and wherein he stands engaged unto the sons and daughters of men, is evident : "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God ;" implying, that, however holiness, especially in any considerable eminency or perfection, carries a strong antipathy in it to the corrupt natures and vile dispositions of men ; yet they who have such an advantage over their hearts, such an opportunity to make their corrupt natures turn head upon their vileness and corruption, as the glorious promises of the Gospel afford, ought in reason, and well may, by the improvement of the means before them, raise and work up themselves to an eminent degree and pitch of holiness ; yea, this improvement of the promises we speak of by men, I mean to an excellency of holiness, seems to be one of the main ends or intents, on God's part, why they were given. "Whereby," saith Peter, "are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the Divine nature," &c. It is the richness, the exceeding greatness and preciousness, of the Gospel-promises, which makes them a proportionable and apt means to communicate or impart the "Divine nature," holiness, unto men. If a king should desire to raise a noble and prince-like spirit in a person of low and ordinary birth and breeding, his only way were to adopt him for his son, and to declare him his successor in his throne. When Saul was anointed by the pro-

phet Samuel to be king over Israel, it is said that as he turned himself to go from Samuel, "God gave him another heart," that is, an heart thoughtful and considerative how to rule and act the part of a king; whereas, the heart he had before was but levelled to the occasions and interests of a private man. I conceive that this raised and prince-like heart was not given unto Saul by any miraculous or supernatural inspiration or working from God, but by an ordinary concurrence in the mind and spirit of Saul with that great providence of his towards him, in calling and anointing him to be a king. The consideration hereof striking effectually upon Saul's heart, being now discharged from his attendance upon Samuel, and so more free to take the impression of this great occurrence home, it seems, quite altered the frame and constitution of it, and made it regal. The promises of the Gospel, thoroughly understood, considered, and believed, cannot but fulfil the joy of him that gave them, in making his creature like unto himself, "holy, as he is holy."

The Scriptures are so impatient of being denied what they call for, in this kind, I mean in point of holiness from the world, so unable to bear the world in an averseness hereunto, that they threaten the loss of the sight and face of God, and therein of all joy, and peace, and comfort for evermore, and, consequently, the vengeance of eternal fire, to all those that are profane or unholy. "Follow peace with all men," saith the apostle, in a place formerly cited, "and holiness, without which," that is, without which holiness, not, without which peace, "no man shall see the Lord," that is, shall enjoy him, as the word commonly imports in Scripture, or come where he is, to behold the glory which God hath given him; wherein himself seems to place the great felicity of the saints. This motive is in the hand of the Scripture as a rod of iron, to batter

and break in pieces all that stubbornness and contradiction which is in the natures and hearts of men against holiness.

There are several other motives, by the meditation whereof the Scripture is wont to urge and press hard upon the world for holiness; as sometimes, the consideration of the beauty of it; otherwhile, it holds forth the glory of it, yea, it oft calls it by the name of "glory;" again, sometimes the peace, sometimes the joy, of it are commended unto the world; and all to inflame the hearts of men and women with desires after it. By all which, and especially by those that have been somewhat more largely insisted upon, it fully appears, that the face of the Scriptures is set like an adamant, fully set, to exalt holiness in the world, to make the generation of the sons and daughters of men, a generation of sons and daughters unto God, by being "partakers of the Divine nature, holy, as he is holy."

Consider the examples of persons eminent in holiness, over whose names and memories the Scriptures rejoice so much, and seem to embalm them with honour, on purpose that, being preserved, the world by them might learn to love and follow holiness in all succeeding generations. The stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as also of all the holy prophets and apostles, with many others that are upon Scripture record, speak plainly and without any parable, that the Scripture design is, to make the holiness of these men to propagate in the world, the men themselves being dead. So that the light of this truth shines clearly from all quarters of the Scriptures, and is spread round about us on every side;—that holiness amongst men is one of the great prizes that they run for and contend and strive about with the world.

If it be objected and said: "But may not men by the light of nature, and help of the law of God written

in their hearts, by an improving, refining, and carrying up to a greater height and perfection those natural impressions of the beauty, loveliness, and excellency of virtue in every kind, which are in them, as they may by study and strength of contemplation, attain unto such a frame of heart, as out of which they may very seriously, and with great earnestness of affection and desire, engage themselves in such a design of holiness, as that which hath been represented unto you in the Scriptures? Do not many heathen philosophers, and moral men, as Plato, Aristotle, Plutarch, Seneca, and others, commend virtue,—which they call perfection, in all a man's ways, thoughts, words, and works,—to the heavens, exhorting and persuading all men to it? Why, then, may not the Scriptures proceed from one or more such men as these, and so not from God?" To this I answer three things.

Be it granted that philosophers and some of nature's prime scholars, both for natural and moral knowledge and wisdom, have done that which is ascribed to them in the objection, have recommended virtue and perfection, as they call both the one and the other, unto the world, and have seriously desired and engaged themselves to reduce the world to those terms of moral excellency which they prescribe; yet, if this be supposed and granted concerning men, that they have appeared in the world in such glory as this, have sought to make the world righteous and holy, in their sense, is not the same much more to be presumed and supposed concerning God, namely, that he also hath appeared for the same purpose, and upon terms much more glorious in this kind than they? Will God come short of men in any virtue, in any praise or glory?

Now, then, this being granted and supposed,—that God is studious and careful, as well as men, to nurture and train up the world in things that are excellent,

certainly he hath his means ; that is, his laws, his precepts, his instructions, his encouragements, for such a purpose, and these extant, and to be had in the world, as well as they. If so, then questionless, those means in this kind,—those laws, precepts, instructions, encouragements, that are of the most exact calculation, of greatest efficacy and power amongst all their fellows, for the carrying on and advancement of this great design, I mean of carrying up the world unto perfection,—must needs be looked upon as the means of God, the means of his immediate appointment and designation for the work.

I answer, yet further, that that moral excellency or perfection which the philosophers and learned men of the world have laboured in their writings to promote amongst men, is quite another thing, and of a far inferior nature to that holiness which he who in and by the Scriptures, hath to do with the world labours by them to fill the world withal.

Holiness, which is the Scripture design upon the world, differs from that moral excellency and perfection, so called, wherewith philosophers were desirous to plant the world, several ways, but chiefly these three: The holiness, which the Scriptures set themselves to exalt in the world, is a perfect and entire holiness ; it wants no limb or member to complete it ; there is never an impression of worth and excellency imaginable, whether in relation to God or men, whereof the heart or soul of man is capable, never a strain of action or deportment in what case or upon what occasion soever that is truly comely and honourable for men, but is comprised and comprehended in that holiness which the Scriptures recommend unto the world. But, for that holiness, if you will needs so call it, or rather that moral perfection, which is of human recommendation unto men, take the fairest and most perfect draughts that ever were made of it by any, you will

find it halt and maimed, many parts or pieces of it wanting. "I have seen an end," saith David unto God, "of all perfection; but thy commandment," or thy law, "is exceeding broad." A man may see from the Dan to the Beersheba of that moral perfection which men either have, or shall at any time invite the world unto; a man may fathom and comprehend it, gather it into his understanding, and be able to say, "Here I have it, the whole element of it," which plainly shows the imperfection of it; but the compass and extent of that perfection or holiness which the law of God, the Scriptures, call the world unto, is so vast and large, that the reason, conscience, and understanding of a man, when they have spent themselves in travel to make a perfect discovery of this continent, and the particularities of it, cannot yet come to the utmost bounds and limits of it. There is an unknown land of holiness in the Scriptures, on which no man's understanding ever set foot to this day.

The Scripture holiness differs from that perfection which the choicest of men have desired to promote in the world, in the purity or cleanness of it. It hath not only all the parts of holiness, all things appertaining unto the greatest excellency or perfection that men are capable of, as was noted in the former difference, but it hath no ingredient or mixture in it of any thing that is repugnant unto true holiness or perfection; it is an holiness, which, as we use to say of solid and compact bodies, is full of itself, and hath nothing heterogeneal within it. Whereas the philosophers' ointment hath many dead flies in it, which make the whole composition, if not to stink right out, yet to send forth such a savour as by which it may be evidently scented and discerned to be the composition of men, and not of God. Plato, in that perfection or holiness which he commends unto the world, besides many other things condemned by the Scriptures, as unlawful, allows that

unnatural pollution which they call "*pæderastia*," spoken of, Rom. i. 27. Aristotle makes several of his virtues of such things, habits, and actions, which the Scriptures make vices and sin: As, first, he makes grief or indignation at the prosperity of unworthy men to be a virtue; which the Scripture prohibits, as a thing sinful and unworthy. So, again, he makes a virtue of that which he calls "a disposition to jesting, or lightness of discourse;" which the Scripture expressly prohibits in the very term. So he makes the judging of a man's self worthy of great things, when he is so, another of his virtues; a disposition which we know the Scriptures do not allow in men of the greatest worth and excellency under heaven. "So likewise ye," saith our Saviour to his disciples, "when you have done all those things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: We have done that which was our duty to do," &c. If you look into Seneca, you shall find, indeed, many excellent precepts of morality, with motives and arguments very considerable to persuade to them; but you shall find many a dead fly in this man's box also; and, among others, you shall find him commending that as a virtuous resolution in Cato, rather to lay violent hands upon himself, and destroy his own life, than to fall into the hands of his enemy Cæsar, though there was little question but that he should have had his life, yea, and honour too, from him; a practice which the author of the latter book of the Maccabees commends likewise in one Razis a Jew; by which character, among some others of like nature, Protestant Divines have unanimously concluded, that those books are not canonical, or of Divine inspiration. If you search into all the greatest masters of morality that ever nature set up to teach the world perfection, you will find, even in those of the greatest and choicest accomplishments amongst them, many things taught under the names of "virtue"

and "perfection," which are imperfections, and things truly dishonourable to the nature of man. This is that which the Holy Ghost himself seems to take notice of concerning them, Rom. i. 21, 22: "They became vain in their thoughts," or reasonings, "and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves wise, they became fools." Professing themselves teachers of perfection, they taught the world imperfection, and things unworthy of them. But if we look into the Scriptures, we shall find that they teach holiness and perfection so, and upon such terms, that they teach nothing else; they teach no unholy or imperfect thing with them.

And that holiness or perfection which the Scriptures so much magnify, and seek to adorn and bless the world withal, consists, the greatest and most considerable part of it, in the due deportments and carriages of the heart and soul towards God immediately; in such inward impressions, or dispositions, which make a man meet for the enjoyment of God in a way of friendship and delightful communion and converse; the knowledge of God, and of his will, and counsels; the love of God, confidence of the love of God towards him, upon rational and solid grounds; hope or expectation of good from him, dependence upon him for the receiving of all good in ways of righteousness and honour, with many more of like consideration; all which qualify and furnish the creature for communion with God; put him into such a posture that God may take a pleasure and holy contentment to hold correspondency with him; and without which men were no more capable or meet either for communion with, or enjoyment of, God, than the wild beasts of the wilderness are for the society or acquaintance of wise and sober men. Whereas, if we peruse the best models and draughts of that perfection and excellency which have come from men unto the world, and shall consider the particularities of them, you will find very little, very few

things, directed or enjoined of any such tendency as this ; the main body or bulk of their writings consisting of such precepts and instructions, whose constitution and frame stand either for the regulating of men in their civil and moral deportments in the world, one towards another, and amongst themselves, or else for the composing and ordering their natural affections and inclinations, in reference to themselves, partly that they may receive a testimony of honour from the world, as of being virtuous, wise, and worthy men, and avoid the shame and dishonour of the contrary ; partly to prevent those inconveniences in their estates, bodies, friends, posterity, &c., which many times fall heavy upon men of dissolute and disordered lives ; partly, also, to nourish and maintain a certain calmness and tranquillity of conscience within, which they found by experience was troublesome and tormenting unto them, when they had been wicked and vile in any way or practice of sin against the light and dictates of it, as the apostle himself intimates. In the writings and works of such men as we speak of, you may find many things worthy consideration, in reference to their ends : But as for either rules or directions, or much urging or pressing any thing of any proper and direct tendency to prepare and sanctify men for the immediate worship of God, or for any special and comfortable communion with him, there is not the proportion of “a gleaning after the vintage,” nor of “the shaking of an olive tree, after the gathering of olives” is past. “Two or three berries,” saith Isaiah, “in the top of the uttermost bough, and four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof :” So there may be here a little, and there a little, a few scattered notions of such a tendency as we speak of, to be found here and there in these writings : But what they do in this kind, they do as if they did it not ; nor is it much considerable what they do.

Men do not, cannot, with any show or colour of truth,

plead any such engagements lying upon the world, by reason of any such love or kindness that they have shown to it, why the world should hearken unto their voice in this kind, or hearken unto the law of their mouth, as he both can and doth that teacheth holiness in the Scriptures. Plato cannot say, nor can Aristotle, or Seneca, or any other of the great philosophers of the world say, nor do any of them say, that they so loved the world, and that, when it was their enemy, "they gave their only-begotten sons for it." They have no such golden cords as this wherewith to draw the hearts of men against their native dispositions and desires, to comport with their instructions or exhortations unto virtue. This sceptre of love, wherewith the hearts of men most delight to be commanded and overruled, is one of the royalties appropriate to His throne, who by the hand of the Scriptures imposeth the tax, or benevolence rather, of holiness upon the world.

Nor do they that summon and invite the world to excellency and perfection in other writings propose unto men any such prizes, any such crowns, such kingdoms, to engage them to run the race of holiness, as he doth who makes his addressments unto the world in this behalf out of the Scriptures: If they should, the world would laugh them to scorn, as knowing them unable altogether to make good their engagements in this kind. "Will the son of Jesse," saith Saul to his servants, standing about him, "give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands?" &c. Plato and Aristotle do not so much as pretend to the lordship of life and immortality, nor to the right of disposing the great things of the world to come.

Nor have the sons of men, who plead the cause of that excellency which they hold forth unto the world, any such prisons or torments to threaten: They have no worm that never dieth, no fire that never goeth out, no pit without a bottom, no lake that burneth with fire

and brimstone for ever, wherewith to punish those who shall rebel against the laws of their discipline and instruction. Sometimes they speak of the miseries and torments which wicked men are like to suffer after death; but at mere peradventure, and poet-like, so as more to delight the fancies, than to strike or trouble the consciences, of men. The hell of philosophers is but like the hell of the poets, which is an hell to play and make sport withal: It is the Scripture-hell that makes the hearts, and souls, and consciences, and all that is in men, to quake and tremble.

That godliness which the Scriptures bend themselves with all their might to set up and magnify in the world,—as, indeed, there is none other but this, truly so called,—is a kind of heavenly impression or propension in the heart and soul of a man, which inclines and is apt to carry it, in all the motions and tendencies of it, upon God, or towards God; to cause it to remember God and his glory, in all the actings and workings thereof, and to raise, frame, and order these in a regular and due proportion thereunto. As we see there is a natural impression or quality of heaviness in a stone, and in all other heavy bodies, which directs and carries them in their motions in a straight line to the centre of the earth, when, or as far as, impediments unto these motions are removed out of the way; and so again, there is a contrary impression of levity or lightness in fire, whose property is to carry this body, in the tendency and motion of it, towards the circumference; so there is, in some men's hearts and souls, a gracious and heavenly propension, which makes them hang and lean God-wards, and in their actions and motions to look towards him and his glory, and to comply with them. And this propension or inclination in the soul we call "godliness."

That godliness is a grace or gracious disposition in the soul distinct from holiness, in the nature, though not in

the subject, of it, appears, 1. In that holiness is often ascribed unto God, yea, more frequently, I conceive, than any other attribute, at least, as frequently as any; but godliness is nowhere attributed unto him. He is often said to be holy, but never said to be godly. It is true, there is a nature or disposition in God which inclines him, in all his action and motions, to comply with himself and with his own glory, as well as with the good of the creature; as there is in godly men, besides that principle of godliness we speak of, a natural impression which inclines them also to comport with themselves, and with their own blessedness and glory, as well as with God and his glory; but as this disposition in men would very improperly be called "manliness," or "menliness," so neither doth the Holy Ghost take any pleasure to call the disposition in God we speak of by the name of "godliness," but rather chooseth to express and discover it some other way. Now, if it were altogether of the same import, or the same thing with holiness, there can hardly any reason be given why holiness should be still so frequently and familiarly ascribed unto God, and godliness not at all. 2. That there is a difference between them appears by this,—that they are exhorted unto or enjoined by the Holy Ghost as two several graces: "Seeing, therefore," saith the apostle Peter, "that all these things must be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" so that holiness of conversation and godliness, or godliness of conversation, are two distinct things; otherwise, we must say that the Holy Ghost in one and the same sentence exhorts twice to one and the same thing, and that in difference of words as if there were two; which, I suppose, cannot be showed in all the Scripture besides.

The difference between the two sister graces, godliness and holiness,—because some may desire to know.

this by the way,—may be thus conceived: Holiness, in the most proper and ordinary acception of the word, is a gracious disposition, inclining the heart or soul where it resides unto actions and ways eminently righteous and just, with a real abhorreny of the contrary, or whatsoever is sinful. Godliness is a disposition which inclines the person, in whose soul it taketh place, to act for God, and to make the advancement of his glory the supreme end of their ways and actions. Holiness may be compared to the lustre or brightness which is in gold; godliness, to that weightiness or that propension in it which, in the motion of it, carries it towards the centre. Holiness respects the nature and quality of the action, and engageth to a serious and zealous rectitude in these; godliness respects the end of the action, and carries the agent in his intentions herein upon God; so that, though their natures differ, yet the difference is such, that it plainly shows that they are never divided in their subject, but that wheresoever the one is, the other must needs be also. God never stirs up the hearts of men truly and seriously to desire or embrace ways that are excellent indeed, but he stirs them up also to make him and his glory the sovereign end of them; yea, he seldom or never stirs up men effectually, and upon the terms specified, to desire such ways or things as we speak of, but he doeth it by putting the propension of godliness first into them. When we find a desire in them to act for God and his glory, then, and seldom or never till then, will men bethink themselves to purpose of doing things that are excellent indeed.

To do a thing to the glory of God requires these four things: 1. That the thing or deed which is done be such, for the nature, kind, or substance of the act, that it be apt to yield matter or opportunity unto men to glorify God, as all such acts are which are done according to the law and commands of God, either

general or special, and no other. 2. That actions thus qualified, as touching the nature and kind of them, be further qualified with dueness of circumstance, in time and place. It is true, there are some kinds of actions which cannot lightly suffer or degenerate through any defect in these, or either of them, as the inward acts of the love of God, remembrance of God, &c. ; but there are few outward actions but may. There is no external act whereby love unto God may be expressed, but that the proportion which it hath, in the kind of it, for the glorifying of God, may be dissolved and destroyed by a mistiming and misplacing of it. 3. A third thing necessary to be done by him that would do any thing to the glory of God, is, that first he consults with the glory of God, and steadily informs himself what that would have or what it requires for the exaltation of it: As a tailor first consults with the body, for which he is to make a garment, by measuring the proportion of it in several places, that so he may know how to cut and fit the garment to it, and make it sit comely; in like manner, he that desires to advance the glory of God by any action or course, must be careful to inform himself what steerage and deportment, in all particulars, will render them most advantageous for, and comporting with, such a design. 4. The fourth and last thing, (which is the chief of the four,) required to the doing of a thing to the glory of God, is, that the heart and soul of a man, in or before the doing of it, makes a secret deed of consecration or dedication of it to this end, raiseth and produceth it for this end, and with this intention, that God may be glorified by it.

That heavenly plant of self-denial, which the Scriptures seek to furnish the world withal, and to plant in the hearts and lives of men, may be considered, either in the root or in the fruit of it. By the "root," I mean, the inward principle or frame of heart out of which a man is not only enabled, but inclined also, and sweetly

disposed, to deny himself. By the "fruit," I mean, all those outward expressions and deportments, in a man's life and conversation, which flow from such a principle, and answer the nature of it. Now, this self-denial, in the principle or root of it, may be thus described : It is such a disposition or frame of heart in a man which inclines him, that is, makes him willing and ready, to neglect himself, in all personal and self-accommodations, especially in outward things, when and as the glory of God, and general good of men, require it for their furtherance and advancement. We shall not now stand to examine this description in all the particulars of it. The nature or main property of self-denial lies in this,—to make a man ready and willing to submit and subject himself, and all his ends, interests, and enjoyments whatsoever, unto the glory of God, and good of men, according to the occasions and exigencies of these ; so that when a man hath a call and opportunity to do some special service unto God or men, but yet he cannot do either, but either with the hazard or certain loss of some private and personal accommodation of his own, whether matter of pleasure, profit, credit, liberty, life, or the like, if in this case he shall resolve to do the service, however, whatsoever it costs him out of his own interests, or how cross soever the doing of it proves to his natural inclinations or desire, such a man may be said to deny himself in that action or service ; and if a man be inwardly principled and uniformly disposed to act upon such terms as these, he may properly be said to be a denier of himself.

We are called to the denial of self by express precept or command : "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth ;" that is, another's good, another's comfort. "Let no man seek his own wealth, but every man the wealth of other ;" that is, Let no man mind, regard, or seek his own interest or wealth apart from, much less in opposition to, the wealth and com-

fort of other men. He commands, that no man suffers his own wealth or contentment, in any kind, to interpose between him and his faithful endeavours to promote the good of others. Not but that it is lawful for any man or woman to seek their own good; but it must be with a tender eye had to the good of others, and with subordination thereunto. If at any time there falls out a case of competition, our own personal and private benefit and good must give place to the good of many: As the Lord Christ said of himself, and of the end of his coming into the world, that he “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to lay down his life a ransom for many;” so the will and command of God is, that men should so live in this present world, as if every man were dead unto himself, and alive unto another,—that is, had no wisdom, strength, care, time, will, necessary occasion, to act for himself and his personal concerns in the outer man, but could find all these in good proportion to act for the public good, and for other men.

As the Scriptures command that self-denial we speak of, so do they encourage and press unto it by the great example of the Lord Christ himself; they hold forth this pattern in the mount, and cry aloud unto the world, commanding every man to do likewise. “We which are strong,” saith the apostle, “ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves;” that is, not to seek the ease or contentment of the flesh or outer man, with the discontent or neglect of any. For, otherwise, if the promoting of the good of other men be a thing pleasing to us, as indeed it should, we may very lawfully, yea, and commendably, please ourselves; and yet this pleasing of ourselves, in that excellent and worthy thing we speak of, should not be the chief end neither why we do it.

The Scriptures do not only command and enjoin that denial of men’s selves we speak of, do not only invite,

press, and persuade to it by the glorious example of the Lord Jesus Christ himself,—which a man would think were alone enough to propagate the disposition and practice of it throughout the world,—and by the examples of the saints; but they further set themselves to draw the world by the heart and soul into this blessed business, with the great promise of life and salvation, and the glorious things of the world to come. “Jesus answered and said,” saith Mark, when Peter had begun to say unto him, “Lo, we have forsaken all and followed thee,” “Verily, I say unto you, There is no man that hath forsaken house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the Gospel’s, but he shall receive an hundred fold now at this present, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come, eternal life.”

They have yet another formidable engine whereby to bow and bend the world unto a denial of themselves, or else to batter and break them in pieces; namely, the threatenings of the wrath and vengeance which is to come, of the worm that never dieth, and of the fire that never goeth out.

Another work of the Gospel, great and marvellous also, as we shall show presently, is, the taking off of men’s hearts from the world; the cooling and quenching of the inordinate heat wherewith men naturally, and according to the course of the world in every place, are wont to burn in desires after the things of the earth, and the contentments of the outward man. When the heart of a man and the world are so close knit and incorporated, as it were, together, that they are become one flesh, as the apostle speaks of the adulterer and adulteress, in reference to the act of their wickedness, the Gospel many times comes and gets in between, divides and separates the one from the other, throws the one one way, as it were, towards the east, and the

other another way, towards the west, and so keeps them asunder for ever : It falls upon the heart and soul like lightning, and melts down the great mountain of the world there, and makes it become a plain : It dissolves the sorceries and enchantments wherewith the world is wont to bewitch the minds and affections of men, and to bind the faculties and powers of the soul, so that these shall act nothing to the recovery of them from this miserable bondage.

PEACE.—You shall enjoy an excellent degree of heavenly and inward tranquillity ; you shall be delivered from those secret wringings, and gripings, and gnawings of conscience, for fear of the wrath that is to come, whereunto they who neglect to steer this course we speak of, to be filled with the Spirit, and whose enjoyments in this kind are but low, are ever and anon subject unto ; you shall not lie under any jealousy of God, as if his heart and soul were not perfect with you, or as if there were some item given of displeasure against you. “The peace of God,” as the apostle saith, “passeth all understanding ;” that is, the worth and value, the riches of it amounteth to more in the true nature and estimate of it than any man’s understanding is able to sum or cast up, or to comprehend or conceive. A man’s understanding can go a great way, and what it can conceive is of a vast extension : “Yet,” saith he, “peace with God is such a thing, the richness of it is so unsearchable, that the understanding of a man cannot value it ; though it should strain itself, and make a work of it, yet this peace of God cannot be conceived by it.” Now, I say, this peace of God shall be vested in your souls ; and though this peace will not, it may be, so reconcile the world unto you, but that you may have wars and troubles from it ; yet it will do that which will be, upon the matter, equivalent hereunto ; it will bring it so to pass with you, that you shall be able to

“rejoice in your infirmities;” that is, in such things which you shall suffer from the world, and to do as James adviseth Christians, “to count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations.” Now, wars and troubles upon these terms are every whit as good, as desirable, as peace itself.

God hath raised the pin of the Gospel to such a height, that it is not only able to furnish men and women with a good proportion of comfort and peace, but he hath put so much of himself, of his grace and love, bounty and magnificence, into it, that it poureth out unto men abundantly of the highest and strongest consolations; although there be very few that understand how, or where, to hold their hearts, that these pourings-out of the Gospel may run or fall into them. Now, the consolation, which is strong and potent indeed, is able, not only to suppress and subdue its enemies, discouragements, doubts, fears, &c., and withal to maintain itself in peace against them, but also to discourage, as it were, and dishearten these enemies from ever attempting any thing against it. For he properly is strong whose strength, being known, maketh an enemy to have no mind to meddle with him, but causeth him to fear to rise up in opposition against him, by means whereof he enjoys himself with little or no trouble or disturbance. Such is the consolation of the Gospel, and is, accordingly, found by men, when it is received in the power and glory of it: It is not only able to suppress and keep under fears and doubtings and sad apprehensions in every kind, which are enemies to it, but to enjoy itself in fulness of peace and security, without any danger of being infested or annoyed by them. This is the height of the consolation of the Gospel; he that is baptized into the spirit of it enjoyeth himself with a Divine security, in the frailty of a weak and mortal man.

When the strong and high-spirited consolations of

the Gospel have once taken the head and the heart and soul of a man, and seated themselves there, they will soon alter and change the inward constitution and temper of the man ; so that whereas before he was dull and heavy, yea, and as dead unto God, and could savour and relish nothing but his own things, his own personal interest, as his ease, pleasure, and the like ; now, he is, as it were, turned quite about, and is all for God ; these Gospel-consolations, when they are apprehended clearly in their strength and height, and set to work in the soul accordingly, then they are operative like unto themselves, and have such a property and peculiarity of virtue in them, so to affect the heart and soul, that they will not be able to refrain, or contain themselves, but will be still speaking of their great and heavenly Benefactor : When once they shall have received a strong sense and feeling of that abundant grace from him which the Gospel presenteth and tendereth unto the world, and are possessed of those matters of joy and high exaltation of spirit, all the waters of this world will never be able to quench this flame ; but they will be ever and anon breaking forth against all oppositions of the flesh, and all carnal interests whatsoever, laughing all these to scorn ; and, if it be possible, they will lift up the name of the great God that hath done such great things for them, that hath, in effect, prevented them with life and immortality already.

Unless a person hath drunk liberally of the consolations we speak of ; unless he be like a prince in his spiritual estate and demesnes, and lives in high satisfaction of soul ; he will never be able to speak out, like an angel, the virtues, the pleasant and lovely things, of his God, he will never attain unto a lip of excellency for the service ; but the expressions of such a man, whether by words or actions, will be lean and starveling, no ways commensurable, nor holding out, with the heights and depths, with the great and worthy things

of God. No man can discourse the royal state and excellency of a king or prince, but an observant courtier that hath had communion with the grandeur, and glory, and goodly things belonging thereunto: So a man that hath but lightly tasted of the grace, goodness, and bounty of God in the Gospel, that hath always kept in the valleys of the visions thereof, and had communion only with the rudiments and first beginnings of evangelical knowledge, can never be able to show out the virtues of God, or bring them forth into a perfect light. Something in this kind such a person possibly may do; he may, as it were, whisper and stammer out, in some broken manner, somewhat of the transcendent excellencies of God. And verily this is the length of such a man's arm; he can lift up the name of God no otherwise, or upon no better terms in the world.

Men and women, I say, that stick fast with their minds and hearts in the mire and clay of this present world, are never like to know what the hope of the Gospel-calling is, in either consideration, and, consequently, not to inherit or enjoy in this world the riches of the glory of the Gospel-consolations.

When the intellectual powers and faculties of the soul are drunk up with worldly and sensual engagements, or over-acted upon the things which are seen, they become awkward, indisposed, and unserviceable for spiritual negotiations and employments about heavenly things. By such low and mean converse as this, they contract an habit of a kind of intellectual rudeness and disingenuousness; by reason whereof they know not how to quit or behave themselves about more noble and high-born objects; nor, indeed, care not much to have to do with them, or come into their company. Even as persons that have been always bred and brought up *inter sordes*, amongst rude and rustical people, of course and rough behaviour, cannot presently change their temper and disposition, and so become

capable of conversing orderly, and according to the principles of civility, with persons of better quality and more refined carriage; and by reason of a consciousness to themselves in this kind, they avoid as much as well they may the company of such persons: In like manner, those Divine discoveries made in the Gospel, those veins of wisdom and of the knowledge of God there, upon which, I mean, upon the apprehension of which, the high-raising and liftings-up in evangelical consolations, of which we speak, chiefly depend; being of a very fine spinning, very spiritual, and remote from the common thoughts and apprehensions of men, and much more from the thoughts of such minds and understandings which have accustomed themselves wholly, in a manner, to this world's affairs; persons of this character, knowing that these things lie out of the way of their genius, and that they are not able to conceive of them with much contentment to themselves, nor to speak of them with contentment unto others, in these respects take little or no pleasure to inquire after them, nor to engage themselves to any purpose in the study of them. So, then, this is one reason why such persons, who are over-intent and bent upon this present world, are not like to ascend in spirit into the region of light, where the consolations we speak of have their dwelling, and are to be found; namely, because, by continual digging in the earth with their reasons, apprehensions, and understandings, they make them blunt and dull, and altogether unapt to take the genuine and thorough impressions of such Gospel-notions, wherein the riches of the comforts thereof are laid up as in a storehouse.

Joy.—Peace importeth freedom, or exemption from troubles and disturbances; but joy importeth the inward and high satisfaction, pleasure, or contentment of mind, which is created or raised in the soul by the apprehension and consideration of the excellent good-

ness of this peace, together with the sweet privileges and enjoyments of this kingdom. Now, this joy we speak of, the joy of the everlasting kingdom of Christ, must needs be, according to that character which the apostle Peter gives of it, which is a taste or first-fruits of that kingdom, "unspeakable, and full of glory." The reason hereof is, because there shall be such a mighty and such an incredible abundance of all desirable and precious things, both to raise and to maintain this joy, which will certainly meet together in this kingdom, in that state and condition which the saints shall be brought unto, when the kingdom of Christ shall be set up in the world. "All Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering." If all the wood that grew in Lebanon were cut down, and one fire made of it all, how exceeding great above measure would this fire, and flame, and burning be! Now, God will summon, as it were, the whole creation together; he will call to the heavens, to the sun, moon, and stars, and all the hosts of them; he will call to the north, and to the south, to the east, and to the west; he will call to the seas, and to the deep places; he will call to the beasts of the field, and to the fowls of heaven; to bring in whatsoever they have in their treasure or keeping, and which will contribute any thing towards the making of the joy of the kingdom we speak of like unto a joy prepared by the infinite magnificence and bounty of the God of heaven, on purpose to show his glory and power for his sons and daughters, and those that have served him. How exceeding great, then, above measure must this joy needs be!

Neither are they like to taste of the feast we speak of, or be filled with the best and choicest of the comforts of the Gospel, who are hard of bowels, cruel, unmerciful, hard to forget and forgive injuries; yea, who have not eyes and hearts full of commiseration and of pity, hearts well exercised with mercy.

They that shut up their bowels of compassion against their brethren that have need, lie under this judgment of darkness, in common with other wicked men, namely, to think that God is like unto them. Therefore, being regardless of other men's miseries, and no ways inclined to acquaint their souls with the sufferings and sorrows of any but their own, they are apt to transform or change in their imaginations the glory of the most gracious and merciful God into the similitude of their own hardheartedness towards others, and so must needs be under a most sad disadvantage to apprehend and believe those most glorious things which the Gospel speaketh concerning the love, and mercy, and tenderness of compassion in God towards men. Of all kind of offenders and transgressors in the world, men that are strait of bowels and uncompassionate are the most incapable of part and fellowship in the consolatory enjoyments of the Gospel, those especially that are fullest of spirit and life; the Gospel every where louring and frowning upon them, staving and beating them off from all hopes and conceit of finding mercy at the hand of God, or of salvation, but only upon the change and turning of their hearts within them upside down.

When men are filled with the Spirit, they are no more like unto other men, they are more excellent than their neighbours; for, by this means, they shall be enabled to act in a peculiar sphere by themselves, leaving the world, yea, and the saints themselves who have but a little or small proportion of the Spirit to move in a lower and more inferior region; whereas they shall mount up on high, and be carried, as it were, on eagles' wings, enabled to do worthily: Great and excellent things shall put forth themselves in them, things that shall have more of heaven, more of glory, more of beauty, more matter for admiration, than can be found in, or raised from, the stirrings, movings, and doings in the world round about them.

“To him that hath,” that is, that shows that he hath, that declares that he hath, that improves and employs that which he hath, namely, that which is given originally to him by way of stock from the Spirit of God; “to him that” thus “hath, shall be given,” namely, by way of addition, “he shall have more abundantly;” he shall still be going on, and be having, and having, and having; he shall have, and have still. At last he shall have abundance, he shall have a full and glorious estate in spiritual riches, in wisdom, in knowledge, in understanding, in faith, in humility, in love, in zeal, in temperance, in patience, and whatever else is necessary to enrich the soul of a man, and to prepare him, and put him into a capacity of the richest and highest glory.

When a man is full of the Holy Ghost, he is now so full of the sense of the goodness of those honourable purposes that are conceived in his soul, and of all high achievements in the service of God, which he judgeth will be both for the glory of God, the advancement of the Gospel, and for the good of mankind, as also for his own peace and comfort; that there is no place left within him for the flesh to suggest any thing to the contrary, either to take him off from, or to retard him in, the prosecution thereof; he is as full of such occasions and engagements as these as ever he can hold, which keep out the motions and insinuations of the flesh. Whereas, if there were room for them to interpose, it is a thousand to one but they would strangle or stifle all good purposes and resolutions within him.

It is only the Holy Ghost that can enable men to do that, can enlarge their hearts unto such actions and services, as those wherein they shall be looked upon as men besides themselves. And when the Holy Ghost shall come and fill the heart, and display the worthiness and glory of such a service, that seems vain,

rash, or needless in the eyes of most men ; then the glory of it shall shine round about him, and he shall see, as in a vision of the noon-day, this conveniency and that, this consequence and that, attending upon it, all great, and excellent, and worthy ; and, by this means, the heart comes to be full of it, full of the greatness, and the goodness, and the worthiness of it ; full of the sense of the benefit and blessing which it will bring along with it. So that, though all the world should rise up against him to dissuade him from it, they could not do it ; for, in such a case, there would be no opportunity, no room in his heart or soul, for any carnal dissuading interposure to enter, or to intermeddle about taking him off from it. As when the glory of the Lord had filled the temple, the priests could not enter into it, to do their office, or any work belonging to them here : In like manner, when the Holy Ghost hath filled the temple of the soul with the glory of great and high engagements for God and for the Gospel, such reasonings and conceits, which are wont to purvey for the flesh, and to sacrifice all that comes to net—pleasures and profits—unto it, cannot now find entrance hither, to inveigle or entice the hearts or consciences of men to hearken unto them.

When Christ prayed for the sanctification of his apostles, he prayed, not simply that God would sanctify them, but that he would sanctify them by his truth ; because he knew that that was God's standing way and method by which he was wont to sanctify men. So the apostle here, knowing that God would not do that great thing for the Ephesians which he prayed for on their behalf, namely, that they "might be strengthened with might in their inner man," be made glorious in their faith, and believe like princes, but by the interposure of his Spirit, he frameth his prayer for it accordingly. And this is further to be considered, that to be "strengthened with might in

the inner man," supposeth, that the Spirit of God must advance above his ordinary degree of acting to effect it ; he must not only act or interpose in men to work it, but at such a rate of energy and power which is proportionable to such an effect.

" You shall be perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect : " As if he should say, " I impose it upon you as a matter of sovereign concernment, both unto me and to yourselves, that you give out yourselves to the utmost in striving to imitate the perfection of your heavenly Father, and to be as absolute in all things appertaining unto you to do, as he is in all things that are honourable and proper for so great a Majesty to do : You must not indulge the flesh, nor be careless or loose-hearted in observing this my charge which I lay upon you ; but endeavour with all your might to express all the goodness, and sweetness, and excellency, in every kind, which you see in your heavenly Father ; your conscientious submission unto this my command will both honour me highly, as you are my disciples, and I your Lord and Master ; and will make your faces also to shine in glory above theirs who shall be more remiss or negligent in obeying it. Therefore, if you regard me or yourselves, you must remember it."

Perfect love,—that is, love when it is sincere, and cometh to any perfection, to any considerable maturity and strength, that it beginneth to fill the soul of a man, and commandeth all things to be done which the nature of love requireth—now it casts out and dischargeth the heart and soul of such a troublesome and sad companion as fear is ; he speaketh of fear that hath torment or pain, or rather punishment, as the word signifieth, meaning for sin, in it. It is a certain sign that he that feareth, that is, that feareth wrath, and vengeance, and destruction from God, is not perfect in love towards God, but his love is maimed, and weak;

and acteth at a low rate. Now, when a man's love is thus broken, it is not of sufficient authority and power to do the execution we speak of, but fears and jealousies of God's displeasure will keep possession in the same heart with it, and will be ever and anon insulting over it. But, saith he, being made perfect, and grown to any strength, that it filleth the soul; now it throweth off all such fears. The reason, in a word, why, or the manner how, love casteth out the fear specified, when perfect, may be thus conceived. A man, when he loveth God perfectly, with an entireness and thoroughness of affection, cannot lightly but know that he doth love him: A man can hardly carry fire in his bosom and not know it. But when his love acteth brokenly, and is at many defaults in the course of it, as if it had a miscarrying womb, now, a man is apt to suspect whether indeed he doth really and truly love him or not; because they that love him not may now and then, by fits and by starts, as we use to say, and in a good mood, quit themselves, both in words and in deeds, like unto those who do truly and unfeignedly love him. Yea, those many things which Herod did at the preaching of John were such a kind of fruit which the true love of God oft-times beareth. Now, when a man cometh to reflect upon himself, as one that truly and unquestionably loveth God, it is not likely that he should be jealous whether God loveth him or no; only supposing that he certainly knoweth and believeth that God knoweth as well, nay, much better, than himself that he loveth him. Men loving themselves, and their own welfare and peace, cannot so far destroy nature out of them, as to seek the prejudice or ruin of those whom they certainly know to be their fast and faithful friends. Nor can the judgments or consciences of persons that know least of God be so far ignorant or misprisant of him, as to think that he intends the misery or destruction of any of those

whom he most infallibly knows to be with their whole hearts and souls devoted in love unto him and to his glory.

Certainly, it is the duty of every creature to drink in all encouragements from God, as fishes drink water, naturally, constantly, and with delight, and to lift up their hearts and hands unto whatsoever by them they are invited and quickened. And he that encourageth or inviteth unto perfection doth, by the same act, invite also and encourage unto the seeking after the greatest and best things that heaven will afford.

If you will but consider how it is in the course of nature, you shall observe that it is the nature of every creature to advance and go on still, to move and to wax : But whensoever this creature cometh to a stand, and goeth no further, evermore the next motion is to relapse. The sun in the firmament of heaven, when he comes to his meridian, and can rise no higher, begins immediately to decline towards his setting. The waters wax, and flow, and increase ; but ever when it is standing water, then is the reflux in a short time, it altereth its course backwards from whence it came. Just thus is it in this great and important business of your souls, and of your eternal peace ; it is well with you so long as you are growing and gathering, so long you are in a safe condition, and out of danger of falling away : But when you come once to such a pass that you desire to rise no higher, it is a thousand to one but that the next news that will be heard will be, that you will begin to decline and lose ground, and to fall back again into your former ignorance, and unto the love of the world, and something which is of an utter inconsistency with your salvation.

To be "filled with the Spirit of God," signifieth, to have an actuous, vigorous, and operative presence of the Holy Ghost in you, to enjoy his grace, love, and favour upon such terms, as to receive from him, and from the

glory of his power, ever and anon, upon all occasions, excellent quickenings, incitements, impulses, enlargements, strengthenings of heart and soul unto every worthy way and every good work ; to have all contrary workings, motions, and risings of the flesh borne down with a strong hand, and swallowed up in victory ; so that a man or woman shall find no great, no considerable opposition or turmoil, as formerly, from any weakness or corruption within him in his way of well-doing, but only such which he shall be enabled, and this at a very good rate, to overcome.

The first thing to be done by us, in order to a being "filled with the Spirit," it being supposed we are clear and thoroughly satisfied about the possibility of the thing ; for otherwise this corner-stone were to be laid for the building ;—but this, I say, supposed, the first thing to be done, in direct order to a being "filled with the Spirit," is zealously to covet or desire it, "to have a man's soul break within him," as David's expression is, "with a longing desire after it."

The goodness, excellency, and desirableness of the thing itself, if you will but give it a narrow and intense beholding with the eyes of your minds and understandings, and feed awhile upon the beauty and glory of it ; this will furnish you, will raise in you, these covetings and desires we prescribe in order to the obtaining of it.

When the soul, when the inner temple of the heart, of a man or woman shall be filled with the Spirit of God, there will be such a glory of holiness there, that there will be no standing or abode for those base companions, unclean, impure, carnal, and sensual desires and inclinations. No ; but they will all be scattered, as the mist is scattered before the sun when it ariseth in its might. These companions, which have haunted your souls and inner man hitherto,—pride, envy, and malice, and inordinate love of the world, pleasure, ease,

and all such kind of things as these,—they will be sensible of the glorious presence of this Spirit of God in you, they will not be able to abide it: His presence will fright away all those aliens and strangers that are contrary to him.

If men “be filled with the Spirit,” so that the exhibitings and quickenings thereof be pregnant and lively, and the impulses and bearings thereof upon the conscience and soul be stiff, and strong, and with power, the inclinations, motions, and lustings of the flesh will be overborne and stifled; even as a vessel upon the water, meeting a stout ship running before a strong gale of wind, is easily overset and run under water by her. If you be full of the Spirit, these lusts themselves will fly from you, and there will be no abiding for them in you; they will take no pleasure at all in such a soul, neither will such a soul find much to do with them; there will be an agreement on both parties to divide and separate; they are contrary one unto another, and they cannot dwell together, because they are not agreed; and in this case the strong must keep possession, and the weaker must give place. “And he that is in you,” saith John, speaking of the Spirit of God, “is greater than he that is against you.” Now, the world and the things of it are the devil’s black retinue and regiment that attend upon him, that promote the affairs of his kingdom; and when the case is come to this, that the soul must be possessed, and inhabited by one spirit, either by him that is greater, or him that is lesser and his retinue; in this case, if you bring in the Spirit of God into your soul, you shall, by one and the same act, as it were, expel and drive out all that retinue: Even as Christ coming into the temple drove out those that bought and sold, and the money-changers; just thus will be the coming of the Spirit of God in power and in glory in your souls; he will chase away from before his face all that rabble

of evil-doers, your unclean lusts and desires, your foolish, froward, and proud dispositions and distempers of soul. Now, consider a little of how great and sacred a consequence such a thing as this is,—to have the temples of your hearts, of your inner man, thus purged and rid of such polluters and profaners of their dignity, excellency, and peace. My brethren, men and women live, as it were, by the fulfilling and satisfying of their lusts and unclean desires; they are afraid that they should not make a life of their continuance in the world and being in the body, unless they take pleasure in such things, and in such ways, unless they satisfy such and such desires; whereas, alas! were they but free from the inordinancy of their desires, their satisfying and gratifications would be rather matter of burden, trouble, and cumber to them than any otherwise.

Whilst men and women are laden with lusts, pride, covetousness, uncleanness, and given to pleasure, it is little less than a death to them to be kept from the fulfilling and gratifying these lusts and distempers; but if these lusts were but healed and separated, as they may be, (for they are not of the essence of their souls,) they are no part of their nature or being; no, they are but strangers and aliens unto their souls: If these, I say, were but separated from them, if they were but mortified and gone, these kinds of ways, whereby they were to be gratified, would be altogether unsatisfying unto them, and would have no taste or relish at all: The truth is, they would not only find no relish, nor any savour in them, but they would be troublesome, they would be matter of shame and confusion unto them. And therefore it must needs be conceived as a matter of excellent, high, and blessed concernment unto men and women to be invested with such a heavenly privilege as this is,—to have the inner man healed of all that unclean retinue of lusts and sinful distempers, to have these removed and thrown out of the soul.

A man hereby also will become little sensible of impressions of sorrow, grief, and trouble from the world, and the cross workings and dealings of things unto him there: His soul, by means of being filled with the Spirit, will be able to dwell amongst lions, even as Daniel did, without fear or danger of being destroyed and devoured with them: Those afflictions, pressures, and trials, which will grind the faces and break the bones of other men, will not create any grief, pain, or trouble unto him.

When men or women are filled with the Spirit of God, and so are in an intamous, serious, and affectionate converse with those glorious overtures of comfort, peace, and joy, and with those strong and high impulses and bearings upon their hearts and spirits unto ways and actions that are truly honourable and excellent, and which take hold of eternal life, which must be the portion of those that are filled with the Spirit; they are not so much sensible of, nor liable to, much sorrow or trouble from the sad or hard occurrences of the world. For when the strength of the heart, and mind, and soul of a man are drunk up with matters of a more sublime and glorious nature and consequence, there is nothing left of him wherewith to become much capable or sensible of other things; especially of those that are but of an inferior concernment unto him.

Whilst the Spirit of God dwelleth richly and plentifully in you, he will kindle and raise up strong and excellent inclinations, potent and prince-like resolutions, within you, unto ways and works of righteousness and true holiness; inclinations and resolutions in this kind that will not be baffled or turned out of the way by every gust of temptation; as the purposes and resolutions of the same denomination in the generality of professors in whom the Spirit dwelleth in a lower degree only are subject to be; but will hold on their

course in ways of righteousness. As a good ship running with all her sails displayed, before a stiff gale of wind, will cut through the waves and troublesome workings of the seas, taking no notice of them: Even so, when a man "is filled with the Spirit," he is, as it were, tied and bound hand and foot, that he cannot lightly move or stir out of the ways which the Spirit itself commendeth unto him, and seeketh to guide his feet unto.

Your being "filled with the Spirit" will cause God to take a holy pleasure and delight in you, and to employ you about many actions and services of his, which will be very honourable unto you, and turn to a blessed account in due time in his kingdom. "Wherefore," saith the apostle to the church at Jerusalem, "look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost," &c.: Which doth imply, that the men that God seeketh, for the acting and doing his business here in the world, are such who are full of the Holy Ghost, such who have a rich anointing of the Spirit of God. Men that are filled with the Spirit will be vigorous, active, and free in their work; they will do what they do with all their might. As men delight to be served by such servants who are diligent, and will go through stich with their business, that will not be baffled or turned out of their way by every toy or trivial occasion that shall present itself, but will go on with their business not with trifling: Even so it is a special principle in the living God to desire servants that will be faithful and fervent in their business. This, indeed, is the very nature and being of God, and therefore he putteth that character of his being upon men which he judgeth meet to be chosen as instruments to serve him, and which are, as I may say, made for him fitly qualified for any work or employment that shall be put into their hands.

Your being "filled with the Spirit" will free you

from all incumbrances in the ways of holiness. And you shall come forth unto such ways as these, like the sun, "which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race." Why is the sun said to rejoice, and to come forth as "a bridegroom, and as a giant to run his course," but because, though his course be long, above what will easily be believed should be accomplished by him in the space of twenty-four hours, he is, if I may so speak, naturally conscious that he hath abundantly wherewith to perform it? Such a course or race to him is natural and delightsome. If another creature not so qualified either with figure, swiftness, propensity unto circular motion, or the like, were to run, I mean, appointed or commanded by God, as the sun is, to run the same course, and were to set forth out of the same chamber with the sun; this creature would not come forth to his work like a bridegroom, but rather like unto him that mourneth, and whose countenance is cast down unto the earth. In like manner, when men and women are filled with the Holy Ghost, they come forth unto the greatest actions, or highest services, whether for God or men, like unto so many bridegrooms out of their chambers, full of alacrity, and with an heavenly pleasantness of heart and face; as it is said of Stephen, who is noted to have been a man filled with the Spirit, that all the Council that looked steadfastly or narrowly on him "saw his face as it had been the face of an angel;" that is, did discern a more than ordinary, a kind of supernatural, visage or composure of countenance in him, wherein an awful gravity, with an heavenly kind of lustre or pleasantness, were in conjunction; and by the light of this his angelical and heavenly countenance, a like heavenly complexion or constitution of heart and soul within might easily have been discerned also. Stephen had a great piece of work, a difficult service, upon his hand; he was to give

testimony unto Jesus Christ before the powers of this world, a great Council of men that were desperate opposers of him, and maliciously bent against all those that professed him, and to abide all hazards and dangers likely to attend such an engagement: But, being filled with the Holy Ghost, his heart sweetly and readily comported with the work, as if it had been but like the going to a feast.

The Holy Ghost, being gloriously potent and mighty in his motions and way, overbears and oversets the natural propensions, and the repugnant and cross inclinations, of the flesh to such services and works, and carries these along with him in his course; by reason whereof they seem willing, also, and consenting to what is done or to be done in that kind. Or look, as it is between the tide, or flowing-in of the sea, and the course of the river or fresh waters upon which it comes; we know the natural course of the river and the waters thereof is contrary to the course of the sea, and the waters thereof, when it flows; yet, because the sea moves with more authority, namely, with more strength and irresistibleness of motion than the river doth, it takes along the waters of the river with it in its course, and these seem to be as willing with the motion as the sea itself and the waters thereof; nor is there any contrariety, or averseness, or reluctancy to the motion discerned in these fresh waters whilst they are under the authority and conduct of the salt: After such a manner it is between the flesh of a man, and the averseness that is there unto things that are of a spiritual nature. When a man is filled with the Spirit of God, this carrieth all down before him, and that after such a manner, as that the flesh forgetteth all hardness and difficulty that is in its way in the service of God, and so forbears all swelling or rising up against it.

If you shall be "filled with the Spirit," you will hereby be enriched with many noble, excellent, and

worthy dispositions of heart and soul, which will lead and carry you forth with a strong hand upon all occasions to works and actions of an high and sacred import : It will relieve you against the natural scantness and narrowness of your hearts in this kind ; and cause you, with Abraham, to be numbered amongst the friends of God, and benefactors to the world, and no opportunity of doing good shall escape you : It will cause you to look upon yourselves, with Paul, as “ debtors to the Greeks and barbarians, to the wise and to the unwise ;” that is, unto all persons of mankind without exception ; and will give you no rest in your spirits but only whilst you are paying what you owe in this kind, or at least preparing and putting yourselves into a condition to pay accordingly. I began to say unto you, that it would make you like unto Jesus Christ himself, in prince-likeness and true greatness of Spirit : It will draw you into part and fellowship, and this in abundance, in the same design, and prevail with you to make one purse, and to cast in your lot with him ; it will give you the confidence and courage to say unto him as Jehosaphat said to king Ahab, “ I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses ;” you will join with him, with all the strength you have, and all the friends and power you can make in the world, in that great and blessed work and engagement which is now upon his hand, and which he is carrying on day and night ; I mean, the advancement of the peace and happiness of the world.

By being “ filled with the Spirit of God,” you shall be enabled to pray unto God ; and this more effectually, and with greater acceptance, and upon far better terms, than any other way : “ Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities : For 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. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the

mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." If this be proper to the Spirit simply, and where he is in a lower and lesser degree; then, certainly, where there is a greater presence of God, and where he filleth the hearts and souls of men with his presence, there he riseth and advanceth in a more excellent manner, with greater accommodations, teaching them how to pray, meaning the manner how they should pray. Now, in that he is said to relieve our infirmities, and to help our ignorances, when we pray; and so to teach the saints to pray as they ought, by making intercession for them; the meaning is, that he teacheth them a prayer of a more excellent and of a more spiritual import, and teacheth them how to present this prayer of theirs upon terms of a richer and more high acceptation unto God.

Now, of how great and blessed a consequence is it unto you to be enabled to pray effectually, to carry things in heaven richly, and upon terms of highest acceptation! If we could but weigh this one privilege or advantage alone in the balance, we should find it to weigh more than all the silver and gold in the world. What! To be able to pray, yea, to pray unto God with acceptation; to pray so as to be able to prevail with God, and that about great matters, for states and kingdoms; as they may that have an interest in heaven; as such persons we speak of have! Such men might carry the world before them, they might pluck up states and kingdoms, they might be as great in heaven as Nebuchadnezzar was here upon earth: "Whom he would he set up, and whom he would he pulled down;" so, had we interest in heaven, as we might have, we might do likewise. It is like, we are at such a pass as the disciples were at, when it is said, that they believed not for joy when Christ came first among them; the consideration of his being rose again from the dead was a business of such a mighty consequence, such a matter

of joy, that it became a stumbling-block in the way of their faith: They believed not for joy, that is, they were not capable of the most demonstrative arguments and convictions, as when he showed them his hands and his feet, and talked with them: This is the case of this great privilege I speak of, namely, of carrying matters in heaven; we are conscious to ourselves that we are poor and weak men and women, whom the men of this world are generally ready to be treading and trampling under foot, and to despise. O, my brethren, the things we speak of, how incredible above measure are they! Yet it is a most certain and an undoubted truth, that if we be filled with the Spirit of God, we might pray at such a rate, and after such a manner, that we might carry our petitions in heaven, and even whatsoever we should ask in the name of Jesus Christ, according to the will of God. And there being no way, at least no way of certainty, to heap up these treasures in heaven, to lift up your heads on high, and that to eternity, amongst those that shall be partakers of the same glory with you, to enlarge your capacities, respectively, for blessedness and glory; but by being "filled with the Spirit;" this must needs highly commend such a qualification or privilege as this unto you, and cause your hearts to burn in longing desires after it.

It is true, the heart of a man requires much hammering before this building of the old man will fall, before the flesh and lusts thereof will be subdued; but would men be faithful unto the interest of their own souls, this blessed work might be accomplished: For the word of God is abundantly furnished, there is enough in it wherewithal to subdue that, or those lusts which are most disturbing; enough quite to change and alter the property and constitution of a man, and to reduce those that are most froward to the greatest gentleness, and those that are most fiery and turbulent in their spirits to the greatest meekness and patience.

I say, If men would but set that wisdom which is from above on work upon their hearts and spirits, this would fill up all the valleys, and bring down all the mountains, and reduce the frame of the heart and soul of such a man who thus employeth it into a conformity with itself; namely, in purity, peaceableness, gentleness, and an easiness to be entreated.

If it be the will of God that all men, especially believers, should be filled with the Spirit of God, then take knowledge from hence, that a "being filled with the Spirit" is no impossible attainment; is an estate of happiness which is accessible to the endeavours and engagements of men: Why else should God call men unto it, or impose it as a duty upon them? Doth he invite or exhort the saints to impossibilities? Those whom he desireth to put beauty and excellency upon,—doth he invite these to do things absolutely and altogether out of their reach? Doth he persuade men to purchase the wind, or to lay out themselves for that which can never be had or enjoyed? Surely he doth not, because it is not a thing that doth any ways answer the infinite grace and wisdom of God. Some men, indeed, strive to persuade themselves and others, that God commandeth many things which he intendeth not that any man should perform; yea, and which he knoweth are impossible for any man to perform; but I trust none of us know these depths of Satan; I mean, are spiritually adulterous with them in our minds or thoughts, or practically know them. To be persuaded to think that God intends not, desires not, our obedience unto whatsoever he demands of us,—what is it but to break the very heart, and to cut in sunder the very sinews, of our obedience, and weaken the hand of our preparations that way, and to tempt ourselves to a neglect of the commandments of God; yea, and to dishearten and discourage men from so much as the knowledge of what is commanded them of God? For

if they shall know their Master's will, and yet not do it ; (and do it they cannot, if the intention of God stand in opposition hereunto, or if they want ability to do it ;) I say, to know the will of God, and not to do it, is to incur the danger of being beaten with many stripes, and to bring the sorer condemnation upon themselves : Therefore, we need not demur upon this point, or doubt but that whatsoever God hath commanded us to do, yea, or shall exhort us unto, he hath put us into a capacity of doing it, at least, into a mediate or remote capacity, from which we may, through the grace of God, that is never wanting unto us in this kind, advance unto that which is immediate, and within reach of the duty or performance itself.

If the doctrine be true, take we notice from hence yet further, that it is the will and desire of God we should be excellent, that we should be a royal priesthood indeed unto him ; that we should live the life of angels, both in point of holiness and of happiness.

For poor creatures who dwell in houses of clay, and are compassed about with mortality, to be [thus] in respect of their inner man, in reference to any troubles, or things formidable, that may assault them ;—for them, I say, to have communion with God in this heavenly privilege, to laugh all troubles to scorn, to be like unto a mountain, or a great rock before storms, and tempests, and whirlwinds ; how glorious above measure must such a state and condition be ! To have the heart and soul like the upper region of the air, where there are no disturbances or commotions ; where to be, as I said even now, they may be able to laugh all enemies to scorn ; not to be afraid of what either men can, or what God will, do unto them,—this is a most Divine privilege ; especially, the obnoxiousness and weakness in this kind of the generality of the hearts of men considered, it must needs be a very rare and high attainment for any to live out of the reach of fears.

XII.—PRACTICAL PIETY.

IF this be the grace and bounty of the great God of heaven and earth, that he will not be served by his creature for nought, but hath both purposed and promised to recompense all services, and whatsoever good thing any man doeth, sevenfold into our bosoms; let us all be exhorted and persuaded from hence, without any consultations had with flesh and blood about the matter, to consecrate ourselves this day, and so for ever, to this blessed service: Let us, out of hand, enter our names in the list or roll of his servants, and resolve from henceforth to work to the throne of heaven; let all other work, which is inconsistent with the work of God, be an abomination unto us, and let all our right hands forget their cunning whenever they shall offer to lift up themselves unto it: And as for that master, to whom we gave ourselves, indeed, as servants to obey in the days of ignorance,—I mean unrighteousness, or sin,—let us break his yoke from about our necks, and cast his cords from us; let us trample his authority under our feet, and make an escape from his iron furnace; that so we may be at perfect liberty to run the ways of the commandments of God, and have nothing to do, nothing to look after, but only the advancement of his throne and glory, and things subservient thereunto.

But lest this may seem a hard saying to flesh and blood, to men that neither have known God, nor what his service meaneth, (being the men whose peace in special manner we labour and travail with in this exhortation,) to be called off from the ease and pleasure of the flesh, and from the service of mammon, who giveth them wages daily which they see, and taste, and handle, to serve an unknown master, whose worth and service do no ways suit or sort with their spirits; I desire to propound a few motives or considerations to

ease the burden of our exhortation, and which, by the blessing of the Most High upon them, being once gotten into their hearts and inward parts, may render the service of God sweet and desirable above all things unto them.

He is that God, of the treasures of whose wisdom, goodness, power, glory, majesty, there is no end, nor ever shall be: He is a God from everlasting to everlasting. If the greatness of a master be any recommendation of the service; if to pour water on hands that are honourable be an employment of higher satisfaction to the minds of men, than on those that are meaner; if attendance upon majesty and greatness be rather wages than worth, honour than service; then hath the service of the God of heaven the pre-eminence; and no other employment, no other service, whatsoever to be desired in comparison thereof; because his throne ruleth over all,—he is infinitely exalted above all gods.

This service of God, whereunto we exhort and persuade, is due debt from his creature: All reason, equity, and conscience, stand up to plead the right and title of the Almighty hereunto. First, the law of our creation or being settlcth this tribute we speak of upon God. He that is Alpha by will and good pleasure, is Omega by right and conscience: The beginning of a thing deserves to be the end of it.

The law of protection seconds the law of creation, and joins hand in hand with it to maintain God's right to the creature's service. He that saves a man's life, having a lawful power to take it away, purchaseth to himself a just title to the best improvement thereof. Now, God, we know, is the great, and gracious, and mighty Protector of the world: He defends the whole earth with his loving-kindness, as it were with a shield. "What shall I do unto thee, O thou Preserver of men?" saith Job unto God. "In him," saith the apostle, (that is, by or through him,) "we live, and move, and have

our being ;” namely, continued and made good unto us. And Christ is said to carry or bear up all things by his mighty word ; as if there were nothing that could either go or stand alone, or as if the whole creation were ready to sink right down into nothing, if Christ should let go his hold but a moment. And yet we know we are all obnoxious to him ; and long since put a sword into his hand, wherewith he might justly have slain us at once. He that protecteth us upon these terms, doth he gather in proportion above what he scatters, if he receive service and obedience from us ?

The law of preservation and maintenance strengthens his title hereunto yet further. “ Who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock ?” saith the apostle. Support and maintenance are ready to complain, and cry out of injury and wrong, if service be denied them.

Well, then, God being the great Foster-Father of the world, filling all our hearts daily with food and gladness ; he who, “ opening his hand, satisfieth the desire of every living thing,” as David speaketh, and putteth the staff of bread into the hand of all flesh, giving it strength, likewise, to support them ; how shall we despise such a great and solemn engagement as this ? How shall we break or cast away such golden cords as these from us ? that is, how shall we refuse to serve him ?

The law of redemption triumpheth yet above all the rest, in the vindication of God’s right and title to the best of our strength in his service. And as himself teacheth us to reason for ourself on the one hand : “ He who spared not his own Son, but gave him for us all to death, how shall he not with him give us all things ?” so, on the other hand, this love of his to us, so richly manifested in the death of his Son for us, teacheth us to reason against ourself (and yet not against ourself

neither, if we knew the things of our peace and glory,) for him. He who spared not his own Son, but gave him for us all to death, how shall he not for such a gift expect and look for all things from us? Yea, how shall we not for such a gift prevent his expectation herein, if it were possible, and even give him all things, though he looked for nothing? To dispute the interest God hath in us, or to demur upon his service, is to set abroad a new query in the world, and to ask for whom Christ died, whether for angels or for the seed of Abraham. He that is out of God's work, and despiseth his ways and glory, seems willing to comfort the devils, and to possess them with a hope, that it was the captivity of hell, and not of the world, that was turned by the death of Jesus Christ. There is no withstanding, no rising-up against, the majestical power and authority of this law; it leaves a man nothing of himself; it despoileth him of all right and power of living to himself, and seeking his own things; it seizeth upon all his heart, and all his soul, and all his mind, and all his strength; upon all that he is, and all that he hath, and all that he is able to do, for the use and service of the great God of heaven and earth: And all this it doeth by a strong and high hand of righteousness and equity; so that there is no man that acknowledgeth his redemption wrought, his ransom paid, by Jesus Christ, can murmur or complain in the least degree, that he is served neither better nor worse, as we say, than thus to be caught up out of himself, and from the earth, and, by a holy violence, constrained and compelled to serve above, and to attend the throne of heaven, and to live unto him that sitteth and reigneth thereon for evermore. Redemption by Christ is as the most gracious lawgiver in one kind, so the most severe in another, that ever was. God himself never gave law that reached so far or so deep into his creature; other laws and commandments of God it shook off from itself, and despised, and

yet God was able to bear it, and to overrule and keep back his fire and brimstone, that they brake not out to take vengeance of the transgressors : Yea, notwithstanding the contempt and disobedience of his creature to that law, yet he loved it still ; yea, with such a love that travailed with no less birth than the gift of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ out of his bosom, for the comfort, peace, and blessedness of it. But the law of that service which the gift of Christ, and redemption by him, imposeth upon man, is indispensable altogether, that knows no mitigation or compliance : All the grace, goodness, mercy, compassion, bounty, patience, long-sufferance in God, will never look after, never think the least thought of, making the least provision for the peace or safety of him that shall live and die in disobedience to it. There is no bit or bridle that will ever be put in the jaws of hell to keep it from falling upon such a man ; nay, hell will be ready to cry to heaven for more fire and brimstone, if it were possible, to advance the torment and destruction of such a creature.

This service of God whereunto you are exhorted is nothing but what is due unto him, by multiplicity of titles and engagements, from you. You must trample under foot right upon right, reason upon reason, equity upon equity, and turn head upon all conscience, if you will stand out and rebel against the voice of this exhortation. And know this; that if you will break all the golden cords by which God hath tied and bound you so fast to himself and his service, and cast them from you, God will gather them up from your hand, and turn them into scorpions, and make a terrible scourge of them, it may be for your consciences, by the way, but most assuredly for your souls in hell. Every reason that pleads for the service of God at your hands in this world, will plead for vengeance against you at the hand of God in that which is to come, if it be despised.

To make the necessity of your serving God more weighty and prevalent upon you, consider, that, as it is his right, so it is his commandment also, to be served by you. He hath declared and testified from heaven, that he is fully purposed to stand upon his right in this behalf, that he looks for the hearts and hands of all flesh to be lift up unto his commandments: "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling." He doth not simply command the service of men, but is very choice of the service he commands; it must be made savoury, and such as his soul loveth; it must be prepared for himself with that spiritual composition of fear and joy. So, again: "Serve the Lord with gladness," &c.; besides other passages in Scripture, of like importance and charge, without number. Now then, let it be seriously thought of, and laid to our hearts, as hot, or hotter, than they can well endure it, of what high concernment it is to the creature, both on the right hand and on the left, that the voice and commandment of God be obeyed. "I had rather obey than work miracles, though I could," was a strain of that wisdom which God gave unto his servant Luther. The truth is, that obedience is better than a being in heaven simply, because, without obedience a being in heaven would soon be turned into a being in hell, a position ratified by the fall of angels; whereas, on the contrary, a being in hell would soon be turned into a being in heaven, if obedience be found with it, a conclusion gloriously sealed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and his ascension into glory: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thy Holy One to see corruption." "Hath the Lord as great pleasure in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as when the voice of the Lord is obeyed?" saith Samuel to Saul; so that he that obeyeth the voice of God pleaseth him; and he that pleaseth God is a benefactor to many, and pleasures the world round about him.

God is seldom pleased but the windows of heaven are presently opened, and the blessings thereof poured down upon the earth. But, O! who is able to abide the heat of his indignation, when he comes to avenge the words of his mouth upon the disobedient and rebellious? What is it that puts the foundations of the world out of their course? that makes kings and princes to labour in the very fire? What is it that tears up the mountains by their roots, and carries them into the midst of the sea? What is it that shakes so terribly the earth, as it is at this day, nation being risen against nation, and kingdom against kingdom? What is it that causeth the sun to be darkened, and the moon to be turned into blood, and the stars to fall out of heaven, and the powers of heaven themselves to be shaken, that is, as some interpret, the holy angels, with astonishment at the great terror of the Almighty, falling on the earth? In a word, what is it that separates between the world and the peace of it, having the God of peace for its Protector and Ruler, that turns the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort into a consuming fire to it, but only the neglect and contempt of this great commandment of the Most High? He commands the world to serve him, and the world would make him serve with her sins; and this is that that the jealousy of him whose name is "Jealous" cannot bear. Thus the great breach is made upon the earth, and the whole world, in a manner, cast upon the bed of sorrow; yea, from the womb of the contempt of this commandment of God are the regions of darkness replenished with inhabitants, and the chambers of death furnished with guests, to be lodged in shame and torments for ever.

To ease the burthen of this exhortation to the service of God, where, I conceive, it wringeth and pincheth most upon the shoulders of natural and carnal men, consider, that if you be but once really persuaded

and made willing to take this yoke upon you, to consecrate yourself to this service of God, all the bitterness, and burthensomeness, and unpleasantness thereof unto you is past immediately. The greatest snare of death, wherein vain and inconsiderate men are taken and held from the service of God, I conceive, is this: They conceive and imagine, that the ways of God and religious courses, which are so contrary unto their natures, and wherein they taste a bitterness like death, for the present, will never be healed of this antipathy and unsuitableness to them, but will continue alike bitter and distasteful to the end; upon which apprehension the heart is enraged against all that is called "holy," and stands off at defiance with spiritual courses, feeding upon and strengthening it all with this reasoning, that it shall never be able to hold out in a way of that enmity and irksomeness to it; and so resolves never to taste or make trial of it, but seeks matter of pretence, and quarrel, and exception against it. Therefore, to remove this stumbling-stone out of the way of these men, and to represent the service of God upon more hopeful and desirable terms unto them than so, I desire this may be taken into knowledge and diligent consideration, that if men shall suffer themselves to be persuaded, to be really, truly, and inwardly willing, to embrace the service of God, by means only of this change in their minds and hearts, the troublesomeness and offensiveness of those ways and courses wherein God is to be served will be eased and taken away. To move upwards towards the circumference, is a motion as natural, and of as much ease and delight, to fire, as moving downwards towards the centre is to a stone or other heavy body; and a stone, if it were changed into fire, or had a contrary propensity of levity put into it, would perform the motion upwards with as much ease and contentment as now it moves downwards. So, to the fig-tree, it is no more labour or pains to bring

forth that sweet and pleasant fruit we call "figs," nor to the vine to bring forth grapes, than it is to the thorn to bring forth that harsh and sour fruit which is proper to it, or to the thistle, that unprofitable flower that grows upon it. In like manner, when the frame of the heart and bent of the will are changed, when new dispositions and inclinations are planted in the soul, ways of righteousness and holiness are as suitable unto him, and of as natural and sweet compliance with his spirit, as ways of vanity and looseness were whilst his heart was yet carnal. "It is joy," saith Solomon, "to the just to do judgment;" and what can it be more to the drunkard to be drunken, or to the unclean to practise uncleanness? David saith, that his "soul should be filled with marrow and fatness, when he remembered God on his bed;" and can the ambitious man's speculation of all his honours and greatness, or the covetous man's rumination of all his treasures and riches, yield them a more cordial extraction, or more spiritfult quintessence, than this? When the heart is renewed, there is an agreement made between the man and the commandments of God, and then they can walk friendly and lovingly together. Yea, it is not only true, that ways of holiness are as connatural and pleasing to a man, when he hath changed his carnal heart for a spiritual, as ways of sensuality were before: But there is seven times, yea, seventy times seven, more inward contentment and satisfaction to him in these ways now, than ever there was in those false and crooked ways of sin before.

Consider, how great the recompence of the reward is that belongs unto it, and is settled upon it, with as good security as heaven itself can give. Suppose the work were never so hard and sore, and that to serve God were to dwell among lions, or in the shadow of death, all a man's days; to "fight with beasts after the manner of men," as Paul sometimes did at Ephesus,

“to be as sheep appointed to be slain all the day long ;” suppose it would turn our black hairs into white before their time, and bring the symptoms of fourscore, as Moses expresseth them, upon our strength at twenty or thirty, even pain and sorrow ; suppose we should spend our whole portion, and all we have in this world, in it, yea, and be spent ourselves upon it ; what were all this, in comparison of the far more exceeding great reward which attends the end and issue of it, (besides what is received in present, and concurrently with the work, which, though it be but first-fruits and gleanings, yet is it better than the whole lump or vintage of the world,) and which is in the hand of the great Master who is served, ready to be given, “in good measure, heaped up, pressed down, shaken together, and running over into our bosoms ?” The nations of the world are many, and the inhabitants of the earth innumerable : If they were mustered accordingly, they would make many armies, great and terrible : Yet, in respect of the infinite greatness of God, “behold, the nations are as the drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust in the balance,” which will not so much as cast the scale ; yea, “all nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity.” Doubtless, there is the same disproportion between all the troubles, difficulties, losses, crosses, offences, inconveniences in every kind, accompanying the service of God, and the reward belonging to it ; they are all but as the drop of a bucket, or as the small dust of the balance, in comparison hereof ; yea, they are to be esteemed less than nothing ; yea, it were no hard matter for a servant of God, that knew how to manage such an advantage to the best, to take the very hope and expectation of his future reward, and, by the power and glory of it, to make himself past sense and feeling of any thing he suffers or endures in this world, in the way of his service. “But I pass for nothing,” was the

invulnerable temper and condition that Paul had wrought himself up unto, in this kind: Bonds and afflictions he passed not for, nor for any thing else of that nature. What shall I, or what can I, say more? If men either desire to fulfil the course of their pilgrimage on earth with joy, or to see the days of eternity in heaven, or seek the good things of this world, or of that which is to come, there is no means, no method, like to the service of God, to put us into possession of both desires. I know nothing but godliness, which is, in effect, the service of God, that hath either the promise of this life, or of that which is to come; but sure I am that this hath the promise of them both; and as sure I am that, having the promise, it hath, and shall have, the performance also. Men that can love death, as Solomon speaks, that can make joy of torment, and happiness of misery, that can neglect and despise all that the great and mighty God can do, either for his creature or against his creature, either in this world or in that which is to come, may turn the back upon the voice of this exhortation, and keep their liberty and freedom to serve sin: But you that can relish the love of God, and love to walk in the light of his countenance; that can tell what to do with peace and comfort on earth, or with crowns of glory and equality with angels in heaven; that neither love the smell of fire and brimstone by the way, nor the torment of it at your journey's end; open your bosoms wide, and lose not the least breath of the exhortation given; desire, love, embrace the service of the most high God; pray for enlargement of heart and soul, that you may desire, love, and embrace it yet seven times more.

Now, in the doctrine delivered, this property of goodness we speak of, which we may call "self-communication," is gloriously manifested, and that from the greatest subject of it in heaven and in earth; yea, from him to whom goodness is essential, yea, essence itself. His

goodness serveth him as David's zeal to his house dealt by him; "it even consumed him and ate him up," it left no David for David to care for or regard; so the exceeding goodness of the Most High hath given away and bestowed Him with all his greatness, majesty, and power, upon his poor creature; he hath made away himself from himself, as far as his power was to make the alienation. "He cannot, indeed, deny himself," saith the apostle; but his goodness, it seems, hath tempted him to make a fair attempt to do it. It is the excellent prerogative of his infinite and incomprehensible being, to do with himself what he will, what he can to the uttermost, to give, bestow, alienate, exchange himself, &c., and yet to be never the further off from the entire and full possession of the enjoyment of himself, but rather to enjoy himself with the most advantage at the greatest distance.

So is it the native and genuine property of created goodness to quit and leave the centre, to walk the circumference; to forget one, that it may remember many; to be thrifty and sparing at home, that it may be liberal and magnificent abroad; and the reward of this goodness is, the further it issueth and goeth abroad from home, the richer laden it still returneth, and maketh the greatest earnings of its own expenses. That greatness which watereth not, which refresheth not its own root by watering of others, that seeketh not its maintenance, enlargement, and exaltation by the lifting up others from the dust, will soon vanish like a pillar of smoke, the root of it will soon be rottenness, and the blossom thereof rise up as the dust. There is nothing good but that for which something is the better.

The church and people of God having this special interest in God, which makes him *theirs*, if they love him, what singular or strange thing do they? In this respect, they love but their own, which every man is apt to do. Many, when they see the servants of God carried

on with a hand of affection and zeal in his worship, watching daily at wisdom's gates, and giving attendance at her posts, serving him night and day, and that instantly, or else engaged deeper than ordinary either in their estate, credit, friends, liberty, life, &c., for the advancement of his glory, make darkness of light, and interpret that strength of affection, which ruleth thus gloriously in the ways and practices of such men, to be nothing else but either weakness of judgment, or strength of hypocrisy, and dissimulation. They either think they have lost their own wits to make such unnecessary expense and waste of themselves; or else gained in some of the old serpent's subtlety and craft unto them, whereby he "transforms himself into an angel of light," for advantage' sake. And this Erasmus reports, that Luther, in his time, seemed, to the generality of men, partly a fool and partly a knave, as we use to speak. "The spiritual man," saith Paul, "is judged of no man;" that is, is not rightly and truly judged of by any man, (but only by his own society, men that are spiritual like himself,) by any certain rule of judgment, because his grounds, principles, ends, relations, &c., are not known, believed, or comprehended by other men. But though he be judged of no man in this sense, for the reason given, yet is he judged and re-judged over and over, after a fashion, by all sorts of men; and no man hath more verdicts and censures past upon him than he, and these as wild and inconsistent with themselves as lightly can be; as it is with unskilful archers, that shoot over and under, and on both sides, but never come near the butt or mark they shoot at.

But if men did fully apprehend and believe this special relation of theirs we speak of, this peculiar interest they have in God, it would neither be thought either defect in wisdom, or excess of dissimulation, that such should with that freeness give out their strength

unto him, and bestow themselves, with that which is theirs upon him, but would judge it a sober, orderly, and well-resolved course; a course whereunto the wisdoms, discretions, and even natural inclinations of men usually conform themselves in other things. Nebuchadnezzar, doubtless, was at great expenses, and lavished gold apace out of the bag, what other inconveniences soever he put himself upon, when he built that royal palace at Babel; but because it was his *own*, and “for the house of his kingdom, and the honour of his majesty,” I know none that have risen up against him to censure or condemn him for his magnificence in that kind. If he had built for another, no way related to him, after such a rate and proportion of charge, men might well have asked how the king and his treasure came so soon parted; and have deemed him greater in power than in wisdom. And, generally, when men do bestow cost upon things that be their own, whether it be for their credit, profit, or the like, if the subject upon which it is bestowed or laid out,—as for example, house, lands, wife, children, or the like,—will reasonably, or but tolerably, bear it, it is passed over as a matter of no great observation; men are not taxed with the transgression of any rule or law, either of honesty or discretion, in such a case.

Behold, is he not *their* God? Have they not a *peculiar* right and propriety in him? “He that loveth his wife,” saith the apostle, (and, may not I say much more? “He that loveth his God,”) “loveth himself;” yea, he that loveth his God most, loveth himself most; and doth it argue either want of wit or honesty that men should love themselves? Or what greater honour and esteem, yet what greater profit and advantage, can, in a regular way, be expected than that it should be publicly known and acknowledged in the world, that God, whom we serve, and in whom we have a propriety as our own, is the only true God, a God of infinite goodness, power,

and majesty? The true God is called "the glory" of those that worship him. They changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. As, on the contrary, to be mistaken in a man's God, to worship and serve, and to be coupled with, a strange god, with a filthy idol, (as the best of all worshipped gods are, the true God only excepted,) is a great reproach and stain to the dignity and excellency of a man. "They went to Baal-peor, and separated themselves to that shame," &c. "You set up altars to that shame," &c.; yea, to be under question or just suspicion of such an error and great evil, is not a thing so well consisting with any man's reputation in the world. Now, that a man hath indeed the Lord for his God, as David speaketh, that he that is God indeed hath revealed himself unto him, and that the devil hath not furnished him and provided him of a god, is a thing which cannot fully be manifested by any other light whatsoever, but only by pouring out ourselves and our whole substance freely and willingly in his worship and service. And may not thoughts of jealousy be justly taken up against a man, that he hath some ignoble god for his god, that he goeth not above the sun, moon, and stars, if he goeth so far, to fetch the deity he worshippeth, when the sacrifice he offers is only the lame and torn of his flock; when he serves him with an evil eye, or thinks anything too good or too great for him? "Cursed be the deceiver which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing." But why should such a man be cursed? or how is he a deceiver? The reason of both followeth, and is the same: "For I am a great King, saith the Lord of Hosts:" Implying, that he that worshippeth or serveth God in a low, sparing, loose, and perfunctory manner, is an enemy to his greatness, and glory of his majesty, and goeth about, as it were, to persuade the world, that God is not the God which indeed he is, so great and terrible; and so deceiveth it.

XIII.—PRAYER.

IF you desire that your anointing should be rich and full, you must employ your angel which God hath given to serve you in this and all other your spiritual occasions about it ; I mean the spirit of prayer which you have received from God. Many great and excellent things, you well know, are spoken of prayer in the Scriptures : That it is a key to open heaven as oft as we desire ; a messenger that, if his despatch be thereafter, will fetch us any thing out of the treasury of God that we stand in need of. You know, also, that heap of promises and encouragements which the Lord Christ himself hath heaped upon the head of prayer : “ And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and you shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth ; he that seeketh, findeth ; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.” First : These words, “ And I say unto you,” &c., seem to imply that what he was now about to say unto them concerning the marvellous efficacy and acceptation of prayer with God, if another one should have said it, it might reasonably seem doubtful or questionable in point of truth unto them : “ But I would have you to take knowledge that it is I that say it ; you may believe it upon the account of my authority ; though it be, indeed, a great and strange saying, and hath a world of gr̄ace in it, yet,” saith he, “ this is enough sufficiently to balance this,—I say it.” Now, by “ asking,” “ seeking,” “ knocking,” our Saviour, questionless, meaneth all kinds or variety of prayer ; intending to declare and signify some such thing as this unto us,—that, if men be sincere and upright-hearted in their praying unto God, whether the manner or form of their prayer be of this kind or of that,—whether it be asking, seeking, or knocking,—it shall be of like acceptance with God, and shall obtain what is desired. If

any man will please to adventure upon any narrow distinguishing of asking, seeking, and knocking, he may do it after some such manner as this is, though I would not have too much to be given to the notion:—"Asking," very probably, may be such a kind of prayer which is right-down, where there is little or no argument, or little or no Scripture-rhetoric; but only a right-down, and direct, and immediate asking, signifying unto God what it is that a man would have without any more ado. And "seeking" seemeth to be a more exact or enlarged kind of prayer, wherein a man goeth about to fortify his heart to believe that he shall receive the things that he prayeth for, by considering such and such arguments and grounds in Scripture; so that it noteth a kind of diligence, and such an engagement of a man which taketh up much of his time. And, "to knock," that may seem to signify a kind of prayer with importunity. As some men are right-down, and cannot use many words, nor form and fashion a prayer with that dexterity and commendableness which others can; so there are some that are importunate, and with a kind of less curiosity than others are. Now, the promise is not made jointly unto them thus: "If you ask, and if you seek, and if you knock, you shall receive, find, and it shall be opened unto you." No; but there is the same promise in effect and substance made unto every one of them apart: "Seek, and you shall find; ask, and you shall receive; and knock, and it shall be opened unto you," &c. Now, to secure and establish them to whom he spake, that they, howsoever, should obtain their desire of God in prayer, in what form or manner soever they should pray, he delivereth this general rule or gracious declaration in the name of God, that "every one that asketh, receiveth; and he," that is, every one, "that seeketh, findeth; and to every one that knocketh, it shall be opened unto him; for every one that asketh, receiveth," &c. As if he should say, "You that are my disciples, and believe in

me, you may be confident that what good thing soever you shall ask of God in prayer, it shall be done ; for, or because, ‘ every one that asketh, receiveth,’ ” &c.; meaning, that God’s will and gracious good pleasure is, that you, and such as you are, should have whatsoever you ask of him,—always supposed that you ask things meet for him to give, and things that are good and meet for yourselves to receive.

If it be here demanded, “ But if God be so willing and free, as you have said, to give his Holy Spirit unto men, why doth he impose the condition of prayer upon them in order hereunto ? Why doth he not give it unto them without prayer ? Or how shall they to whom it is not, or hath not been, given pray for it ? Can men pray for the Spirit of God without this Spirit, so as to obtain the gift of him from God ? ” To these things I reply : God may be exceeding willing and free to give his Holy Spirit unto men, and yet not be willing to give him in any other way, and upon any other terms, than of men’s applying themselves unto him by prayer for the obtaining this gift of him ; yea, his declaring of himself in this point unto men—I mean that upon their prayer he will give his Spirit unto them—is a clear argument that he is ready and willing to give him ; for will any man teach another how, or by what means, he may come by such or such a thing, which he hath no mind or desire that he should have or come by ? Surely no man will do it. The reason, then, why God requireth prayer at the hands of men, in order to the obtaining of the gift of the Spirit from him, is not to make the obtaining of the gift more difficult, or because he is in any degree loath or unwilling to give him ; but because the transcendent excellency or infiniteness of his wisdom requires such a thing as this of him, judging it meet to enact such a law whereby he should subject his creature man to the condition of prayer, for the obtaining of such a donation or gift as this is from him, and that he should not give

it unto him in any other way. And this meetness we ourselves are capable in part to conceive and apprehend ; for upon a like ground or account it is that we nurture our children, at least many discreet parents do, submissively to ask of us such things as are necessary and meet for them before we give them unto them. As our Saviour himself also seemeth to intimate in those passages [of Scripture :] “ If a son asketh bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone ? or if he ask a fish,” &c. By these expressions it seems it was the manner amongst the Jews, in our Saviour’s days, to ask their parents such things as they desired or stood in need of before they gave them unto them. And as God shows no unwillingness, as hath been said, to give his Holy Spirit unto men, but rather a readiness and propenseness in him in this kind, to give him, by enjoining men to pray for him ; so neither doth his requiring righteousness and holiness in men to render them capable of happiness and blessedness from him any ways prove or intimate in the least any unwillingness in him to make them blessed, but the contrary rather,—I mean a great desire in him to make them blessed.

The Spirit is in some measure or degree graciously vouchsafed unto every man coming into the world, inasmuch as every man is enlightened, at least to some degree, to see and discern the things mentioned ; and so, likewise, is secretly minded and put upon it to do things that are apprehended just, and good, and meet to be done ; for that which men’s consciences do, or are said to do, in this kind, they do by the help and motion of the Spirit of God within them. Therefore, from hence it followeth, that whosoever shall pray for the Spirit doth not pray for it simply without the Spirit ; though, possibly, he may pray for it without any such presence or assistance of the Spirit, which is found in true believers, I mean in those who believe to justification.



If it be here replied, and said, that “without faith it is impossible to please God;” therefore no presence of the Spirit, without faith, can enable men to pray any prayer unto God with acceptation, and, consequently, not any prayer upon which the Holy Ghost can be attained; I reply, that, as the apostle affirms it to be in the case of contributing to good works, “that if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted,” or rather he, or the man, is accepted, “according to that which he hath, and not according to that which he hath not;” meaning, that if he be willing in his way, and doeth that which he is well able to do, God doth accept him, and doth not reject him, or disapprove him, because he doeth not more than he is able to do: So it is in any other kind of endeavours or engagements of a man whatsoever; for there is the same reason of others which there is of this. If a man doeth that, or be willing to do that, which he is able to do, I mean well able, human infirmities considered, this is accepted with God, though it comes not up to the perfection or degree of worth which is found in the same kind of action performed by other men. Therefore, he that prayeth unto God, suppose it be for the Holy Ghost, according to the ability of praying which God hath given him, he is accepted with him.

It is worthy our taking notice of, by the way, that when we pray for the repentance or the conversion of a child, or friend, or whoever, if we pray regularly, and agreeable to the mind and will of God, we do neither pray simply nor absolutely for his repentance; as if in case he should not be brought to repentance, then God cannot be said to have heard or granted our prayers; nor yet conditionally either in such a sense, as if we should, or in duty ought, to leave him at liberty, whether he would grant our prayers in this kind or no; for he hath not left himself at liberty in such cases, neither would he have us leave him at such a liberty.

But when we pray for the conversion of a child, husband, wife, or any other person, our prayers ought to be absolute in this kind ; that he would be pleased to vouchsafe to entreat the person for whom we pray very graciously and effectually by his Spirit, in order to the bringing him to repentance ; that he will move and incline his will with a high hand of persuasive power, that if it be possible he may not any longer remain impenitent. This is the tenor or effect of any prayer that can be made advisedly and regularly according to the will of God, for the repentance or conversion of any. But if this be the sense of our prayers, that God would compel men to repent ; or, which is the same, (though there hath been much beating of the air to find, or rather to make, a difference,) that he would incline his will by an irresistible power hereunto ; this is not according to the will of God, nor doth he convert any man, nor will he, upon the prayers of an angel in heaven, bring any man to repentance, upon such terms as these. Nor doth it stand with his wisdom, nor with the great end of his glory, which he hath on foot, and carrieth on from day to day in his government and administration of the world. Yea, and though the repentance of the person for whom we pray upon such terms should follow, yet it is not to be imputed to our prayers, as if they obtained it ; though, haply, that good and Christian intention out of which we may pray in such a case may prevail with God for that grace to be given unto him who is prayed for by which he is brought to repentance. So then, that which I say is this, that though a person hath been a long time loose, careless, and profane, a despiser of God and of his grace, yet, if his condition hath been frequently and fervently commended unto God by prayer, and this by persons of any considerable interest in God, such as Noah, Daniel, and Job ; all their prayers may possibly meet together in one, and centre in some more than ordinary excita-

tion of the heart and soul of such a person by the Holy Ghost,—as in the hearing of a sermon, or some other like opportunity,—by the advantage whereof he may possibly be brought to repent and believe.

Your humble requests and earnest strivings and strugglings with God for the pardon of the sins you have confessed, as well national as personal, the putting forth your strength and might, yea, and the increasing your strength and might, the provoking your hearts to do more and more in this kind, in importuning the God of mercy to pour out his grace and goodness abundantly upon your persons, and upon your land, in all manner of expressions thereof, which concern the peace either of the one or the other. For there is no man but if he hath once smitten the rock of his heart, and gotten out prayers and requests unto God, let him smite the second and the third time, and he shall find that the waters will still flow more and more; for there is spring upon spring, desire upon desire, many rich veins and mines of this treasure that might, with labour, be digged out of the soul.

You must not think that the good, the reward, that comes upon those services, is from the merit or desert of any thing you do, or from the strength or worth of grace received, to go through such a work, when you have caused your voice to be heard on high; no, you must know that all the blessing and the virtue that seems to come out of such things, even the holiest duties, in the holiest manner performed, lies rather in the strength of the promise of God, in that truth and faithfulness of his which inclines him to perform, and make good, all that grace and goodness that he hath been pleased to settle and confirm, under the great seal of heaven, unto such duties and services as these.

As the seekings and services and addressments of particular persons unto God have never been unrewarded by him, but were still returned with abundant

consideration into their bosoms, and that, for the most part, even before the sons of men, in very gracious and large expressions in outward mercies and blessings of this life; so have the seekings and addressments of whole societies of men, of cities, states, and kingdoms, unto him much more. I do not believe, that any one instance or example can be produced out of the sacred records of the Scripture, wherever a city, nation, or people did humble themselves before God, especially with prayer and fasting, but the windows of heaven were opened upon it, and the blessings and mercies sued for poured down upon them. When the children of Israel were for their sins sold into the hand of the king of Aram, and were oppressed and kept under subjection by him, we only read of their crying unto the Lord, and soon after he stirred up a deliverer unto them, who brake the yoke of this bondage from off their necks. In like manner, when, upon a new score of provocations, God had suffered Eglon the king of Moab to oppress them, the like cry and calling upon God presently fetched down from heaven another saviour unto them, who soon brake the staff of this oppressor also. A third time, when, notwithstanding former pressures and former deliverances, they fell yet again to their old trade of doing wickedly against the Lord, and he gave them wages fit for their work, and sold them into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, a stouter oppressor, it seems, than either of the former, for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; yet only suing and crying unto the Lord, as before, they soon got an execution, or a judgment against the nine hundred chariots, which was served by the hand of Barak and Deborah. Again, a fourth time, when they suffered grievous things under the Midianites, and were driven from their cities, houses, and dwellings, into dens, and caves in the mountains, and were mightily impoverished by them, as the story saith, yet the former

means of crying unto the Lord wrought so with him, that he presently sought and found them out a deliverer from under this calamity also. The rest of the tribes of Israel which had been twice beaten by the Benjamites, upon the second humbling themselves before God, obtained a victory.

If we should, by causing our voice to be heard on high this day, draw out of heaven and see brought to pass before your eyes, you will be, I conceive, as those that dream; you seek them, I fear, in some respect, upon the like terms (it were well if you did so in all) that the church of God sought for Peter's enlargement out of prison; they were at it close, and prayed earnestly for Peter's life and liberty; but yet they said, she was mad, though one of their own company, that brought them tidings that their prayers had prevailed, and had fetched Peter out of prison: So you weep, and mourn, and are troubled in your souls, and lift up your cries to heaven to obtain these mercies and suits from God. But if a man should come in amongst you, and should say to you, that your prayers and tears are accepted, that the Lord hath heard the voice of your weeping, and you shall have a speedy answer from heaven of all things; the iniquities of your people are forgiven; your land shall be healed, your enemies shall fall before you and lick the dust at your feet; the Gospel of Jesus Christ shall run and be glorified in the midst of you: I fear you would say, or at least think within yourselves, that such a man were mad. Well, follow you the work and service you have in hand, as those Christians did, and call and cry with your whole hearts: Though your faith and hope of particulars, especially of present prevailing, be as short and weak as theirs, in all likelihood, was; yet you have the same God to do with that they had, whose eyes are as open to the prayers of his servants at this day as ever, who cannot forget to be gracious, because he practiseth

continually, and keeps his hand in use daily and hourly.

If it be no part of God's meaning to be served by his creature for nought, but he will give rewards and be bountiful to those that serve him, and hath declared himself upon such terms ; then observe again from hence, by way of instruction, that it is a thing well-pleasing to God, and no ways offensive to him, for all men to provoke and stir up themselves to the service of God by the consideration of his bounty, and of those great and gracious things he hath promised to do for those that serve him. Doubtless, God would never have kindled this fire in the world, especially he would never have made the people so great, and heaped on wood in that abundance he hath now done to increase the heat and strength of it, if it had been unlawful for the creature to have warmed itself at it. What! hath God cast out these golden baits out of heaven to fish for the hearts and souls of men in the sea of this world, and is it not lawful for the soul to bait at them, yea, and to swallow them? Hath godliness the promises both of this life and of that which is to come, and may it not regard them? May it not touch, nor taste, nor handle them? May it not live and strengthen itself by the hope of enjoying them? Hath God planted so many trees, so many precious promises, in the paradise of the Scriptures, and is it not lawful to eat of any of them? Hope must be no longer a grace, but a sin, if it be not lawful both to look at and to look for the good things that God hath promised to those that love him.

The best, indeed, and most spiritual use that can and ought to be made of the promises and large recompences which God gives unto those that serve him, is, to use them as glasses, wherein to contemplate and behold the glory of the love, goodness, and bountifulness of God towards the creature, and so, indeed, to be more provoked to the love and service of God, by what

he seeth or feeleth of God, or from God, either in his promises or rewards, than by what he either seeth or feeleth of his own, or coming toward himself, in either. This, as the Scripture itself, I conceive, intimates unto us in the frequent expression of "seeking the face of God," meaning, by "the face of God," some favourable or gracious expression of himself unto us in some mercy, deliverance, or the like, wherein, as it were, the face of God, that is, his love, goodness, bounty, &c., is to be discerned; but sinful, doubtless, it is to neglect or pass lightly either by his promise or rewards, because these cannot be neglected or despised, but God himself must be despised in them, there being so much of him, of his grace, goodness, and bounty in them, it being every whit as true, and happily with truth of a greater weight and importance, concerning the promises of God, as it is concerning his precepts and commandments,—that he that despiseth them despiseth not man, but God.

If God be so gracious and bountiful in his rewards to those that serve him, then woe be to them that serve him not; "fire and brimstone and an horrible tempest" is like to be the portion of their cup. God's bounty and fulness towards those that serve him is a great presage of his heavy and deep severity and vengeance against those that despise him. "O consider this, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you!" Who are they that forget God? Not only they that never think of him, that never come in places of his worship, that never join in the outward exercises of religion, that never speak of him, &c. Men may do all these, and yet be of those forgetters of God that shall be torn in pieces by him, and have none to deliver them. To forget God, in Scripture phrase, is when a man doth not remember him with such a remembrance which produceth effects suitable to the nature, holiness, and glory of God, as love, fear, obedience, &c. Other kinds of remem-

branches of God will rather turn to men's heavier judgment and deeper condemnation than otherwise. To remember God with a neglect and contempt of him, is far worse than a total forgetfulness of him; as that knowledge of God which the Heathen had, not working in them the fear and service of God, made them the more inexcusable, and, consequently, laid them open to the greater vengeance.

The truth is, that all the judgments, all the threatenings, all the curses, all the wrath, all the vengeance, all the terrible and intolerable things that are found from the one end of the Scriptures to the other; they are burdens of the neglect of this serving of God, and shall be borne by those that do despise him; yea, all the wrath and indignation of the Almighty that is poured out in fire and blood upon the earth, upon the heads of kings and princes, of kingdoms and nations, of cities and people, are nothing else but the rebukes of Heaven for not serving him.

That hath been God's constant method in proceeding against a nation or people, to begin with rods, to go on with scorpions, and to make an end with lions, that tear all in pieces and devour; except he be met withal in the way of his judgments with repentance and tears; destruction, still rising and ripening and coming on towards perfection, as the corn doth to the harvest; first the blade, then the ear, and, lastly, the full corn in the ear. The impenitency and stubbornness of a people despoils the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort of all his bowels and compassions; they turn the God of all grace into a consuming fire; you must look to see your land an Aceldama, "a field of blood," and your cities and houses flaming up towards heaven like Sodom, except you compound with the Almighty for them in repentance; except you will ransom them with the casting away of your great transgressions. Sin, when once it hath drawn blood of you,

will never give over hunting and pursuing you to the death, except you first give over the following of it. A land of righteousness turned into a land of wickedness, without repentance, is no more meet or capable of the mercy of God towards it, than the ragged and steep rocks are for a horse-race, or to be ploughed with oxen.

Our Saviour's scope and drift, by this hypotyposis or comparison of the "unjust judge," who "neither feared God, nor regarded man," &c., was not simply to teach or prove that there is a like ground of hope that God, upon the importunity of his elect by prayer, will avenge them of their enemies and oppressors, with that which the widow had to overcome the unjust judge, and to prevail with him, by her importunity, to do her justice on her adversary; but to demonstrate a great overplus of hope, or certainty rather, that God, upon the terms mentioned, will avenge and deliver them. "And shall not God avenge his elect, which cry day and night unto him?" &c. As if he should have said, "Did the widow, by her importunity, draw water out of the flint, obtain an act of justice contrary to the nature and principles of him from whom she sought it? And is it not a thousand times more worthy hope, yea, and confidence of expectation, that God, who is naturally inclined to acts of grace and mercy, on the one hand, towards those that are oppressed, as, on the other hand, to acts of justice upon oppressors;—that he, I say, especially upon importunity of requests and solicitations made unto him by persons so highly respected by him as his 'own elect,' should in due time appear for their deliverance out of trouble?"

XIV.—PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

PARENTS especially are bound to lay up in prayers for their children, as well as in lands or money; and that which is laid up or, if you will, laid out, by worthy parents, for their children in prayers, is like to turn to a more certain account in benefit and good unto them than that which is laid up, or out, for them otherwise. And to this purpose is that saying of Jerome unto Monica, Austin's mother, who wept and prayed for her son's conversion night and day for a long time together, whilst he, like a lost sheep, was going astray in the error and vain practices of the Manichees; this woman, I say, making her moan to Jerome about this her son, received this answer from him, full of comfort: "A child that hath so many tears bestowed on him by a parent, could not perish;" meaning, could not lightly perish.

However men, degenerating into ways of sin and wickedness, prove a stain and a blot to the honour and memory of their worthy forefathers, and forfeit their right unto and interest in those promises of grace which are made by God unto their fathers; yet to come from the loins of parents singularly interested in the love and favour of God, is, simply and in itself considered, a privilege of a very choice and desirable import. That one only promise of God, wherein he promiseth to show mercy to a thousand generations in those that love him, is a demonstration hereof in abundance. He that hath a fair estate left him by his parents is, by means hereof, in a better condition, as to this present world, further from poverty or want, than he that is left, as we say, to the wide world, and must shift for himself; although it oft cometh to pass, that he that hath such an estate left him, through wasteful and unthrifty courses comes to beggary; and he that was born to inherit the dust of the earth only, is fed plentifully.

Christians stand bound in a more peculiar manner before God to endeavour the salvation of their kindred ; to do more, and suffer more, if need be, for their salvation than for other men's ; even as they stand charged, likewise, to provide outward things for those of their own house.

When our Saviour, having taken a little child, and set him in the midst of his disciples, speaking thus unto them, " Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me," we conceive that he clearly supposeth all children to belong unto him, and to be interested in that redemption which cometh by him. Otherwise, how should a child be said to be received in Christ's name, that is, to be looked upon, to be respected and tendered, as one of those for whom he vouchsafed to shed his blood ? When the Lord Christ saith elsewhere to his disciples, " Suffer little children to come unto me," giving this reason for it, " For of such is the kingdom of heaven ;" we conceive that he clearly avoucheth the happy estate of infants, whilst such, and, consequently, their non-reprobation by God.

We know not how to reconcile the tormenting of millions of poor infants, who never provoked God by any actual sin, with that philanthropy, those tender mercies, bowels, and compassions, that great propension and readiness to pardon, which the Scriptures so frequently, and with such expressness of words, depredicate in God. We judge, that all those scriptures and grounds which hold forth and prove the universality of atonement made by Christ in his death, do evince the safe estate and condition of all children dying before the commission of actual sin.

XV.—MINISTERS AND PEOPLE.

THERE would be one, or rather several, administrations lost in the world, if the Holy Ghost should furnish men and women immediately by or from himself with the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and the things of their eternal peace ; whereas by setting on foot such an ordinance as that of the ministry of the Gospel, he affords the world a great variety of administrations ; which, as it is a means of much good unto them, so doth it tend to the beautifying and adorning the world ; and it is a thing marvellously declaring the wisdom, the manifold wisdom, of God, that he knows how to furnish it with such almost incredible variety in every kind. For instance : If we look to the flowers of the field, herbs, plants, and all kind of vegetables, what great variety is there amongst them ! Now, what doth this but declare the infinite wisdom of God, in that he gives such variety of shapes, and colours, &c., unto them ; and withal hath given men wisdom and skill how to order them for their good, according to their several and respective natures and operations ? So, if we look into the sea, what an infinite number and various kinds are there both of great and small fishes ! So on the earth, what great variety of creatures are there ! And of fowls in the air there is the like ! Again : If we look into the firmament, what an infinite number of stars are there also, and that of several magnitudes ! And in all these creatures, what various natures, motions, colours, and properties are there amongst them ! So, likewise, in the great business of salvation, God, by erecting a ministry amongst men, and putting them upon it to have recourse unto this ordinance, to come by the knowledge of the things of their eternal peace, doth, as it were, beautify the world, in this great ordinance of preaching the Gospel, with many dispensations, wherein there are

many strains of his wisdom to be seen ; if any one of these should be wanting, or missing, it would occasion an *hiatus*, or empty place, in the dispensations of God. And, as one compared the taking away the ministry of the Gospel out of the world unto the taking the sun out of the firmament of heaven, which would cause a vacuity or emptiness, in respect of light, and, consequently, render the whole creation of God less lovely or desirable : In like manner, the taking away of this ordinance of the ministry of the Gospel would cause a great darkness, in respect of all other the dispensations of God, and there would be an empty place in the world. The ministry of the Gospel is in itself a thing exceeding lively, and penetrative, and effectual ; it will take men's hearts out of their bodies, and give them into their hands to see all that is within them : Many times it poureth out itself like a great flash of lightning, and makes men to see hideous shapes of thoughts, conceits, opinions, and apprehensions, on the one hand, and allureth, on the other hand, to ways of holiness and virtue, by strong and potent arguments or motives.

When the Gospel is preached sincerely, and as it comes from God, it casts forth a strong scent, and fills the nostrils of the souls and consciences of those that believe and submit unto it with a most odoriferous and pleasant savour of life, peace, and joy, in the love and favour of God ; as, on the other hand, it sends forth a strong scent or smell of the fire and brimstone of hell, and of the eternal vengeance of a most dreadful God, into the nostrils of all that are ungodly and disobedient. And in what degree the spirit of it shall be at any time stifled, clogged, or allayed, by any carnal ingredient, it looseth proportionably of the strength and vigour of either of these operations.

We are not able to conceive how the Gospel can, with simplicity, truth, and clearness of sense and notion, be

preached unto every creature under heaven, in this or any like tenor of words, "If thou believest thou shalt be saved," unless it be granted and supposed that Christ died for all and every man. For, in case it should be said to any man for whom Christ did not die, "If thou believest thou shalt be saved," such a saying cannot be justified nor avouched for truth; because where a commodity is not it cannot be had upon any condition or terms whatsoever. Now, certain it is, that there is no salvation in Christ for any man but only for those for whom he died. Therefore, to encourage such a man to believe for whom Christ died not, by saying unto him that in case he believes he shall be saved, is but to feed him with ashes, or to make him glad with lies. For how should such a man be saved, yea, though he should believe, for whom there was no salvation purchased by Christ? especially, considering that his believing in Christ would not invest Christ with any more salvation than was in him before, and, consequently, whether he believed or no.

If a minister of the Gospel should go and preach this doctrine to a numerous auditory of souls,—that God hath given his Son Jesus Christ to die for the salvation only of a small handful of men and women in the world, comparatively, and that none of them who were now before him had any certainty that they, or any of them, were of this number; yea, and that the best amongst men had very little ground to hope or think that he should be one of these few; and that the rest of mankind, let them do the best that they are able, shall, notwithstanding, be certainly damned; (for all this is nothing but the evident and express import of our brethren's doctrine;)—must not such a message as this, being believed, directly cause a fearful despondency of heart and soul, a general hanging-down of hands, amongst them, a quenching of all desires, and, consequently, of all endeavours, either to apply themselves to the means

of believing, or to the exercising of themselves unto godliness in one kind or other? Or doth such a doctrine as this any ways agree with that declaration which the angel made, concerning the Gospel, unto the shepherds?—"Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

Nor is there any way more dangerous unto men, or more threatening the great evil and misery of being emptied of the Spirit, than to despise prophesying, or the ministry of the Gospel, which is called "the ministration of the Spirit;" and the ministers of it, "the ministers not of the letter," (that is, not so much of the words, matter, or contents of the Gospel,) "but of the Spirit;" because the Spirit of God, according to the counsel and good pleasure of God in this behalf, is wont to join himself with the glorious truths of the Gospel, published and proclaimed by his messengers, when he hath an intent or desire to go forth into the world, and to visit the hearts and consciences of the sons and daughters of men. And as the Spirit ordinarily cometh unto the souls of men in a golden shower of evangelical truths, rained down upon them from the mouth of a church-angel; so doth he not only continue, but increase and enlarge, his presence in them, proportionably to that honour and obedience which is given by them unto those truths by which he was brought into their souls. Therefore, as the despising of prophesying, whether it be by undervaluing or neglecting the ordinance or dispensation of it, or whether it be by disobeying and casting behind their backs the holy counsels and Divine injunctions of it, is a ready way to "quench the Spirit;" so, on the contrary, to have this heavenly ordinance in high esteem, and, with constancy in attending upon it, to join a reverential and awful subjection unto the voice of it in our lives and conversations, is a method or means sealed by God

whereby to obtain that inestimable treasure of being "filled with the Spirit."

Such who, though they do not make it matter of conscience wholly to desert the ministry of the Gospel, nor rise up to plead in words against the blessing of it, yet are they chill and cool in their respect unto it; they do not esteem it as their appointed food; they are not zealous in their attendance on it; their hearts are not perfect with it: When they come to it, they come as if they came not, or cared not much whether they came or no, and so they hear as if they heard not. Satan with a very slender and slight temptation may interpose at any time, and separate between them and their attendance upon it. We know there are many thousands amongst us of that lukewarm and unworthy temper we speak of, who think it enough to wait upon God when he is speaking the words of eternal life by his messengers, (his servants sent unto them,) when they know not well where else to be, or what to do: They will offer sacrifice of that which cost them nothing, or else no sacrifice at all.

As men are wont to do when there is too much fire in the room where they are, for the season, and the heat beginneth to be a little troublesome or offensive to them, they lessen the fire by taking off some of the wood that is upon it, and so reduce the air in the room to a convenient temper: In like manner, that generation of men and women now under censure seem to moderate, stint, and limit themselves in their attendance upon the ministry; they will hear but now and then, lest the Spirit of God should come in too fast upon them, and they should grow too hot in their spirits, too full of heavenly heat to comport with the pleasures and profits, with the principles and ways, of the world round about them, without interruption or check from their consciences; and yet they would not be counted or seem to be profane neither, but would

willingly keep some fair correspondency with God and Christ, though at a distance ; that if there be such things as the worm that never dieth, or the fire that never goeth out ; I mean, hell and damnation on the one hand, or if there be happiness and glory, heaven and salvation, on the other hand, they may have somewhat to depend upon for an escape of the one, and an obtaining of the other. And the truth is, this seemeth to be the secret policy, the deep and profound reach, of the religion of the generality or far greater part of professors amongst us ; they project and design to yoke the two worlds, that which is present, and that which is to come, and to make them draw together. To make earnings of the world that now is, men and women labour in the very fire ; they rise up early, and go to bed late, and eat the bread of much carefulness day after day : They that are addicted to pleasures, and given up to voluptuous living, forecast, too, to make provision for the flesh ; they waylay opportunities and means for the gratifying of themselves in this kind ; yet there is neither the one nor the other of them but will keep an eye upon that world which is to come ; they will be doing somewhat this way, though it be to little purpose. If Jesus Christ teacheth in their streets, when the world and their ease and pleasures will give them leave, they will give him the hearing. On the Lord's day, when the world that now is stands still, and the world that is to come moves and stirs, these persons we speak of will give some formal attendance upon the ministry of the Gospel ; they will hear a sermon, or perhaps two ; and they think, that, by steering such a course as this, they shall make the port of heaven and salvation, if there be any such thing ; or, however, that they shall escape the wrath and vengeance which is to come, in case there be any such thing, which, indeed, is that which runneth most in their thoughts. These conceit that the golden gates of heaven,

if they be but touched with the least of a man's fingers, will fly open and give him entrance; that the great things of eternity will come upon them before they be aware; that a little time spent, now and then, when their ease and their profits will give way, will cause heaven and happiness to bow down unto them; whereas, their judgment of this present world is, that both the inner and outer man, with their highest contendings, sweatings, and strainings of themselves, are all little enough, or rather too little, to prevail with it to bless them, or give out its strength unto them.

And there are persons who, though they have not, as yet, with the first, wholly forsaken the ministry of the Gospel, nor seem, with the second, to be but loosely and indifferently affected to it; yet they do take a course in a short time to be emptied of the Spirit as well as either of the former; and this is by turning aside from the ministry, where it is lively and powerful, teaching wholesome doctrine,—as faith towards God, and repentance from dead works, where it promoteth godliness with an high hand, and, consequently, is like to fill men and women with the Spirit of God,—and turning unto and following a ministry that is like to fill them with wind and flatulent humours, with fond notions and conceits, either above, or besides, or contrary unto that which is written. The apostle speaketh of some, “vainly put up in their fleshly minds,” or irregularly puffed up; even as it is with some bodies that seem to be very fat, and full, and fair, and yet their fat is but a loose kind of flesh, or, it may be, it is nothing else but some dropsical humours, which any kind of sickness will quite cancel; and commonly such persons fall into the most desperate consumptions of all, when that loose fat forsaketh them; even so there are many loose professors amongst us, and have been in all ages, who have swollen in their minds and conceits into a great bulk: They judge themselves to be like the children of

Anak in spiritual matters, and other professors about them, but as grasshoppers, as men and women of low, and weak, and inconsiderable stature in respect of themselves. Now, there is, and for the most part always hath been, such a ministry of the Gospel (so called) which is apt to work this way ; though, to speak properly, it is no ministry of the Gospel, but only a kind of counterfeit of it, which seeks to commend itself unto the world for such ; yea, and to disparage that which is truly and indeed such in comparison of itself : But of that generation of men and women which forsake such a ministry of the Gospel which is savoury, wholesome, and sound, where the mind and counsel of God, concerning the peace and salvation of their souls, is effectually declared and held forth, and betake themselves unto that which will feed their fancies with vain and windy speculations and conceits, and let their lusts be quiet and not disturb them : Such a ministry as this they will not bear.

Curiosity is such a distemper in the heart or soul of a man or woman, which disposeth it to linger and lust after things that are rare, and which we know are enjoyed but by few ; and withal are unnecessary, and yield no benefit unto those that know and enjoy them, but rather are prejudicial and hurtful unto them ; for if the knowledge and enjoyment of things be really necessary and profitable, all things considered, the desire of knowing or enjoying them is no ways sinful, and, consequently, not savouring of curiosity, but regular, and approved by God : But when men and women, in matters of religion and things appertaining to God, shall by degrees decline and wither in their affections towards the hearing of such things which are wholesome, and sound, and edifying in faith and love ; and shall affect a knowing of spiritual things, higher and more mysterious and secret than those which are written and communicated by God unto the world in and by the

Scriptures ; this savours strongly of that sinful distemper of the soul which we call "curiosity."

Some call that ministry "legal" which urgeth and presseth upon the consciences of men, with all earnestness and zeal, those great duties of mortification and self-denial, and a thoroughness of subjection and obedience unto the whole will of God, though otherwise, upon occasion and as oft as it judgeth it necessary and meet, it effectually openeth the whole counsel of God unto men, concerning the freeness of his grace, as well in their justification as salvation ; together with all the secret strains, and all the turnings, and windings, and carriages of his wisdom in the Gospel, as far as they are ordinarily reached and discovered by men ; whereas this is the most evangelical ministry, and most likely to bring men to a true faith and belief of the Gospel.

It may be as truly and properly said of many ignorant persons in the land, and of Papists generally, that—worshipping God, as they think, but after such a manner, with such a worship, with such rites and ceremonies as the devil hath devised, (to be sure, God hath not,) and not with that worship which God hath prescribed,—they also worship and serve the devil, and not God ; because they obey the devil, and not God, and, therefore, according to Paul's rule, are his servants. Yea, even of those that know God savingly, and are truly godly, in the main, it may truly be said, that they also serve the devil, and not God, when, and as far as, they fulfil the devil's pleasure, and are led by that learning which he hath taught the world in and about the worship of God ; as, namely, when men join with polluted and mixed assemblies,—mixed, I mean, with openly profane and scandalous persons, and such of whose interest in Christ they have no ground or proof at all,—in the service of the Lord's table. So again : When they submit to the precepts and commandments of men, in matters of worship,

I do not say, when they submit to the things enjoined and commanded by men,—for this in many cases may be necessary and matter of duty to do, namely, when men enjoin the same things which God enjoineeth; but, whether in this or in any other case, when they make the injunction or precepts of men the reason and ground why they submit unto them;—in what case soever, I say, they do this, so far as they do it they serve the devil, and not God, because, it being the precept or command of the devil, and not of God, that men should submit to the wills or injunctions of men in the worship of God, they that do it obey the devil, and so serve him.

Though for a minister of the Gospel to build up men in the false and lying imaginations of their hearts, be none other than the casting of a snare of death and eternal ruin upon them, yet is there scarce any work or service for which they are, more generally, so willing to give large wages as for this. Now, give me leave, for your precious souls' sake, freely to tell you, that there is no sort of men under heaven so obnoxious to be merchandised, or sold for carnal advantage by their teachers, as men in places of power and authority, and where silver and gold have their throne; and this in more respects than one.

Such teachers are never like to be cordial or faithful to the dear interest of your souls, nor to make you great in the saving knowledge of God, who either, on the one hand, cannot willingly bear your frowns, neglects, or contradictions for the truth's sake, or, on the other hand, care not to offend you for a humour's sake, or a thing of nought. They are the men for your service in the Gospel who are most solicitous and intent to please you, and, withal, most fearless and regardless of displeasing you, for your good.

As David speaketh to the security, comfort, and joy of Israel, the church of God, "Behold, he that

keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep ;” so, on the other hand, may it also be said, for the awaking of Israel himself, that he may neither slumber nor sleep, either more, or otherwise, than may stand with his safety, that he that seeketh the destruction of Israel neither doth slumber or sleep : “ Your adversary, the devil,” saith St. Peter, (what ! sitteth still, or sleepeth ? No ; but,) “ like a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

Now, because satan would not willingly run thus up and down for his living, to pick out here a man, and there a man, to devour or prey upon ; (he counteth this but small gain, and little better than loss of time ; an allowance altogether unproportionable to the vastness of his devouring greediness ;) he, therefore, spreads his nets to take whole companies and congregations of souls at once ; to destroy men by whole towns, cities, nations, and kingdoms.

To bring to pass a design of this nature, a project of such an accursed and dismal consequence as this, there is no way more direct and compendious than to procure the fountains of living waters, of which all jointly drink, or the bread of life upon which all feed, to be poisoned, to convey death into the pot ; this is a way of quick despatch with the poor souls of men, if he can procure such a project as this to be advanced in any part of the world, where there is any necessity or occasion for him to desire to do it ; I mean, where God hath a church, or where truth of religion is planted. He needs not now run up and down, seeking whom, or which man, he may devour ; he may sit still and devour whole multitudes at once, without seeking further for them. If the waters be poisoned, the fisherman needs not be careful of his bait, how he may deceive the fish ; they will come to his hands alone, and lie dead upon the top of the waters ; he may take them up as he please.

When, in any place, the truth of God is universally tainted with pernicious and damnable errors, the souls of men are there unto satan, as "the fig-trees with their first-ripe figs; if they be shaken, they will fall into the mouth of the eater:" Little tempting will serve to effect the ruin and destruction of the souls of those men that have no better, no more wholesome, nourishment wherewith to be fed, than either the doctrines of devils, or traditions of men. The apostles of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, even in their days, discovered Satan close at his work, labouring by his agents and factors to undermine the spiritual peace and salvation of the churches of God, by corrupting those wholesome streams of saving knowledge which in plentiful manner issued forth from the sanctuary, from Jesus Christ in the flesh, into the world; and, accordingly, their care was both to withstand him themselves, for their times, with all their power, and also to leave a deep and weighty charge behind them upon all churches to beware of so dangerous an enemy, especially in so dangerous a machination and attempt.

Christ suffered death, that by such suffering he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; it is a new or further destruction to the devil to be thrown out of men's hearts, and lose his interest in the precious souls of men: This is his tumbling "down from heaven, like lightning." This was a second heaven to him, after he was thrown down from the third heaven, and the best he was now capable of, to be honoured and served like the Most High in the hearts of sinful, blind, and miserable man.

Now, as it was the power of God to throw him down from the third heaven; so, it was the weakness of God, the death of God being made man, that fetched him down from the second heaven, out of the hearts of men. And it is as much against his nature

and inclination,—as tormenting a destruction to him, —to lose this second heaven, as it was his first; and, therefore, he is said to “fall from this heaven like lightning;” that is, fully against his nature and inclination, with the greatest reluctancy and torture of spirit; as it is the greatest natural torment, as we may say, to fire, whose natural inclination and motion is constantly upwards towards the circumference, to be compelled and forced downwards towards the centre; and the more pure the fire is, as lightning is of the purest kind, it includes still the greater repugnance to the nature of it, to be forced downwards.

The bent, and inclination, and level of the Gospel is in the straightest line that can be imagined to be laid for the advancement of God, and his glory, and his Christ; and not at all for the carnal ends and purposes of men. It was never framed to serve turns. The highway of the Gospel lieth through the midst of men’s fruitful and pleasant fields; through their gardens, and orchards, and vineyards; yea, many times through the midst of their palaces and stately houses; through the midst of men’s honours and preferments, estates, pleasures, reputations, &c.: And so, if it be suffered to go forth in its own spirit, and take the way itself desireth and chooseth, it will make great spoil of men’s carnal advantages; it will tread and trample under foot the base and unworthy ends and designs of men; therefore, those men that are much intent upon such ends as these, which are so incommensurable with the great end of the Gospel, and cannot be content with God alone for their portion, must needs seek to turn the course of the Gospel another way, that they may suffer no loss or prejudice by it, in their particular ends. Yea, if it were possible, if the strength of their wit, and learning, and understanding, authority, and interest in others will reach to it; they will hail and bring over the Gospel to themselves; they will force

and compel it to plead for them and their ways ; they will take the words of the Gospel, and dispossess them of that Spirit of truth that lives and speaks in them, and will inform and animate them with their own spirits, and give such senses and meaning unto them as if God himself spake to the heart (as the Hebrew phrase is) of their fleshly minds and worldly ends.

Thus men do labour to persuade themselves, that gain is godliness, as the apostle speaks ; that honours and preferments are godliness ; that time-serving and pleasing men are godliness ; that opposition to the truth is godliness ; that drawing disciples after them is godliness ; and every carnal end and way every carnal man makes godliness ; that is, to make it seem nothing else but what doth well stand and agree with the true rule and perfection of true godliness ; as Austin's saying is : " Whatsoever men have a mind to, that they resolve to make truth." Thus merchandise is made first of the truth, as St. Paul speaks ; next, of the precious souls of men, as St. Peter clearly affirms, speaking of covetous men, in this case : " And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise," or " with framed words," as the word bears, " framed for their purpose ;" that is, they will gloss over the truth with such cunning and fair colourable meanings and interpretations, so well-pleasing and suitable to us, that, except we be very wary to discover them, and what they are like to do, they will sell us into the hand of Satan and eternal death, only for a little money, which they shall gain by that which will be our destruction, namely, the corrupting the truth of the Gospel, and bringing in those damnable heresies. If a man's profession be to make boughs or hoops, and the growth of the wood or timber, whereof he is to make them, be straight, there must be violence offered unto them,—that which is straight must be made crooked or bending,—or else the artificer cannot follow

his trade, nor make a living of his art ; so men, having carnal and unworthy ends, if they will seek to justify or advance them by the Scriptures, which are spiritual, and, in their natural posture, lie across to them, must bow and wind them this way and that, and carry them quite beside their own intent and meaning.

Men that are of ambitious, aspiring dispositions ; that love to have the pre-eminence, as we see in Diotrophes ;—though not always they that have pre-eminence ;—men that love to mount upon the high places of the earth, to see others sitting below at their feet ; that cannot go on foot, but they must ride on horseback, as Solomon speaketh ; that cannot frame to the humility of Elias's spirit, and gird up their loins to run by Ahab's chariot, but must ride in chariots as well as he ; especially if, withal, they have, in the mean time, a desire to seem but humble, and modest, and moderate men ;—these men must attempt to corrupt the Scriptures, that they may seem to speak for them, at least, to connive at them, and to say neither good nor evil of them, as Balak would have indented with Balaam ; because, if the Gospel be permitted to speak its mind freely, it would fill the ears of men, and perhaps the consciences of the delinquents themselves, with outcries and clamours from heaven, against the ambitious distempers of such men ; therefore, they must beat their brains, and set all their learning and books to work, to find out some other sin that the Scriptures should condemn, that so their sin may not be thought to be arraigned, and sentence given against it by God in his word. As the Papists, they find out one kind of idolatry, which they confess the Scriptures condemn ; but as for their idolatry, that is none of it, the Scriptures speak not against that. We know the example of Jeroboam ; to set up and maintain the kingdom to himself, he stuck not to maintain idolatry too. The like may be said of the second sort, of some

affinity with the former, and many times materially the same. Men that are resolved to serve times, and please men ; that set down with themselves, that what men soever, or what humour or opinion of men soever, reign where they live, they will reign with them ; as Paul speaks, they will have a share in an earthly kingdom ; these men are very obnoxious to do injury to the truth of God, and will hardly forbear. We know, the Scriptures bear hard upon the upper forms and ranks of men in the world, and speak as if few of them were likely ever to rise higher than they are ; few that now ride on horses but are likely to go a-foot for the days of eternity : “ Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble ; ” therefore, these being, for the far greatest part, the refuse of the world, and, therefore, enemies to the truth and professors of it, as James speaks of the great and rich men of the world, those that will strike in with these, and give contentment to them, and gain endearment with them, must make them glad with lies : As the false prophets did with the princes of Israel ; for with the truth they will never be able to do it. They that will know men after the flesh themselves will make the Scriptures do as they do, that is, know men after the flesh too ; which we know they will never do, except they be mightily wrested or perverted, and so are not themselves.

Another sort, like to prove enemies to the truth of the Gospel, and to seek the destruction of it, are men led away by a spirit of vain-glory ; and, being, indeed, little or nothing, desire to make themselves something in the world ; either, first, in a way of popularity, by seeking to please generalities and multitudes, and desire to fill their sails with vulgar breath, and that all men should speak well of them. They run a great hazard, also, of accommodating the Scriptures, and making them a nose of wax, as the Papists' comparison is, to turn every way, and to turn into every man's

humour. A multitude can seldom be followed or seconded but it will be to evil; which made our Saviour pronounce a woe to such as whom all should speak well of.—Or whether, secondly, it be to draw disciples after them,—for many count this a glory to them, to have a retinue of scholars, of whom they may be counted the head and master-founders; and there is not any greater temptation than this to move a man to offer violence to the Scripture; for Paul makes this same speaking or teaching perverse things, opinions that will not square with the truth of God, to be the direct and proper means of drawing disciples after them.

A new opinion, or new way, especially when it colours with the Scriptures, but doth not cotton, is as natural a means to draw men that are injudicious and unstable, as a lock of new fresh-smelling hay in a man's hand is to draw a sheep or a beast after him;—I say, if it be an opinion that hath but a kind look from the Scripture, and if the Scripture draw near to it in words, though the heart be far from it, then it is a bait for the purpose, it will draw men by heaps and multitudes after it; the error in it makes it suitable to nature, and the face or visage of truth upon it, laying a religious and conscientious obligation upon men for the embracing and receiving of it, both these meeting together make men rather mad upon it, than simply to love or like it; as generally it is to be observed in all cases where there is a like concurrence: When there is any agreeableness to corrupt nature in a thing, and withal an apprehension of religion to set a man forwards towards the doing of it, a man is like a ship that runs before wind and tide, he lays all his weight and strength upon it; being like Jeremiah's wild ass in the wilderness, men shall weary themselves to run after them, to think to turn them.

A fourth sort, that cannot but endanger the truth

and purity of our faith, are men of an evil eye, as our Saviour speaketh, that are of a malicious, repining, and emulating spirit, either at the credit and esteem or the preferment of others, in any kind above themselves; men that cannot bear the weight of other men that stand above them, that cannot go on foot when they see others ride, or that are prone to drink in discontentments, or affronts, or disappointments in any kind, into the depth of their spirits; these are apt to relieve themselves, by setting up some way or some opinion in the church, that may seem to countenance the equity and justice of their discontentments, or else reflect prejudice upon those from whom they are now divided in affection; men that break the band of peace, to be at liberty to set up error. But especially these evil distempers are found in men that are eminent in place, that have power in their hands in any kind; but otherwise are unworthy and base in their course of life and ways; and so men that are further inferior in place are as far their superiors in esteem and in the hearts of men: I say, in these, this distemper of envy and discontent is of most dangerous consequence to the truth; for now, being armed with power, it hath a greater encouragement and advantage many ways, both to set up, and to get established, tenets and opinions in religion, by way of opposition to such men and their ways whose reputations are an eye-sore unto them.

Men that are given to filthy lucre, as Paul speaks, that love the wages of unrighteousness, that is, gain, however coming in, by a way of unrighteousness, (the apostles in their writings speak much of these kind of men,) these are the men that will, as Paul speaks, adulterate or embase the word of truth: It is a metaphor taken from vintners, or wine-sellers, that mingle corrupt or bad wine with that which is good, to help it off. The word of God, in the life, and power, and

simplicity of it, is but a drug, a commodity that will yield little in the world to him that shall utter it; it is very few men's money, except it be prepared, and the high spirit of it corrected and taken down, that it may fall even with tempers, desires, imaginations, and intentions of men; therefore, he that seeks to make matter of gain and advantage of it in the world must accommodate and fit it to the hearts of those that are like to be his best chapmen and customers.

Men that are not able to be baptized with the baptism wherewith Christ was baptized; that are not able, or, at least, much unwilling, to suffer for the truth; these, in a passive way, or by way of consent, many times prove enemies to the truth, and strengthen the hands of those that do impugn it, and are accessary to many a breach that is made upon it. Thus Paul tells the Galatians, that such as did constrain them to be circumcised, that is, were earnest with them to yield to circumcision, did it not so much because in their judgment they rather thought it so necessary or fitting, but only, saith he, because they would not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. Peter himself, through his infirmity, first knew not Christ; and again, fearing those of the circumcision, he knew not but he might lawfully separate himself from the Gentiles, that is, in effect, build up again the partition-wall which Christ had thrown down, and yet not prejudice the truth of the Gospel. But Paul's resolution and courage made straight what Peter's fear had made crooked; and, indeed, except men will be somewhat willing and free-hearted this way towards the Gospel and truth in time of danger, there is no sin more present with us at any time, than even for those that are otherwise well-willers to the truth, with a little wit and learning, to shuffle away the substance of it, and to sit down upon a distinction clean beside it.

Another sort that are enemies to the faith, and as dangerous as any of the former, if not more, are men that will needs be spiritual benefactors to religion ; I mean that are superstitiously addicted, and will needs undertake to relieve the weakness of God with their strength, and supply the foolishness of the Gospel with their wisdom, that will add traditions and commandments of men, to make the precepts and commandments given by God himself hold full weight and measure, that God may have his due, full allowance, and heaped measure in his worship ; (as the Papists do, and those that are leaning to that kind of devotion ;) or, in a word, to express them, as Paul's language is, that cannot rejoice in Christ Jesus, but have the prime, at least, of their confidence in the flesh ; men that find more satisfaction in their consciences, in what they do, than in what they believe ; and are more in doing what themselves and other men have commanded, than in doing what the great God himself hath commanded : This is in effect to preach another Jesus, whom Paul never preached ; and to set up new ways of pleasing God, is to set up new saviours ; and to set up new saviours, is to exauthorize and discharge the great Saviour indeed ; for this is an essential property of that power of saving which resides in him,—to save alone, or to work by himself alone in the salvation of any man : Therefore, if we offer to join any help to him, we wholly destroy his power of saving ; as Paul, in very express and peremptory terms, tells the Galatians, that if yet they be circumcised, namely, with an opinion of any holiness in it, to help them to heaven, or to accomplish their justification, Christ shall profit or will profit them nothing.

We have many, like post-horses, who will run their stage lively enough, and with good metal and speed ; but it is death to them to go never so little further ; so is there a generation both of men and women amongst us, who can with some tolerable patience and attention go

along with the minister of God, speaking the oracles of heaven, whilst the glass is running : But if he carrieth them a little further, though the great things of their own peace be never so earnest and instant with them, yet, alas ! they are themselves no longer ; they now begin to sweat, and to faint, and sometimes to nestle this way and that ; as if their seats by this time were grown too hot for them ; or as if all that is spoke after the hour is expired, were unsanctified matter, and born out of due time ; they cannot relish it, nor edify it.

To men of thus low and staitened spirits in the service of God, I shall only say this for the present,—that if God gave rewards for his service, by naked, scant measure, if he gave so many heavens of an hour long a-piece as we hear sermons whilst we live, this were some tolerable ground for men to nourish and suffer their hearts in such an humour : But they that say, they hope for good measure indeed at God's hands, measure heaped up, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over ; they that look for crowns of righteousness, for life and immortality from God, by way of reward ; for these men to nurture and train up themselves and their hearts in such degenerate and unsuitable strains and ways, as we speak of, to make their ephah so small, when God's omer is so great,—is it not as if the thistle in Lebanon shall seek to the cedar in Lebanon, to give his daughter in marriage to his sons ? It is altogether unworthy the name, not of religion only, but of reason itself.

If God be indeed so open-handed, so full of rewards to those that serve him, then let such as have wrought to the throne of heaven, that have been diligent and faithful in the affairs and service of God, in case God hath done no great things for them yet, since they first entered his service, let them lift up their heads, and be comforted from hence ; their work is all this while with the Lord, and will be shortly with them, even in their

bosoms. As the Scripture saith of Christ, that he that doth come, will come, and will not tarry : So he that doth reward, will reward, and will not tarry : All your sufferings for Christ in any kind, all the labour of your love that ever you showed to any of the saints ; all your prayers and hearings, and addressments unto God in any kind ; all your holy conferences and meditations, in their full weight and number ; all your holy purposes and resolutions ; all your standings-up to plead the cause of God or of his truth or people upon any occasion ; all your instructions administered to the ignorant, reproofs and admonitions to relinquent ; yea, all the diligence, and faithfulness you have used in your particular callings, in conscience unto God ;—if there be any other work, any other service, in any kind, wherein you have obeyed the voice of the Almighty, behold, the exchequer of heaven is countable unto you for it ; it is as good estate, as good strength, life, peace, joy, glory, as any Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or all the angels of heaven stand possessed of.

XVI.—GOOD AND BAD ANGELS.

ALL the good and holy angels who are employed on the behalf of the saints receive their commission immediately from God himself, or from the Lord Christ, who is represented in the Scripture as their great Lord and Master: They stand charged there with loyalty and homage to him: "When he bringeth in the first-begotten in the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." And, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth?" &c. They are sent forth by Him, whose angels they are, about their several ministries. And that is the reason, too, I suppose, of that expression of our Saviour, who, speaking of the little ones who did believe in him, saith, "I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven;" meaning, that they do stand continually in the presence of God, and there behold his face, looking and waiting to receive some commission or other, longing for service and employment from him: It is their life, it is their glory and felicity, to attend the services that shall be commanded them by God; and therefore they do stand as servants of a king, who saith to one, "Do this;" and to another, "Do that;" to one, "Go this way;" and to another, "Go that way:" So do all the angels in heaven stand round about the throne of the great God, every one of them being greedy of service, to have some message and intimation from God what to do.

It is very probable that there are several ranks and degrees of angels. And it is not much improbable but that there is a subordination amongst them, and that some are of a superior order, and some of an inferior; and that every rank hath one that is the principal or superintendent over the rest of the same rank; though this be but conjectural too. We read, indeed, of arch-

angels in the Scriptures; the archangel spoken of in Jude is called by his proper name, Michael, which rather imports a species or order of such angels, than that there is only one archangel, and his name Michael; for if there had been but one archangel, it had been more proper to have said "the archangel," without calling him by his proper name, which ordinarily serveth to distinguish one person from another of the same species; and, Daniel x. 13, Michael is called "one of the chief princes," which importeth that there are more of the same order; that is, one of the archangels, though perhaps the first of them, as the margin gives you the liberty of reading it. Though for good order they have one that doth precede or go before, yet that there should be any one that should have the sovereign power, or rule, and ordering of all the rest of all ranks and orders, is contrary to reason, and hath no footing in Scripture. Concerning the other place mentioned, 1 Thess. iv. 16, where we have it translated, "With a shout, and with the voice of the archangel," as if there were one such angel, and no more; the truth is, according to the original Greek, it may rather be read, "With the voice of an archangel."

God is styled "the God of angels," either for his special grace and favour to the angels, in which respect he is called "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," and sometimes the God of his people; or else, to express his majestic greatness, as being environed and attended with innumerable angels, who themselves, though creatures, are yet excellently glorious, and of incredible strength and power, "beholding his face continually," as our Saviour speaks, and in this posture attentively awaiting all significations of his pleasure unto them, respectively, for employment. And because he that hath the absolute command of all the angels must needs, upon this account, be conceived to have the like command over all creatures besides, even

of those that are of greatest strength, and most formidable, he may, probably, be styled "the Lord of Hosts."

SATAN.—As there is a vast number and company of devils and unclean spirits, so is it in no ways dissonant unto reason to conceive, that they have their distinct employments and offices. One sort of them may be employed to raise, stir up, and strengthen a spirit of uncleanness in men ; another, a spirit of covetousness ; a third, a spirit of malice and revenge ; a fourth, a spirit of gluttony and excess, &c. The Scripture, and that not obscurely, seems to countenance this notion ; namely, that they are ranged into orders, and are under a kind of regimen, and that they are in a strait band, league, and confederacy to carry on one and the same grand design. And if so, their nature considered,—namely, their wisdom and subtilty,—it is most probable that every one of them is employed according to his proper genius. Some, because they are of a more bloody and cruel nature than others, may be employed to stir up and to strengthen in men a spirit of malice and persecution ; others, that are otherways disposed, may be employed to stir up and cherish a spirit of pride and wantonness ; a third sort of them, whose genius lieth that way, to strengthen and increase a spirit of error.

The evil and unclean spirit, that is, the old serpent, commonly called "the devil," walketh up and down the world, compassing the earth to and fro, as his own expression is, "seeking whom he may devour ;" that is, whom he may devour at once, and with as much haste as possible may be ; meaning, by filling them with all unrighteousness, with uncleanness, love of this world, fearlessness of God, and of his laws, precepts, and commands,—for he, namely, satan, hath no other weapons to destroy men and women withal but these ; and in these, and in these only, lie his murdering and devour-

ing attempts ; so that where he meets not with one that is greater and stronger than himself to oppose him ;—and there is but one to stand in his way, of whom the apostle John gives this testimony, that “ he that is in you,” namely, the saints, “ is greater than he that is in the world ;”—I say, when he meets not and is not encountered by this Spirit of God that is stronger than he ; yea, if this Spirit have not advanced in his strength and assistance, by the means before spoken of, to some good degree in the hearts and souls of men, he, namely, the evil one, is very likely to prevail, yea, and questionless will prevail, over men, and fill the hearts and inward parts of men with all unrighteousness, covetousness, love of the world, &c., and with all manner of sinful inclinations, dispositions, and propensions, which will be their ruin. They that are filled with the spirit of the devil have nothing in them but what is born of the flesh, and therefore they can do nothing for, but against, the truth ; no, not in their own souls, judgments, and consciences ; still comporting with satan against the truth and their own peace and comfort.

The devil himself was tempted and drawn away with his own lust, and enticed to the greatest impiety, whilst yet there was no tempter ; much more may men be tempted and drawn away by their own lusts ; so that the tempting of men all the world over, at one and the same time, doth not prove that therefore the devil tempteth all the world over at the same time. And the devil himself confesseth, in the Scriptures, that he “ compasseth the earth to and fro, and walketh up and down in it.” And elsewhere it is said of him that “ he goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.” Therefore, the devil is not present all the world over at the same time, doing one thing or other, either by himself or by inferior devils, his subservient instruments.

However temptations, and other actions proper to the devil,—as, the catching away the seed sown, by filling men's hearts with wickedness, &c.,—which are done in the world in a thousand different or distant places at one and the same time, are or may be attributed to satan or the devil, in the singular number; yet our adversaries themselves will confess, that all these actions are not done in one and the same instant of time by one and the same devil: But though they may be acted by many subordinate devils, yet, according to the Scripture dialect, they are or may be ascribed to him that is the head or chief of the corporation.

It is very probable, that, as in commonwealths or kingdoms politic, the inhabitants, for the accommodation and conveniency of the whole, betake themselves to several callings, occupations, or trades; some are husbandmen, some carpenters, some churgeons, &c.—for the body of a commonwealth, as it was the saying of a philosopher, doth not consist of a husbandman, and a husbandman, but of variety of trades; wherein respectively, by means of an appropriation or confinement of themselves to one and the same employment, they become more expert and dexterous, every man in his way, and so the whole is the better accommodated and provided for:—In like manner, I say, it is very probable, that these wicked and unclean spirits, the devils, who have a polity, such as it is, to manage and uphold, for the accommodation of their affairs, and the advantage of their kingdom, and the greatness thereof, do betake themselves to several trades and occupations in their way; and that some of them apply themselves to one kind of action or employment, for the better managing and maintaining of their kingdom, and some unto another. All the variety of employments which are practised amongst them, or is indeed any ways necessary for the welfare (such as it is capable of) of

their kingdom, being reducible to these two general heads : The tempting men unto sin ; the troubling and tormenting them, when he hath overcome them by temptation.

As there are great varieties of sins whereunto men and women may be tempted, as sins of uncleanness, adultery, covetousness, idolatry, and the like ; so is it very probable, from the Scriptures, that there are several devils that do attend upon all these sins. There is one kind of devil that attends upon this kind of sin, another upon that ; some that do tempt men unto uncleanness ; others, to covetousness ; another, to murder ; another sort of them tempt to pride ; for there are devils in abundance, and whole troops that do manage one kind of sin. And so, likewise, in matters of judgments and punishments, there are some that God maketh use of, as men are wont, in their way, to use and employ men according to their capacities, to afflict in one kind ; and then he sets other devils on work who are of another occupation, and who know how to afflict men and women, (such persons who have offended, whom he judgeth worthy to be chastised,) in another kind. Methinks the Scriptures give a little hint of this, where we read of some devils that were dumb and deaf. The devil may be called “dumb,” because he doth inflict that kind of punishment or affliction which we call dumbness ; and so likewise of others.

Satan doth nothing else but study and invent opinions, and conceits, and imaginations, which may have some colour of truth, that so they may fall in with the judgments of men : He doth invent, and mint, and set such opinions abroad in the world ; and then his next work is, as far as possibly he can, to find out agents and instruments, the best he can prevail withal, and which are fitted and prepared to promote his design in the world : And the better men are, the more learned, and the more innocent in their lives and conversations,

(can they be prevailed withal,) these are the chosen vessels for him, and fitted for his turn.

The enmity and hatred which the devil bears to the Scriptures, is discovered several ways: 1. In that he watcheth the seed of the doctrine thereof, when it is sown by the hand of the spiritual seedsman in the hearts of men, and catcheth at it immediately, and many times snatcheth it away as soon as ever it is fallen upon the soul; which shows that he is not willing it should remain there, no, not for the shortest season. And if he be not willing it should remain in the heart of a man, surely he would not have it have any place of being in the world. But that disposition and practice of his we speak of, you shall find clearly asserted by our Saviour himself, in his explication of the parable of the sower.

2. The devils' enmity against the Scriptures and the doctrine thereof appears in this,—that they are still casting blocks, in one kind or other, in the way of those that are most able and willing to propagate the knowledge of them in the world, to prevent them of their opportunities, and hinder them from the work. Thus Paul complains, that when he was resolved and endeavoured abundantly to have gone to Thessalonica, to strengthen and edify the saints there, satan hindered him.

3. In that he attempts the discouragement and molestation, both temporal and spiritual, of those that are the professors and upholders of them in the world. Thus Antipas, a faithful martyr, is said to have been slain where satan's seat or throne was, and where he dwelt; to imply that satan was the chief stickler to procure his death. And our Saviour signified, in his epistle to the church of Smyrna, that satan would cast some of them into prison, and that they should have persecution ten days; namely, by his means, and instigation of men to persecute them. Again: That he is still attempting the spiritual disturbance and discouragement of such as hold



forth the Scriptures and the doctrine of them unto the world, appears from many places: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." And, again: "Above all, taking the shield of faith, whereby ye shall quench all the fiery darts of the devil:" In which passages, with many others, there is plain information given of satan's diligence and desire to disturb the inward peace of the precious souls of men.

4. The devil's hatred against the Scriptures and the doctrine thereof appears in this,—that he endeavours all he can to blind the minds of men, that the light of them should not shine unto them. As far as lies in his power, he labours to keep the world "in darkness, and in the shadow of death;" the light of the Gospel is to the devil as the light of the morning to the thief and murderer, in Job; that is, as "the shadow of death." When it shines in the eyes of men's minds, it is as a sword that passeth through his soul; yea, when men are lifted up into heaven by it, the devil is thrown down from his heaven into his hell. 5. His enmity against the Scriptures and main doctrine thereof, the Gospel, appears in this,—that he tempts, persuades, and engageth men, from time to time, to invent and substitute other Gospels, and other doctrines, and other Christs, as near, and with as much affinity and similitude, to the true Gospel, and true doctrines, and the true Christ, as he knows how; and so to hold them forth unto the world on purpose to trouble and confound the minds and thoughts of men, and to put the world into a maze, to make men at a loss which or what to call the Gospel, or what the truth, or who the true Christ; yea, and to make them question whether there be any Gospel, any doctrine, any Christ, at all able or likely to bless them. Such wiles and methods and stratagems as these, put upon the world, are, I conceive, called "the doctrines and depths of satan," by our Saviour himself, in his epistle to the church of Thyatira.

XVII.—AFFLICTIONS.

A STOICAL apathy, or indolency of heart, is so far from being a virtue, or just matter of commendation unto any man, that the deepest sorrow and heaviness of soul, that is lightly incident to the nature of man, in some cases, and, as occasion may be, well becomes persons of the greatest wisdom, gravity, and worth in every kind.

The Scripture speaks much of afflictions, as of a kind of ordinance, sanctified by God for the reducement of men unto themselves, and, consequently, unto himself: Even as Solomon speaks of the rod in the letter, or, properly so called, as if it were appointed by God to drive out that childish folly or untowardness which is “bound up in the heart of a child;” “but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.” In like manner, there is a kind of folly appropriate unto men; you may call it “spiritual folly,” a remissness and negligence of soul, to look after the great things of their peace; which the Scripture represents as frequently cured, or driven out of men, by the hand of afflictions. Thus Elihu, in Job: “And if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction, then he showeth them their work, and their transgressions, that they have exceeded; he openeth also their ear unto discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.” So the rod of extreme misery and shame drove away that abundance of folly, which was bound in the prodigal’s heart before, far from him, and brought him home to his father’s house; and that of Isaiah is of the same importance: “When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness;” with many the like. If we look into the world, amongst the saints and the congregations of the righteous, there are many of them will tell you how they were driven into their



spiritual refuge or shelter by some temporal storm : Not that tribulations or afflictions have, by or of themselves, brought any man home unto God ; but they have awakened many to inquire after, to attend, and intermeddle with, that wisdom by which they have been brought unto God. As though a lie, in the nature of it, be most contrary to God's glory, yet he can overrule it, and through his truth make it to abound to his glory ; so, though sickness, and weakness, and poverty, and disgrace, and imprisonment, &c., be contrary to the peace and comforts of men ; yet God, who sometimes caused the sun to turn head upon its own proper motion, and to go backward, can, and many times doth, alter the course and tendency of afflictions, which is to make men miserable, and to curse them ; but he makes them to bless them altogether.

There is no creature, one or many, that can be brought so low, so near unto death, or never so much under the power of death, but God hath not only one, or some few, but many, secret ways of escape for it ; he hath choice of ways, and means for deliverance, when itself is ready to say there is none at all. With him there is "plenteous redemption."

When the Scriptures give unto the church a right and propriety in God, as both in this place and elsewhere, as we shall hear presently, it doth, the meaning is, that, look whatsoever is in God, power, wisdom, justice, mercy, &c., it may lawfully lay claim to all by virtue of this propriety, and may confidently expect, and shall not be denied, that God will be unto it according to his excellent greatness, proportionably for a God indeed, in due time and in the best way, all that can be for the advancement and benefit of the creature.

So that, suppose the creature itself, (if it be fit to make such a supposition, as, to explain a truth of such importance, little question need be,) suppose, I say, the creature itself were or could be personally invested and possessed

with all that infinite power, wisdom, mercy, justice, &c., which are in God, and could do every whit as much for its own advancement, support, deliverance, or the like, as God himself now can do, it would do no more, it could do no more, than God will do ; yea, hath engaged himself to do by that covenant wherein he hath made over himself, or a propriety in himself, to the creature.

What is it to be “strong in the Lord, and in,” or with, “the power of his might?” Doubtless, the apostle’s meaning, duly considered, riseth to a great height ; he would have the children of God, who believe in Christ, to take unto themselves, and put on as great a confidence of their salvation and everlasting happiness, in regard of the mighty power of God to effect it, as if themselves had the same almightiness and all-sufficiency of power in their own hand, to use and exercise at their own desires, and were as mighty themselves as God is, for the effectual procuring of their own happiness ; implying, that, by means of this propriety in God, they have no more cause to fear or doubt any thing in this kind than they should or would have if themselves were omnipotent.

What is the direct and full meaning of this clause ?—“I will be their God.” In what, or in what degree, would the Lord have Abraham and his seed conceive their condition to be bettered and advanced by this bargain, as it were, that God now made with them, in making over himself unto them ? There can be no other meaning but to this effect,—“I will be their God ;” that is, “I will be ready at all times, with my out-stretched arm, my almighty power, to help them, to relieve them, to provide for them, to do them good every way, according to my greatness and excellency.”

There is a greater emphasis and weight in it, as I conceive, to promise that he would be a “God” unto them, than if he had said he would be a “Friend,” yea, than if he had said he would be a “Father ;” as appears



by such other places, where both these expressions are used together, of being a "Father" unto his people, and being a "God;" this being still put in the last place, as more weighty, and adding somewhat unto the former: "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and to your God." †

For although for a creature to receive such a promise from God, that he would be a "Father" unto him, may imply as much, in a direct and ready consequence, as if he had said he would be a "God" unto him; yet he must reason a little to come at the full apprehension hereof; he must consider how great He was that made the promise of being a "Father" unto him; the word "Father" doth not carry as much in it as the other word, "God," doth; though, coming from the mouth of God, it draws as much after it.

When he promiseth or covenanteth with the creature to be a "God" unto it, he promiseth to do all things to it, and for it, answerable to an infinite goodness and power, such as are proper to a God; else he could not properly be said to be *their* God, or *a* God unto them, but only in part, or a piece of a God; to be unto them, or to do for them, only according to the line and proportion of a creature; as for example,—to be unto them as Abraham was unto Isaac, to give them an earthly inheritance; or as Joshua to the people, an earthly deliverance; or as David to Solomon, an earthly kingdom: Any of these, or all together, will not make up the sum of those words,—to be a God unto them. This would rather be to be Abraham, Joshua, or David unto them; he is not their God, except his infinite goodness and omnipotence be theirs; for what is God without these?

The woman of Samaria thought their well of Sychar had a kind of blessing upon it above others, because so great a man as their father Jacob drank of it; but, on the contrary, we that are the church and people of

God may truly, and with soberness of judgment, think ourselves blessed indeed, that we draw all the waters we drink, all the mercies and preservations we enjoy, from such a fountain, as the goodness of the great God of heaven and earth. The same mercies and good things, did we receive from another, from an inferior, hand, were not the same ; the best and pleasantest taste and relish that is in them, whatever they be, is the taste of the hand out of which they come. And therefore profane and ignorant men lose the best part of all the temporal good things they enjoy, because they do not savour the hand that gives them forth unto them. "The Lord," saith David, "hath done great things for us ; whereof we rejoyce." If David were now alive, and the question put to him, where the emphasis and life of these words lay, I verily believe his answer would, be not in the great things that were done for them, but rather in the great Doer of them, the Lord.

It is a rule and principle in common reason and experience,—and weak apprehensions will reach it,—which Xenophon well expresseth in his language, thus : " Things that are alike, or of equal worth and contentment in themselves, coming from persons unequal in place and dignity, do not equally affect men that receive them ; but still a great difference there is, if the inequality of persons from whom they come be great." To kiss the hand of a man inferior to us is as nothing, rather, indeed, a disparagement, and a thing ridiculous : But to kiss the hand of a prince is a matter of favour and countenance. So Solomon saith of the "light of the countenance," or "favour of the king," that it is like "a cloud of the latter rain ;" which often is more worth than a king's ransom ; whereas a good look from a mean man is scarcely valued at two drops of water. God cannot give any light or slender mercies, because the greatness of the Giver makes them all weighty, and full of importance and signification.



This peculiar interest of the church in God is a sure ground of a most certain and infallible presage, what will be the end of all the enemies thereof, and what the issue of all the attempts of those that shall seek to do it evil. Frustration will undoubtedly be the end of all such attempts, and confusion the end of all their enemies. The servants and people of God have been, yet are, and still will be, too hard for all the world to deal with: There is no meddling with them but only in a way of love and kindness: And so they are the profitablest men under heaven to converse and deal withal. He that is the sanctuary will be a stumbling-stone, and as a rock to fall upon, and as a snare, to all the inhabitants of the earth that shall either lift up a tongue, or stretch forth a hand, against them.

If God be yours, you, church and children of God, if you have this special interest in him, then up with those hands that hang down, and let those knees that are feeble take strength to themselves, and those hearts that are smitten within you, and wither like the grass, let them flourish again like the green herb. If God be yours, why do you fear, or why do you take care, who or how many they be that are against you? Will you profane the sanctuary of your strength by your fears, and pollute that blessed name that is called upon you, and by you? Will you unsanctify the Holy One? Will you proclaim it in the hearing of the world? Shall Gath and Ashkelon have information from you, that his arm is shortened? that he is now become as man, and no longer a God? that his horses are flesh, and not spirit? What do you else, my brethren, that cast away your hope and confidence, which enemies gather up, as fast as they perceive you to scatter, and make hope and confidence of it for themselves, and give the cause and state of the church of God and religion amongst you as good as lost, which is yet more worth than many worlds? Samson's courage was above his strength,

because "he knew not that the Lord was departed from him;" and, therefore, when he went forth, thinking to do as he did at other times, he was taken of his enemies. But your strength is a great deal more than your courage, because God is not departed from you: Nay, he hath bound himself unto you, whilst you continue his church and people, with bands which he cannot break. It is like, you will say, "Ah! but we cannot discern any signs of his presence: If God be with us, or on our side, why is it thus?"

Let me reason a few things with you, to allay the bitterness of these complaints and fears. Do ye think, or believe, in good earnest, that you are now in greater danger, nearer ruin and destruction, than you were at that time, when he that is your God stepped in between the match and the powder, and kept them from coming the one at the other? Only now, it may be, you see and apprehend more; but the danger is not the greater, but the lesser, by that. When the disciples, not long after the miracle of the loaves, began to question their provision of victuals, how sharply doth our Saviour rebuke them, as fools, and without understanding! "Why reason ye thus, because ye have no bread? Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? Have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see you not? And having ears, hear you not? And do ye not remember? When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took you up? They said unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?"

As if he should say, "It is the most unworthy and unsavoury thought and conceit in the world to lodge in you who have so lately, and that again and again and so apparently, seen and had experience both of the tenderness of my care, and mightiness of my power, in



making provision of bread for you, to suspect or fear inconvenience in that way, that ever you should suffer hunger or be affamished." Have we not had as clear, as mighty a demonstration, in the deliverance we now celebrate, with many others, of the care, providence, and protection of God over us, for the preservation of our lives, liberties, goods, religion? And shall we suffer such an unworthy and sacrilegious apprehension to tyrannize over us as this,—that God will now deliver us up to the will of our enemies, because his time and our time for deliverance are not yet met? our time for ease, comfort, and deliverance, being always; but God's time, many times not yet.

When men in an unseemly manner are officious in doing suit and service to the world, when they suffer themselves so far to be brought into subjection by silver, and gold, and houses, and lands, by fair and full estates, by pleasures, and ease, and liberty, &c.; that a man, in Scripture phrase, is not able to live without these, yea, and to reign too, as Paul speaks, to live like kings without these: This is a betraying of the glory and happiness which is annexed to that interest which any creature hath in God. Are there not many that would be thought people of God, and to have interest in him, that are yet as effeminate and impotent in their desires and lustings after things of this life, as Rachel was after children? "Give me children, or else I die." So many must have the flour of the wheat, and honey out of the rock, they must have the best and sweetest aspects of the world, or else as he said, "Their life is not worth the living," their hearts die and sink within them, and they are "like to those that go down into the pit," as David speaks: And what can be more prejudicial to the glory of God; what can derogate more from his goodness, bounty, and power, than to find men in these deep discontentments, in such faintings of heart for want of these by-matters of the world, who

pretend and challenge interest in God and his all-sufficiency?

Doth not the Scripture prove the resurrection from the dead, and that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are yet living, by this argument, that "God is the God not of the dead, but of the living?"

The force and strength of the argument and reason, I conceive, lieth in this: That God being a God of that infinite goodness and bounty, and withal of power, and strength, and greatness answerable, it is altogether a thing unworthy of him to call himself the God of such, or to ascribe that special and peculiar interest of himself to such creatures as are deprived and destitute of the best of their being, their life; he shall lay his own honour in the dust to do it. What difference shall there be, then, between an infinite God, and the most contemptible of creatures, in this respect, if a man might have God for his God, have the best interest in him, and yet be as low, and as little worth, as he could be, had he had interest in the poorest creatures in the world? For what condition more empty and poor than death?

So, my brethren, they that call themselves by the names of "God's children or people," and pretend or challenge interest in God, and yet hang down their heads like bulrushes in every storm, and are as dead men, without any life or soul of joy or comfort, except the world puts life into them,—do not these make God to be the God of the dead, and not only of the living? By valuing their interest in God at so mean a rate, as not to make it a sufficient ground of joy and comfort unto them in the absence of moon and stars, as if there were no efficacy and power in it to raise the soul of a man, but only in conjunction with corn and wine and oil; do you not spread a cloud before the glorious face of the all-sufficiency of God, and take a course to bring up an evil and hard report in the world of him and his



goodness, and weaken and discourage the hearts of men for ever choosing God for their portion ?

Elkanah did well and truly represent the melancholy and uncomfortable temper of his wife for want of children, as reflecting some prejudice and disparagement upon him, being her husband : “ Hannah, why weep-est thou ? Am not I better unto thee than ten sons ? ” as if he had said, “ If thou knewest and didst but consider what cause thou hast of comfort and joy in me, and my love and affection towards thee, thou wouldest not be so disquieted and troubled for want of children : Is not the interest thou hast in me valuable with the comfort and contentment of many children ? ”

So, if we shall say we have interest in God, and yet walk with dejected countenances, and with hands hanging down, because “ the fig-trees do not flourish,” and because “ there is no fruit on the vine,” and the “ fields yield no meat ; ” because outward comforts fail and are cut off from us ; do we not darken the face of the heaven, and shame the glory of the infinite goodness and greatness of God ? Is not God unto us more than many houses and lands, than silver and gold ? As we are unto him of more worth and value than many sparrows, so is not he more to us than many worlds ?

Therefore, now let him that claimeth interest in God, that saith God is his God, let him vindicate and make good so great a title and claim in the sight of the world, by a heart full of joy and full of contentment in the midst of outward wants and necessities, of hunger, nakedness, reproach, &c. If he hath an estate of joy and peace in God, it is an unseemly thing for him to fill the cares of the world, or to break the hearts of men with complaints of wants and misery. He that hath interest in God must be able to work wonders in the world, or else he shall shame his glory, and the world will not believe him. As our Saviour said of those that should believe, that those signs should follow

them, "In his name they should cast out devils, and they shall speak with new tongues, and they shall take away serpents, and if they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them : " So, my brethren, they that say, with David, that God is their God, that they have an interest in him, such signs as these must follow them as a glorious retinue in the world to answer that greatness ; they must be rich without an estate, joyful in the midst of sorrow, strong in weakness ; they must not burn in the midst of fire, nor drown in the overflowing of darkest waters ; they must live without a soul, and sleep without a bed, and be clothed without raiment ; be at liberty in prison, in their native country when they are in exile and banishment ; in a word, St. Paul's expression is, " though they have nothing," yet must they be " as though they had all things ; " otherwise they are as if they had no interest in God at all. If God be thine, and yet thou sayest thou wantest any thing, " thou art a liar," as John in another case saith, " and the truth is not in thee." For, as David speaketh, " of them that fear the Lord," we may as well, with as much truth, and with more perspicuity and evidence of truth, They that enjoy the Lord, and have interest in him, want nothing, except perhaps the knowledge of their abundance ; God will find any man's cup alone, and make it overflow and run over, though there be nothing in it besides.

And this reproof concerns us, not only as we are private Christians, and every man one by himself, but as we are together a people of God, a church of God. If we have interest in God, as we pretend we have, in calling ourselves the " church and people of God," as you have heard, then are we not to bow down our backs to suffer all kind of discontentments and discouragements to go over us, as generally we do, and to tread down the strength and comfort of our hearts, because the world refuseth to give us the right hand of



fellowship; because they that are mounted upon the high places of the earth, as Isaiah speaks, "behold us afar off, and do not favour our righteous dealings, nor countenance us in our ways." Is not our God unto us above all gods? as David's expression is. What, if the faces of rulers should be clouded, should we not rejoice nevertheless, if the light of God's countenance shine upon us? Shall we complain that the moon and stars do not appear and shine upon us, when the sun shines out unto us in the fulness of his strength? Were not this to cast an aspersion upon that glorious creature, the sun, the beauty of heaven, as if he wanted the help of inferior luminaries to serve the world with that great and heavenly commodity of light? And shall we not charge weakness and insufficiency upon the great God of heaven and earth, to revive and cherish us, if we be therefore sad and uncomfortable, because we have not alike interest in those gods that are made of men, I mean kings and princes and rulers of the earth, as well as in Him?

If we could look into men, and see into the depth of their thoughts, we should find the hearts of most bot-tomed with creatures, as with silver and gold, estate, greatness, favour, or credit in the world; a very small remnant with the living God; and, therefore, we see, when any of their bottoms decay or are knocked out, all men's hopes and comforts and expectations run out, and are like water spilled upon the ground that cannot be gathered up again; whereas, if men's dependence were upon God, if the weight of all their hopes and desires rested and stayed upon him, though all outward props and supports were struck from under them, yet a man should be able to keep his standing and not fall to the ground, because God is a rock; and a rock always keeps his place, and never gives way; if you know where it is to-day, you know where it will be to-morrow.

Now, this is that I say, that if a man claims that special interest in God which is the portion of his children, and yet makes his dependence upon any thing besides whatsoever; as the maid said to Peter, that his speech betrayed him, so such a man's ways betrayeth him to be but an idle pretender to that royal privilege, and that, indeed, he knows not what any such interest means. Our full and entire dependence upon God is the best, and highest, and most honourable part of our service; it is the centre-point, as it were, of our obedience, that is better than all the circle and circumference besides: "Obedience is better than sacrifice," as Samuel; but dependence is better than sacrifice and obedience, in other kinds, both together. That same confidence in God, which no persuasions, nor entreaties, nor threatenings will prevail with men, but that they will needs cast it away from them as far as it will fly, as a thing that would but abuse them and do them no good, this is that that hath the great recompence of reward; as if there were inferior rewards prepared for other services, but the great reward, the right hand and left of Christ in his kingdom, were reserved for this. But if men have any thing else, any creature that flatters them, and says unto them, as the bramble said to the trees of the forest in Jotham's parable, "Come and put your trust under my shadow," place your confidence in me; men will hardly be entreated to cast away such a confidence upon any terms.

If a great estate or some great friend that is eminent in place and power should but allure us, and speak as kindly and graciously unto us as the great God of heaven and earth doth from place to place in his word, "Cast all your care and your burden upon us, we will take care for you;" men would take hold of such words, as soon as they should be spoken, and would do that which was desired of them with all their hearts, and would hardly ask any question about it, either for con-



science' sake or for fear's sake. But now God inviting us to do him that honour, and ourselves that ease, as to cast all our care on him ; that is, to do it in a careless, secure, and resolute manner, as the word importeth, assuring us that he doth care for us, (which no creature doth in comparison of him,) men will think of it ten times before they will do it once. Even they which do any thing in this kind will not cast their care upon him ; all they will be brought to do is, to lay it on him fair and softly, as we use to lay burdens of any weight upon tables or stools, when we suspect the joints to be crazy and shaken,—we lay them down as gently and easily as may be, for fear we should break all in pieces, and our burdens fall to the ground ; and as men use to walk upon ice over deep waters, they do not at first leap and jump upon it, but first set one foot, and then another, to see whether the ice crack or no, whether it will bear them, that so they may retire back again to the ground without danger, before they be on too far ; but to go thus to work with God is not to cast our care upon him, but rather to tempt him, and see whether he will bear it or no : Whereas he gives us in that an assurance beforehand, yea, gives it as the reason or ground upon which he requires us to cast all our care upon him in such a manner : “ Cast all your care on him, for he careth for you.” I would never wish you to do it, to cast it upon God, but that I know he doth take care for you, and will discharge that trust alone, as much for your comfort and satisfaction as if you should be over busy yourselves, and would needs join yourselves in commission with him.

Therefore, now, if thou hast interest in God, and hast any burthens, one or more, to bear or carry ; if thou wilt carry this burden thyself, and toil and turmoil thyself till thou beest ready to faint, and sink, and die under it, and not cast it upon God ; now walkest thou laden to the prejudice and scandal of heaven, thy bur-

then would be honourable upon the shoulder of the Almighty both to him and thee. We account it a mean calling among men, and servile, to carry burdens ; but it is exceeding glorious in God to bear all the burdens of his saints, that they may walk upright, and not have their backs bowed down to the earth.

If our interest in him be such as hath been declared, as doubtless it is, if we be the people of God, why do we cause this great blessedness of ours to be blasphemed and evil spoken of in the world, by seeking to lay other foundations of our peace and comfort, besides the favour and power of God alone ? Why do we not stand sure upon him, though we have nothing else to establish us ? Why are we not built upon him ? What addition can be made unto him ? If we had all the flesh in the world made up into an arm of salvation unto us, could it add any thing to our security ?

“Is not thy God,” saith Darius to Daniel in the lion’s den, “whom thou servest alway, able to deliver thee from the lion ?” Either he is able to deliver us, and save us out of the mouths of all lions, able to rebuke all our destroyers, or he is not able : If he be not able, then, I ask, Who made heaven and earth ? Doubtless, it will not ask a greater power to save us, than it did to create us and the whole frame of heaven and earth besides. And therefore David, in the name of the church of God, fats and flesheth, as it were, his trust and confidence with that consideration : “Our help standeth in the name of the Lord, that made heaven and earth ;” as if he meant never to trouble himself further, as long as he saw heaven and earth standing before him, to inquire out more names of helpers and defenders to join with Him that made heaven and earth.

“Our help stands in the name of the Lord.” Here it is permanent and fixed ; it did not remove up and down, and shift from one name to another, as if now they were confident in God, another while confident in some



creature or outward support. They did not remove from bottom to bottom, as men that are double-minded do ; they have no standing, help, or comfort any where, but still are shifting and flitting from under the shadow of one tree to another, from under the wing of one creature to another. If he be able to deliver us, and we be his people, and have interest in all the glory of his power, why do we suffer any thought to enter into us of standing upon any other ground? Why are we troubled and distracted in ourselves about seeking and providing a hiding-place from storms and tempests, when we remain "under the shadow of his wing?" If any enemy have power to pluck any of his feathers, then had we some cause to fear a lying-open to the weather.

If the church and people of God have such interest in God as hath been formerly opened, then those also are to be reprov'd that challenge this interest in him, and yet suffer their hearts, in times of danger, to be troubled and overwhelmed with inordinate and tumultuous fears. If they see but a great wave coming towards them, they are ready, with Peter, to cry out, "We perish;" or, if they taste but some bitterness in the broth, presently cry out, with the prophets' children, "There is death in the pot." How many are there that say they have interest in God whose hearts fail them, and become like stones within them, cold and heavy, if trouble or affliction do but come forth and look a little upon them, they are not able to endure the appearance of any danger ; as when the great champion of the Philistines did but show himself in the field, it is said, that "all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, ran away from him and were sore afraid." They knew not whether ever he should have come near them to hurt any of them or no, and yet they were all afraid, and ran away, only upon sight of him. So the Israelites did but lift up their eyes, and "saw the Egyptians marching

after them ;” and the text saith, they also “ were sore afraid.”

If dangers and troubles do but put forth a little, and begin to bud, we conclude that a deadly winter must needs be at hand. If there be but a thick arm of flesh lifted up against us to strike, we think the blow must presently fall upon us. If satan doth but show himself in arms; and bring forth his troops, and display his colours before the walls, we give the city as lost presently. Yea, some men are as tender of their fears in this kind, and as impatient to have them rebuked and touched, as David was of his son Absalom or Adonijah ; it is said that his father would not displease him from his childhood, to say, “ Why doest thou so ?” Some men even take such a felicity and contentment in their fears and apprehensions of dangers, (though otherwise fear hath torment, as St. John speaketh,) that neither will they displease them themselves, nor suffer any other to displease them ; they will not endure any man to dispute, or to conceive any hope, when they have once feared ; so that they seem to have a touch of Jonah’s spirit in them, that was angry with God for not executing judgment upon Nineveh, when he had prophesied the destruction of it. Some men seem so highly to honour the prophetic signs of their fears, as if they would take offence at God’s goodness and mercy if he should not bring upon them, and the church of God amongst them, the judgments and mercies that they have prophesied of in their fears.

Now, I say, all such distracting and dismaying fears as these are no ways seemly and comely in those that profess this special interest in God. Are they not rather a giving honour to men, and magnifying the powers of darkness and the devil himself above God ? What are any such fears, being rightly interpreted, but as much as to say, The rage, and malice, and wickedness of men are greater than the goodness, and truth, and power of God ? These are winds and waves that

R

will not obey him, that he cannot command and rule. "Should such a man as I fear?" saith Nehemiah, that have professed such confidence in God; and still you shall find that in Scripture there is an opposition between those fears and that honour that is due unto God from those that are his, and say they have interest in him.

It is not simply poverty and want, and a mean condition, that makes a man ashamed in the world; but only when it succeeds riches, and plenty, and fulness. A poor man in the country, that is born only to inherit the dust, that had never a good coat on his back since he was born, is not ashamed of a patched cloak, but walks, and holds up his head, and shows his face before any man, for all that; but take a courtier, or a merchant, or a citizen of best rank and quality, that have been "clothed with fine linen, and fared deliciously every day;" that have not been seen but "in soft raiment," in silk, in silver, and gold; if such a man shall be brought down to rags, and have no better to put on but some coarse mantle, or the like,—this makes him hold down his head, and ashamed to show his face to any that knows him. So, when the Lord saith that the enemies of his church shall be ashamed, it implies that they shall have a time granted them, wherein they shall flourish "like a green bay-tree," which tastes not of winter, as most trees besides do, losing the beauty, and verdure, and comeliness of their leaves, which the bay-tree doth not; that they shall have a time wherein they shall do even what they list in the world, or, as the original hath it, "shall even pass the desires of the heart," that is, shall have more power, and authority, and glory in the world than they could well tell what to do with, wherein they shall have the saints of God, and the church of the Most High, under their feet, and shall throw down the foundations, and shall see no man able to do any thing against them, able or likely to make resistance. In this great prosperity of

theirs, and poor and contemptible condition of the church before them, God lays the foundation and cornerstone of their shame and confusion, which otherwise, to speak properly, could not be brought to pass.

If the church and people of God stand really possessed of the high privilege and prerogative royal, that hath been spoken of; if they have indeed that interest in the Lord Almighty, in his mercy, wisdom, power, with all the rest of his glorious perfections, as hath been proved; then hear, all you that are enemies to the people of the God of Abraham, you that either cry out, with Edom, or speak it in your hearts, with Sanballat, Tobiah, and such like underhand enemies of the church of God, "Down with it, down with it, even to the ground!" let this generation, I say, hear from all the ends of the earth, and suffer two words of exhortation.

First, be exhorted and persuaded to lay aside all thoughts of violence, to let fall all your desires and purposes of evil against the generation of the righteous, so greatly beloved on high; have nothing to do with these men in a way of hatred and contradiction. Break your swords into mattocks, and your spears into scythes, and lift not up a sword against this nation, neither accustom yourselves to fight against them any more. Suffer them to pass peaceably and safely through your land; if the earth be yours; but indeed it is theirs, towards their own country, their heavenly Canaan. If the motion do not yet relish and savour kindly with you, let me season it with a few considerations and motives; it may be then it will be found savoury meat unto you, such as your souls will love.

These men against whom your eye is evil, whose flesh you eat like bread, and whose blood you drink like sweet and pleasant wine; against whom you have suffered yourselves to be provoked and enraged by the cursed and common enemy, both yours and theirs, the devil; these men, I say, have interest in heaven, and are



the children, the sons and daughters, of the Almighty ; they are a people confederate with the great and terrible Lord of hosts ; they are, as they are called, “ a peculiar people unto him,” or, as the word signifieth, they are a people, more than a people, as John Baptist is said by our Saviour to be a prophet, yea, and more than a prophet. Shall any man, but such as love death, and seek their own destruction and confusion as a treasure, rise up against these, or offer to lay their hand upon these anointed ones ? Is it because there is no other way that leadeth to destruction ? as the people, in their murmurings against Moses, reasoned with him : “ Hast thou brought us to die in the wilderness, because there were no graves in Egypt ?” meaning, there was grave-room enough in the wilderness, but nothing else.

So let me reason the case with those men that will needs magnify themselves, as the Scriptures speak, against this heritage of the Lord. Is it because they think there is no other way of wickedness against God, that will bring vengeance and damnation swift enough upon their heads, unless they provoke him in his holy ones ? Know they not how to provoke the Lord to anger to purpose, by striking at him in other places, except they smite him in the face ? nay, except they level and aim at the very apple of his eye, which is the tenderest part in the face ? There is no child of God, but may speak it as truly as the wisdom or truth of God itself doth, “ He that sinneth against me hurteth his own soul, and all that hate me love death :” They love death ; that is, if death were a thing to be loved and desired, men could take no way more ready and certain to obtain it, than by hating the wisdom, and let me put in also, than by hating the children and people, of God. What ! is that man of sin, and all his confederates with him, all that have been baptized in the spirit of that fornication,—are they afraid and of doubtful and deliberative thoughts, whether all their

other sins and abominations, wherein, notwithstanding, they are mighty men, like the sons of Anak of old, and other sinners in the world of ordinary stature are but grasshoppers to them, do they indeed question, whether all their other sins be able to bring down that great mountain of their power? Is it made so strong, that unless they drink also freely of the blood of the saints, they are afraid that God otherwise should pass them over, and forget them, when he comes to take vengeance of the world? Are they afraid they shall perish and be destroyed but after the common manner of other men, and that their destruction shall not come upon them with a sufficient glory of terror and astonishment, or, as Isaiah's expression is, like a destruction from the Almighty, except they make havoc in the Lord's heritage? Do they know that this is a sin by itself for the purpose, that will swell and be seen in their destruction above all their other sins? Do they think they shall never have their cup full of the fury and indignation of the Almighty, except they provoke him in his saints?

Surely, my brethren, the tenor and proceedings of their malice and hatred against the servants of the living God, and glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ; their faggots, their fires, their swords, their poisons, their whips, their ships, their vaults, their powder, their billets, their bars;—these and such like strange things and doings of theirs, being interpreted in the plain language which the Scripture speaketh, are, as much as to say, “We would not fall or be destroyed after the dull manner of other kingdoms of the earth: We would have the day of our vengeance celebrated with more solemnity of horror: We shall not be satisfied with our destruction, except the powers of heaven and earth be shaken together at the terror of it.” If such a desire were indeed and in truth to be found in these men, and in their religion; if it were a real design and project amongst them, to procure another hell to be created for



them, by themselves, beneath the nethermost hell that is now extant, wherein they might have more cruel tormentors than devils, a more horrid lake than that which burneth with fire and brimstone, a darkness blacker than utter darkness, a worm that shall gnaw with greater extremity than that which never dieth, a fire that shall burn with more pain and torture than that which is unquenchable, where weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth should be but pleasure and recreation ; they could not furnish themselves with any other means under heaven more suitable and better proportioned to bring such a thing to pass, than to set themselves, in that desperate and implacable manner as they do, to fall upon the reward of the hosts of heaven ; (for so may the saints on earth be well termed ; they are called angels in the Revelation, for that communion and fellowship they have with the angels, in fighting Christ's battles here beneath ;) than by seeking to root out the generation of the righteous from under heaven, than by grieving and afflicting the souls that have that precious interest in God.

A second motive to persuade the enemies of the church of God to stay their hands, and to give over that service of the devil, persecuting saints, may be this : Because it is a work that never prospered in the hands of any, from the beginning of the world till this day ; but still hath been a work, like the land of Canaan, as the spies described it to the people, " that eats up the inhabitants of it." So this work of persecuting the church and children of God hath ever been a work and employment that hath been the ruin and destruction of the doers of it. Yea, the sharpest and sorest contentions that ever fell between heaven and earth, between God and the men of this world, have still risen about injuries and violence offered to his church. This apple of God's eye hath cost the world dear ; the touching of it hath cost the blood of the

greatest monarchs, of many kings and princes of the earth. It hath cost whole monarchies, kingdoms, and states, the greatest, the richest, the strongest that ever the world saw, their whole estates, riches, glory, and peace. True, we read often of the jealousy of God over his great name, in respect of any pollutions and profanation of it by other sins; but we do not read of his great jealousy but only for and over Jerusalem, his church: But as concerning the case of Jerusalem, we read of it twice in the same prophet. As if God had a jealousy and a jealousy, a two-fold jealousy, a double and a single, a greater and a lesser; and the lesser jealousy he puts on, and arms himself with, when he went forth to execute vengeance for other sins; but when he sets forth against the enemies of his church, when he comes to plead Jerusalem's cause with her adversaries, his double jealousy now went on; his great jealousy was reserved for causes of this nature, as of highest and greatest importance for his glory, Yea, I shall say yet more, that when men have put forth their hands to this work, I mean, to afflict the church of God, upon the fairest terms, upon greatest advantage or likelihood that can be conceived of doing any good upon it, and making earnings of it; I mean, when they have seemed, in doing it, even to give the right hand of fellowship to God himself, when he hath begun to punish them, yet did never any man come off fairly from the work; God still found something or other against those that were his workmen and executioners, which made a breach between him and them: They never ate of their labours, nor ever rejoiced in any of these works of their hand, seldom any of their heads went down in peace to their graves.

As for example of the just vengeance and fiery indignation of the Lord breaking out upon those who, without any warrant or commission from him, have evil entreated, despitefully used, oppressed, and persecuted



the church of God ; these, both in sacred records and other histories of the church, are without end or number. There is not only a cloud of such witnesses, but the whole heaven is spread over with them, and divers of them known unto all men ; so that it would be but time lost to produce them. Therefore, now I beseech you consider, you that are enemies of the truth, that have embittered spirits against the holy city and church of God, consider and ponder with yourselves the truth and weight of this motive. There was no man ever spread a snare to take the people of God with, but, first or last, if he continued his malice, his own foot was taken with it. No man ever digged a pit for such but fell himself into it ; no man ever attempted mischief against it, and continued in it, but it still returned upon him, and fell on his own pate, as David speaketh. It was the argument the Lord Jesus Christ himself used to Paul, when he took him hard at this work, busy in persecuting the saints, and meant to take him off from it : “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks ;” against sharp-pointed irons, as goads or nails have : Teaching, that a man cannot lift up his hand or heel against the meanest of the servants of God, but with as much folly and madness, and with as little hope of doing themselves good, as he that shall stand chopping and dashing his naked hands or feet against the sharpest points of weapons or instruments made of steel or iron.

They that persecute the saints of God call for fire, as it were, down from heaven, upon their own heads ; they put a sword into the Lord’s hand, wherewith to slay them. If that scarlet whore of Rome had been, or ever should be, able to perform the device she imagined, and yet imagines daily, to root out all the holy seed, the whole family that is descended of Jesus Christ in all the world, so that she had left none but her own adulterous generation to possess the earth, she

might then think, indeed, that she sat like a queen ; but the truth is, she should have prevented her judgment and torments so much the sooner, she had but brought the fear and dread of the devil, which was “to be tormented before his time,” so much the more speedily upon his own head. Suppose the Lord had given us up into their bloody hands ;—which yet we and our posterity shall have cause to bless him so long as the sun and moon endures, that it was far from all his thoughts to do ;—but put the case, I say, that she had been let alone, with state, people, Gospel, religion, that she might have done with all these, as it is said the Jews did by John the Baptist, even what she list ; that she had triumphed in that fatal blow ; for aught that she knew or was aware of, she might have shaken the foundations of her own mountains, and have caused her sun to have set over her head, even at noon-day ; she might have thundered even the Lord Jesus Christ out of heaven to have taken speedy vengeance upon those that would bring up hell from beneath upon the face of the earth, and that had destroyed out of the world the beauty and glory of it.



XVIII.—APOSTASY.

CONCERNING the doctrine which maintaineth a possibility of the saints finally falling away, though I am not ignorant of the scriptures and arguments usually brought in against it, yet I verily believe that what makes professors generally so zealous in opposing it, is not so much any satisfaction they find in the arguments used to prove the contrary doctrine, as their fears lest this doctrine should prove unfriendly to their inward peace and comfort. In this respect, for the securing of some passages in the former chapter, being almost necessitated to consider the doctrine of perseverance, I judge it best in my entrance upon it, to remove this stumbling-stone out of the way, and show, not only that this doctrine is every way as consistent with the peace and comfort of the saints, as the contrary opinion ; but of the two it is better calculated to promote them.

I must beg leave to affirm, that the doctrine of perseverance, as it is commonly taught and received, is, in its own nature and tendency, very destructive to the true peace and comfort of the souls of men. For if we carefully examine into the ordinary causes of those doubts and fears, so incident to professors of religion, and which give them so much uneasiness of mind, we shall generally find them to be such as these,—negligence in watching over their hearts and lives ; omission of known duties, or formality in the performance of them ; and especially the frequent out-breakings of corruption, vile affections, &c. Therefore, whatever doctrine is, in its own nature, calculated to lead men into such snares of death, to fill the conscience with the guilt of such unchristian conversation, must of necessity be opposed to the inward peace and comfort of souls. And what doctrine can be of more apparent tendency

this way than that which promiseth to men, let their falls into sin be ever so great, an exemption from that punishment, the dread of which is the strongest bridle which God could put into the mouths of unruly men, to restrain them from sin ; yea, and, notwithstanding its strength, the carnal mind frequently despises it, and disdains to be reclaimed by it. And is not the doctrine of unconditional perseverance of this very tendency ?

If it be said, "But they who teach the doctrine of perseverance urge the necessity of the use of those means which God hath appointed to enable men to persevere ;" I answer, It is in vain to press men to the use of means which are in themselves unpleasant, when they are assured beforehand that they cannot miscarry, whether they use means or no.

If it be replied, that the teachers I speak of "do not promise perseverance to the end, but only to those who use the means appointed by God for obtaining it ;" I answer : If this indeed be the drift of their doctrine, mine and theirs are no longer two, but one and the same. I am as willing as any of them to give the great pledge of heaven, the word of the living God, to the saints, for the security of their standing to the end, on the use of the means prescribed by God thereto. But I fear that this is not the simple drift of their doctrine ; they cover it over with some such specious cloak as this,—that as God requires the use of the means of perseverance, and will give it to none but those who use them ; yet he hath irreversibly decreed that they shall use them, and that he himself will interpose by the power of his Spirit, that not a man of them shall miscarry. I have but a word to say to this : Let them produce such a decree as this, and it shall be an end of all strife immediately.

As the doctrine of unconditional perseverance contributes so much towards many of those fears and gripings of conscience, whereby peace is interrupted



and comforts depressed, so it is to be feared, that it hath a powerful and pernicious influence on those daily apostasies and declensions from the ways of holiness which are found amongst men. For if the unsanctified nature in man should be intoxicated with such a fulsome conceit as this, that it hath goods laid up for eternity, is it not liable to the temptation of the rich fool, who, on the conceit that he had "goods laid up for many years," encouraged his soul in vanity? "Soul, take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry." When a man who stands in danger of falling, is it not the most likely way to procure his fall to persuade him that there is no possibility of it? Agag, full of this conceit, "Surely the bitterness of death is past," came unto Samuel "delicately." When the flesh has learnt to say, "Surely the bitterness of eternal death is past, I am out of all danger;" is it not a powerful temptation to it to "wax wanton against Christ," and to feed upon the sinful delicacies of this present world? Not only the distinct sound, but any confused blast, of such a trumpet as this is sufficient to prepare the flesh to the battle of sense and sensuality.

If it be said, "But it cannot be proved that any of those who decline and turn back from a religious course ever were true believers, or, if such, that they continued in such declensions without any holy recollection of themselves to the end;" to this I answer:—

Let it be supposed, that all who fall away, without being recovered again, never were true believers; yet it cannot be denied, that many of them were in a very fair and hopeful way of obtaining true faith. Now, that doctrine, the native tendency of which is to draw them aside from the way of faith, is as completely anti-evangelical as that which occasions such miscarriages in those who do truly believe.

But if there be any persons under heaven who may on sufficient grounds be judged true believers, many of those apostates we speak of were to be judged such.

As far as the eye of man is able to penetrate, they lived godlily, righteously, and soberly in this present world. Hath any true believer zeal for God? So had they. Is a true believer fruitful in good works? So were they; yea, they were found in the practice of such works of piety and mercy, as we ought to reverence and honour, as the lovely and majestic characters of faith and holiness in their exaltation. Therefore, it is but an unreasonable pretence to deny them to have been true believers.

If our Saviour's rule be to be regarded, "By their fruits ye shall know them," we did not only stand bound by the law of charity, but by every other reasonable consideration, to judge them true believers while they adorned the Gospel with such fruits as have been mentioned. For he doth not say, "By their fruits" you shall have ground to judge them in charity such; but, "You shall know them." If, then, it be possible for men, by any outward signs or fruits, to know true believers, which our Lord, in this rule, supposes it to be, the persons we speak of may be known to have been such.

If the doctrine of perseverance reduce men to the necessity of judging all those to have been hypocrites, or unsound in the faith, who finally fall away, it will be found, on a serious examination, to be a doctrine not so much calculated to promote the peace and comfort of God's people as some imagine. For what will it avail me to my peace and comfort, though I be ever so fully persuaded, that if I be a true believer I shall never finally fall away, if, in the mean time, I be so perplexed in my own mind, that I can scarcely have any sufficient ground to conclude that I am a true believer, or otherwise have occasion strongly to suspect the truth of my faith? Now, if I must of necessity conclude all those to have been hypocrites who afterwards fall and rise no more, it is likely to give rise to a



thousand fears and jealousies respecting myself, touching the reality of my own faith, lest it should be no better than theirs. And being surrounded with such fears and jealousies as these, what peace or comfort am I capable of enjoying respecting my own salvation? Or what is it to me whether true believers may fall away or not, when I am in suspense whether I be a true believer or not?

If it be replied, "But I may be assured of the truth of my own faith, because I am conscious of the uprightness of my own heart, which I could not be of theirs; and, therefore, though I might be mistaken respecting them, having nothing to found my judgment on but their outward deportment, yet, having the testimony of my own heart and conscience, together with my outward deportment, I may here be confident, though there I miscarried;" to this I answer:—

Far be it from me to deny, but that a man may attain to a very strong assurance that his faith is sound and saving; yea, and such, if persevered in to the end, whereby he shall be actually saved. This is agreed to on both sides.

But I verily believe that there are very few who are thus assured of the truth and soundness of their faith on rational grounds; because, though the testimony of a man's own heart and conscience, touching his uprightness before God, be comfortable and cheering, yet seldom are these properties built on such grounds which are sufficient to maintain and support them. For the testimony of a man's conscience is of little value in respect to spiritual things, unless enlightened with the knowledge of the nature and properties of the things concerning which it testifieth; and be in the actual contemplation of what it knoweth, when it giveth such a testimony. Now, there are many who truly believe, and whose hearts are upright with God, who yet are not enlightened to that degree, so as to have

that full assurance of faith which frees them from all doubts and scruples of conscience, respecting the safety of their state. This is the constant and well-known experience of the children of God; there being not one, the testimony of whose conscience, respecting the soundness of his faith, is, to any such degree, either comforting or cheering, but that he has had many fears and scruples frequently to encounter.

The comfortableness of the testimony which any man's conscience gives, respecting the soundness of his faith, depending principally on his uniform and regular walk in the ways of holiness; and there being so few, even of the saints, who are so happy as to walk without any slips; hence it must follow that the testimony of conscience will be divided in itself: And though what is comforting and cheering may prevail, yet the consciousness of irregularities must proportionably detract from the same. The credit of the testimony which any man's conscience gives him, touching the soundness of his faith, must, in a great measure, depend upon its uniform obedience to God in the ways and work of righteousness; for when there is any considerable departure from these, that testimony will be suspended and put to silence for the time, unless conscience be under the power of some delusion. This is evident from the Scriptures in many places: "Little children," saith St. John, "let no man deceive you: He that doeth righteousness is righteous." This caution, "Let no man deceive you," plainly intimates that the consciences, even of true believers themselves, may very possibly be deceived in their estimation of a righteous man or a believer, and judge him to be one when he is not. Therefore, it is added, "He that doeth righteousness is righteous;" that is, "he," and "he" only, who "doeth righteousness," is to be judged a righteous man. Now, by doing righteousness, he doth not mean the performance of an act of righteousness now and then,

but a constant and uniform practice of the duties of evangelical holiness. Now, if no man ought, on Scripture grounds, to be judged a righteous man, or a true believer, but only he who thus follows after and practises righteousness, it is evident that in what degree men fall short of this rule, the testimony of their consciences must needs falter and be encumbered with many doubts proportionably, unless misinformed or hardened.

The grounds of the doctrine of perseverance duly considered, in which so many professors rejoice, as being so desirably and richly connected with their peace and comfort, must of necessity appear to have no such connexion with them, but rather be more likely to entice them into sin; and, consequently, dispose them to apostatize, yea, and fill their consciences with dread and horror, and very frequently with jealousies respecting the soundness of their faith.

But, will the friends of this doctrine still say, "We find it sweet and comfortable to us; whereas the contrary doctrine is full of discouragement." To this, and every thing of the kind, we answer:—

Suppose the doctrine we speak of were ever so comfortable, yet this would not be an argument of its truth, unless the comfort derived from it be consistent with the wisdom and righteousness of God. It would be easy to invent doctrines every way as comfortable as this, which would be found defective in point of truth, because they have no consistency with the attributes of God. As for instance: "All men, without exception, shall be saved, whether they believe or not; men are as much approved by God in the commission of sin, as in the performance of duty:" Such doctrines as these are much more sweet and comfortable to human nature than that of the saints' perseverance. But as these doctrines are not to be received on account of their sweetness, having no foundation in the word of

God ; so neither is the doctrine of unconditional perseverance to be regarded on that account, unless the stamp of Divinity could be found on it.

Though both doctrines and other means of spiritual comfort be very desirable, and earnestly to be contended for, when rational and agreeable to the word of God, yet we ought to be content with the disposal of our heavenly Father, and to rest satisfied with such grounds and means of spiritual consolation as he hath judged meet for us, and vouchsafed to us in his word ; and not strain our imaginations to form such opinions as we conceive to be calculated to promote this end. A spirit of error can in no ways be serviceable to the interests of religion, or promote the true peace and comfort of man.

No doctrine which only affords comfort to the flesh, ought to be esteemed by the saints as a mean of peace, but should rather be esteemed as prejudicial to their whole and best interest ; for that which strengthens the arm of flesh cannot be serviceable to the spirit, in its true peace and comfort. Now, the doctrine above-named must needs be an encourager of the flesh, because it administereth a certain hope to it, that though it gratify any vicious inclination or desire which may arise, yet it shall escape the future vengeance of Almighty God. For this is the very spirit of the doctrine.

That it is no ways comforting to the spirit of a regenerate man, but rather fulsome and unreasonable, is evident from hence,—because so far as he is regenerated and spiritual, he desires not heaven itself, only in the ways of holiness ; nor would he purchase a dispensation to sin without danger, though offered him on the most trifling terms. Nay, if an angel from heaven were to come and offer such a dispensation to him, it would be accounted by him a base and accursed offer. Now, a regenerate person, who



is truly spiritual, and renewed after the image of God, regardeth not opportunities of sinning; nor doth he expect or desire to continue in the love and favour of God on any other terms than those on which the Lord Christ himself enjoyed it. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." Therefore, it is evident, that the new man takes no pleasure in any doctrine which insures either perseverance in faith, or a continuance in the favour and love of God, upon any other terms than of walking holily and humbly with him.

The commonly-received doctrine of perseverance is so far from encouraging the spiritual part of man, that it is to it what Peter was to Christ, when he said, "Be it far from thee, Lord," or "Pity thyself;" I mean, an offence; or what those Christians were to St. Paul, of whom he saith, that they "brake his heart with weeping." For it secretly suggests such things to the mind, which have a tendency to scatter what the Spirit hath gathered, to dissolve those holy purposes and resolutions wherewith the regenerate person is armed against temptations. When the new man, in a child of God, shall have reasoned and resolved thus, with St. Paul: "I will keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway:" If any should insinuate to him, "Whether thou 'keep under thy body and bring it into subjection,' or whether thou suffer it to wax wanton, thou shalt be in no danger of being a 'cast-away;'" shall he not undermine the very foundation of such a resolution? Or suppose a man should argue and resolve thus within himself, that "I will labour with my hands, that I may provide honestly for myself and do good to others," would not a suggestion of this kind, that he should have a sufficiency

for both purposes, without any labour, be a strong temptation to retract his resolution ?

If it be here said, " But a full assurance that God will never cease to love me, but will bring me to glory, whatever my failings be, is an effectual motive to cause me to cleave to him in love and faithfulness ; and, consequently, is cheering and strengthening to the inner man ; " to this I answer :—

That the inner or new man in the saints can take no pleasure at all in the idea that it may enjoy the love of God, or salvation, in the practice of sin and wickedness. The very sound of these last words is harsh and unpleasant. Nor could it easily be persuaded that any such notion is from God.

Should it be granted, that a full assurance of the continuance of the favour of God, on any terms whatsoever, even of the greatest sin, would be an effectual motive on the heart of a regenerate man to cleave in love to God ; yet would it not be a motive of that strength and efficacy, as an assurance that he shall continue in the favour of God for ever, in a way of righteousness and well-doing, but shall be in danger of forfeiting this favour, if he should draw back into folly and wickedness. The reason why this latter compounded motive must necessarily be of greater efficacy than the former is, because the latter supposeth a necessity of cleaving to God, in the way of duty, for the obtaining of this great good ; which the former doth not.

If such an assurance as the objection speaks of be such an effectual motive to persuade the heart of man to cleave in love to God, why is it that he should not exhibit and afford this to all men, to this end ? For, 1. It is certain that all men are commanded to love God. 2. It is equally certain, that God is not defective in affording motives to them for this end, and those the most proper and efficacious.

3. It is also certain, that an assurance of the love of God towards them, under their sin and rebellion against him, is a motive every way as suitable to carnal men as to spiritual and holy men, to persuade them to love God. Therefore, if God have not thought proper to afford such a motive as this to carnal men, it is not at all likely he hath afforded it to the saints; with whose hearts, as such, it could have no agreement at all.

The consideration we now speak of hath nothing at all in it of the real nature of a motive, to persuade any one to cleave in love to God. For whatsoever representeth God to the mind of man as a God promising his love and favour, as well to him who falls into sin and turns back as a swine to her wallowing in the mire, as to the obedient, can be no consideration which commends him to his creature, or, consequently, which hath any thing in it to engage him to cleave in love to him. Suppose a man that, having once had a good opinion of another, and would never alter it on any consideration whatever, though he should become the most vile and notorious character under heaven; but under his daily enormities should love him as sincerely, and with as much affection, as he doth the most virtuous; would such a disposition as this commend him as a person worthy of so much the more love and respect in the eyes of sensible men? From what hath been said, it doth not appear that the doctrine of perseverance anyways contributes to the peace and comfort of what is of God, but only what is of satan, and which deserveth mortification, instead of comfort and peace.

If it be yet further objected, "But is not the doctrine of falling away a very uncomfortable doctrine? apt to produce in the mind a servile, slavish fear? Or must not those who apprehend themselves to be in danger of falling away and perishing, of necessity, eat their bread

in darkness, and dwell in trouble and perplexity all their days?" to these, and such like reasonings, I answer: To be in danger of falling away, and to be under a possibility of it, are two very different ideas; at least, if we understand the word "danger" in the common signification of it—as it implies a probability of evil befalling those who are said to be in danger. A man who is in danger of suffering evil cannot be comfortable and easy in his mind while the danger continues; but he that is only in a possibility of suffering evil, especially if he be provided with a sufficiency of means to prevent the evil coming upon him if he please, is perfectly capable of enjoying himself on the best terms of security which are suitable to a creature. Men may very possibly fall into the fire, and be burnt; into the water, and be drowned; yet no man is less comfortable because he lives under a possibility of suffering these great evils. The reason is, because they know that God hath given them reason and understanding sufficient to preserve themselves from them. In like manner, God having vouchsafed a sufficiency of means to the saints to preserve themselves from apostasy, so that they need not apostatize and perish except they please; there is no reason at all why they should live at all more uncomfortably, or be less confident of being saved, only because under a possibility of falling away. St. Paul acknowledges himself to have been under a possibility of being a "reprobate" or "castaway." Yet how great was his comfort, and his "joy unspeakable and glorious!" "I am persuaded," saith he, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The ground of this most blessed confidence, notwithstanding the possibility he was under of becoming a castaway, was partly that clear and certain knowledge he had of the

unchangeable purpose of God to give salvation to all those who should persevere in faith and holiness to the end; partly, also, his knowledge of the goodness of God towards his saints, in vouchsafing to them so rich a proportion of means in order to their perseverance.

Suppose, for the sake of argument, the doctrine of perseverance should be granted, and that absolute assurance, also, which this doctrine pretends to give them; yet that conditional assurance which the other doctrine affords will not fall much short of it. Were I a person who desired to live long in the world, and God should please to grant me a lease of my life for a thousand years, only on condition that I should not wilfully destroy myself before the time; should I not be as well satisfied with such a conditional lease as with one that should be absolute, and wherein my life should be assured to me against all possible attempts made by me to destroy it? In like manner, if it be simply the salvation of my soul which I desire, such a conditional promise as this, that I shall certainly be saved, if I abstain from folly, follow the Lord in the way of duty, and not turn back like the sow that is washed, is all the security I stand in need of. But if my desire be, besides the saving of my soul, to indulge myself in sin, to bid defiance to the Almighty, and to laugh Jesus Christ and his Gospel to scorn in the face, without running the risk of losing my soul, then I confess only such a promise of salvation as the doctrine of absolute perseverance implies would satisfy my mind. The truth is, that there is nothing more in that assurance of salvation which the doctrine of absolute and unconditional perseverance pretends to, than in that of conditional perseverance, but only a liberty of sinning.

That doctrine, the tendency of which is to prevent all those occasions and miscarriages from which trouble of conscience and doubts concerning salvation do frequently arise, must needs be a doctrine better calculated to pro-

mote the peace and comfort of men than that which is apt to produce such occasions. Now, 1. That the uncleanness of men's hearts and lives are the springs which commonly send forth the bitter waters of trouble, fears, and perplexity of soul, hath been already proved, and the daily experience of too many corroborates it for truth. 2. It hath also been clearly demonstrated that the doctrine of absolute perseverance is, in its own nature, calculated to encourage such uncleanness as we speak of in the lives of men. Therefore, 3. I add, that the contrary doctrine is in its own nature and tendency calculated to prevent the breakings-out of such corruptions in men, which otherwise would be very unruly; and, consequently, is a faithful guardian over, and promoter of, the peace and comfort of men. For teaching the certainty of perseverance and salvation, on a conscientious use of the means God hath appointed, encourages and strengthens the Spirit in men, who desire neither on any other terms, and rejoice that in this way they may be enjoyed: And, again, by teaching, that, through a neglect of duty, there may be an apostatizing to perdition, it rebukes that corruption which is in man, and puts a sharp bit and bridle into his lips.

If it be objected, "But experience shows, that the doctrine of unconditional perseverance is more effectual to subdue corruption in men than the other, inasmuch as many who maintain the doctrine of falling away are known to be loose and irregular, and no friends to the power of religion; whereas, men of the greatest holiness of life are known to be of the contrary judgment;" to this, also, I answer, If persons on both sides the question were duly compared together, I believe there would be found as great a proportion of men truly conscientious and religious among those whose judgments are in favour of a possibility of falling away in the saints, as on the other side. But, through a foolish and unreasonable partiality, we are apt to reckon our

own geese for swans, and other men's swans geese. If the writings of men of the one side and of the other be compared together, and an estimate made from hence of the religious worth and holiness of the authors respectively, those who oppose the common doctrine of perseverance will be found every way equal in this honour to their opponents. The truth is, I do not find the Spirit of holiness to breathe with that warmth and excellency of power in the writings of the latter which I am very sensible of in the writings of the former. These insist on righteousness and true holiness, both in heart and life, and are at all times backed with the most powerful arguments, and add nothing to enfeeble the authority of their demands ; whereas, the other, though they be sometimes pressing in their exhortations to holiness, yet they frequently render both these and themselves contemptible, by avouching such opinions as cut the very sinews of their exhortations, and overbalance the weight of those motives by which they attempt to bind them on the consciences of men. The primitive Christians, who, during the space of three hundred years or more next after the apostles, held the possibility of a total defection, even in true believers, will fully overbalance, both for numbers and true godliness, all those in the Reformed churches who adhered to the common doctrine of perseverance.

Notwithstanding all that hath been said on this subject, some will still object and say, "We cannot yet be satisfied but your doctrine of falling away must, of necessity, be very uncomfortable, and of sad consequence to the saints ; because, though there be but a possibility of this, yet, considering their manifold weaknesses and propensity to sin, they must needs be in continual fear lest they should really fall away. And, therefore, there is nothing that can give them any security of their state, but a knowledge and belief of some such unchangeable decree of God as this : That,

however foully they may fall, they shall never finally fall away. Nor is there the same consideration of a saint's refraining from sin, and of a man's forbearing wilfully to destroy his natural life; because self-preservation in man is a very powerful, vigorous, and active principle, and will urge him to refrain from any thing destructive to natural life; whereas the inclination to abstain from sin, which is in the saints, is comparatively weak, much encumbered by the flesh, the frequent motions thereof," &c. To these things I answer, Though that disposition in the saints to forbear from sin be neither so free nor so full of energy as the natural inclination in men to preserve natural life; yet, even this inclination itself is not so entire and strong but that it is subject to temptation, and sometimes is overcome; as in the case of those who lay violent hands on themselves. Therefore, there is not so great a disproportion between the inclination of the one and the other, as the objection supposeth.

But let it be granted, that the disposition in the saints to abstain from sin is not in the general so powerful as a desire in men to preserve natural life; yet it is probably as powerful in reference to some sins, and particularly to those which are likely to produce final apostasy. For, though there be in every sin a natural tendency towards apostasy, as there is in a slight wound in a man's finger towards the dissolution of natural life, yet as no man is uneasy in reference to the continuance of health and life, by losing a drop or two of his blood from his finger; so neither is there any reasonable ground why, upon every appearance of human weakness, a saint should be overwhelmed with a fear of falling away, unless he hath an assurance from heaven that he cannot fall away.

Whether that disposition we now speak of in the saints be really commensurable in strength and power with the inclination in men to preserve natural life by



the forbearance of all acts of violence or not, it is certain that God hath vouchsafed to them a sufficiency of means to make them every way commensurable hereto ; yea, to raise them to a higher degree of power than so ; yea, further, hath put it in their power to use these means to the actual producing of such a glorious and blessed effect. Therefore, if the said inclination in them be not as serviceable to them, in securing them against all fears of doing any thing apparently destructive to their spiritual interest, as the principle of self-preservation in men to preserve them from doing any thing that would destroy natural life ; the fault is entirely and absolutely in themselves ; and this not through any infirmity which is natural to them, but through their own stupid carelessness and sloth. If so, then the doctrine of conditional perseverance is not any ways prejudicial to the peace and comfort of the saints, in respect of itself, but merely occasionally, namely, as the saints will voluntarily run into such extravagances of sin, which, that doctrine being true, may justly fill them with fears of finally falling away. But permit me to say this also, that even those who hold the common doctrine of perseverance do affirm that the saints, under such relapses into sin as we speak of, can have no comfort or assurance of salvation, and, consequently, no assurance of perseverance, unto the end. Therefore, by their own confessions, there is not such a great difference between the two doctrines, in reference to the peace and comfort of the saints ; the one leaving them liable to fears and doubts, as well as the other ; yea, if we must judge according to truth, that of perseverance must be adjudged, not only to leave the saints under a possibility of fear, but under a strong temptation of tormenting themselves with fears, which the other doth not.

If it be said, “ But what are the means which God hath given in such abundance to the saints, to make themselves as strong in an inclination to avoid things

destructive to the peace and salvation of their souls, as natural men are to forbear things destructive to natural life ; so that they need not be any more afraid of losing their souls, than men are of destroying their natural lives ? ” I answer :—

There is nothing which endangers the salvation of the soul but sin ; and they are sins which are known to be such, if not by the light of nature, yet by the light of grace, and of the Scriptures ; known and manifest not only simply as they are sins, but manifest in that relation we now speak of, as threatening the destruction of the soul. So that the saints are fully furnished with means sufficient from God to inform them of whatever is apparently destructive to their souls.

He hath blessed them with understanding and light, whereby they clearly know, that it is not more rational for men to refrain from such actions as would endanger their natural lives, than it is to forbear the commission of sin, the natural tendency of which is to destroy the soul.

God hath not only given them eyes and the light we speak of, but hath endued them with the faculty of consideration, that they may reflect on and ponder over what they see and understand, Now, whatsoever a man is capable of seeing and knowing, of pondering and considering, he is capable of raising an inclination in himself towards it, proportionable to the degree of excellency and goodness which he apprehends to be in it. And the greater the good is that is apprehended herein, and the more raised is the apprehension, the stronger and more vigorous must the inclination of the soul be towards it. Therefore, if there be real worth and goodness in any object, and if a man be in a capacity of apprehending this clearly, and of considering this his vision, certainly he has a liberty to work himself to any degree of inclination towards it he pleaseth.



Now, it is, or may easily be, evident to any one, that there is more good in abstaining from things eminently dangerous to the soul, than in forbearing from things destructive to natural life. It is as evident, that every man is capable of attaining a certain knowledge of, and of clearly apprehending, this excess of good to him in the former above the latter. Every man is also capable of ruminating on this as much and as often as he pleaseth, as he is apprehending it. It follows, therefore, that the saints may and have means and fair opportunities to plant or raise an inclination in themselves to refrain from all deadly sins, with greater energy and vigour than that natural inclination in them which teacheth them to refrain from those things destructive to natural life. Therefore, if they be more afraid of voluntary destroying their lives than they are of falling away through sin, the reason cannot be in that doctrine which affirms that there is a possibility that they may fall away, but in their own voluntary negligence; they have means in abundance to render themselves every way as secure respecting the latter, as they reasonably can be concerning the former.

I answer further: Concerning the manifold weaknesses of the saints, their propensity to sin, &c., these are indeed sufficient and proper to work fear in them, but not the fear of falling away from God, but that fear which is opposed to high-mindedness: "Be not high-minded, but fear." This fear is nothing else but a humble reflection on a man's own weakness and insufficiency to stand in his own strength, which naturally produceth a humble dependence on God or strength, and an acknowledgment of strength received.

It is certain that the infirmities of the saints, through which they are apt to sin, do not require any such decree in God which includeth in it an impossibility of their falling away to render them secure from

it. The truth is, that they are so far from being any just ground of fear to them that they shall fall away, that the sense and acknowledgment of them are the most clear and effectual antidotes and preservatives against falling away ; for he who is truly sensible of his own weakness and inability to stand, especially being a saint or believer, will most certainly depend upon Him for strength who is both able and willing to supply and furnish him on such terms.

If the doctrine of falling away be so uncomfortable as the objection pretends, it appears that there is not much relief from the received doctrine of perseverance: For this doctrine, as hath been shown, scarcely permits any man to believe, on any rational grounds, that he is a true saint or believer, yea, and almost tempts him to such things as are exceeding likely to fill him with fears respecting the truth of his faith. And what comfort, then, can it be to him, to hear that true believers cannot finally fall away? Whereas the other doctrine affords them plenty of room to judge themselves true believers; nor doth it deprive them of sufficient ground to secure themselves against all fear of danger of falling away to perdition. This doctrine, therefore, of the two, is, without all doubt, of the more benevolent aspect and influence on the peace and comfort of the saints.

Our present business shall be to confirm the truth of the said doctrine from the oracles of God: This being done, we shall produce some grounds of reason, built on the Scriptures, for the further countenance and credit of it.

First, in reference to the subject now in hand, we cannot wish a more satisfactory account than the Holy Ghost himself has given us in the Old Testament: "But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth,



shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel! Is not my way equal? Are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die." What can any man reasonably desire more for his establishment in any truth whatever, than what is to be found in this passage, to evince the possibility of a righteous man's declining from his righteousness, even unto death? The latter part of the passage is conclusive beyond all contradiction: "When a righteous man turneth away," &c., "and dieth in them," that is, without repentance, "for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die," namely, perish everlastingly. The sense of this passage is evidently this: "When a righteous man shall forsake the ways of righteousness, wherein he formerly walked, and turn aside to sinful practices, and not repent before death, this man shall die the death of the impenitent and unbelievers, which is the second death." If the righteousness which a backslider might perform while he was righteous shall not deliver him when he turns aside to sin and folly, what can we imagine should deliver him? Doubtless, his wickedness to which he hath turned will not be friendly to his deliverance.

Again: The death which God here threateneth against backsliders is opposed to the life which is promised to repentance and perseverance in well-doing. But this life is confessed by all to be eternal life; therefore, the death opposed to it must of necessity be eternal, or the second death.

Yet again: When God, in the Scriptures, threatens impenitent sinners with death for sin, he doubtless intends eternal death, or that death which is the wages

of sin. Otherwise, we have no sufficient ground to believe, that men dying in their sins shall suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, but only temporal death, which the righteous themselves are subject to, as well as they. Therefore, for any to say, as some have done, that God threatens apostates with temporal death only, when he elsewhere threatens the impenitent, under the slightest guilt, with eternal death, is, in effect, to represent him as vehement in his dissuasions from less sins, but indifferent in dissuading from sins of most enormous magnitude.

Once more : If it be only temporal death which God here threatens impenitent apostates with, then may men, under the guilt of the greatest abominations, remain in the love and favour of God, as just and righteous men ; yea, and without repentance, not only escape damnation, but inherit eternal life. And where, then, is the God of judgment ? Or what will become of that general voice of the Scriptures which inviteth men to repentance in order to the forgiveness of sins ?

Some, in order to evade the force of this passage in Ezekiel, have pretended, that by the "righteous man," is not meant a person truly and really righteous, but only an outside professor of righteousness, or, in other words, a hypocrite. But this pitiful shift has, in general, been rejected by sensible men ; even the synod of Dort itself could give no countenance to it. And, indeed, the whole context clearly evinceth, that by the "righteous man" is meant one who is truly so, and who, had he persevered in the way of righteousness, would have worn the crown of righteousness, and received the reward of a righteous man ; as by the "wicked man," all along opposed to him, is meant, not a person seemingly wicked, but truly and really so. So that the opposition between the righteous and the wicked, running through the discourse, would be destroyed, if by the "righteous man" should be meant only one seemingly

so ; he that is only righteous, in this sense, being truly and really wicked.

Others have attempted to explain the sense of this passage away from the hypothetical form of the words themselves. "Ezekiel," say these, "doth not affirm that a righteous man may turn aside from his righteousness, &c., or that he may die in his apostasy, but only speaks by way of supposition ; namely, that if he should turn away from his righteousness, &c., then he shall die, &c. And from such conditional passages as these nothing positive can be concluded." To say that God puts a case with such solemnity and emphasis, as are remarkable all along in this chapter, of which there is no possibility that it should ever happen ; and this vindication of himself and the equity of his dealings with men, is to bring a scandal and reproach of weakness on that infinite wisdom of his which magnifies itself in all his words and works : Which also is so much the more unpardonable when there is a commodious sense every way worthy the infinite wisdom and goodness of God, and pertinent to the occasion in hand, which offers itself clearly without any straining of words from their proper signification.

Lastly : There are some, who, in order to support their favourite opinion of perseverance, have judged it proper to make use of the following pitiful shift, in order to save their tottering building. "When God," say they, "threatens the apostatizing righteous man, that for the iniquity which he committeth he shall die, he speaks neither of the first nor yet of the second death, but of afflictive dispensations of providence, which are frequently signified by the term 'death,' which God often brings upon good men when they provoke him by their sins." To this I answer :—

That this mist hath been already dispelled in the former part of this chapter ; and it clearly appears, that by the death threatened by God against a righteous

man backsliding, and persevering in his sin to death, is meant "eternal death;" therefore, not any afflictive dispensations of providence. We further add:—

That it is unbecoming an interpreter of Scripture to recede from the proper and best-known signification of words, save only when the context or the nature of the subject requires it; as, namely, when the proper signification of the word is inconsistent with the general tenor of Scripture, or with the principles of reason; neither of which can be pretended to be the case here.

The whole context makes expressly against this interpretation. For, the infliction of that death here threatened against the righteous man that shall apostatize is not threatened, but on his dying under his apostasy; in which case there is no opportunity for God to inflict any temporal judgments upon men. "When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them, for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die."

When God threatens such and such sins or sinners with death, it is of dangerous consequence, and tends to break the energy and hinder the operation of such threatenings on the consciences of men, for any one to put a qualified sense on the word "death."

We produce another testimony from Scripture, evidencing the same truth with the former: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, when I have preached unto others, I myself should be a castaway." St. Paul appears to have been very solicitous and industrious to prevent his becoming a "castaway," and in order to this he kept his body under, and brought it into subjection; but no man of understanding will be solicitous to prevent the coming to pass of that thing which he knows to be impossible.

It may be said, that "the word *αδοκιμος*, translated 'a castaway,' doth not always signify 'a person wholly



rejected of God ;' but sometimes 'a person reprobable, in respect of some particular action,' &c. I answer :—

This word in the writings of St. Paul is constantly rendered "reprobate," unless it be once, as Heb. vi. 8, where it is translated "rejected," which is much the same as "reprobate," as is evident from what is connected with it: "But that which beareth thorns and briars is REJECTED, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned."

Chrysostom, Ambrose, Theophylact, and others of the most approved among the Fathers, understand by this word "a person rejected from salvation by God."

The general scope of the context evinceth the lawfulness of such a sense in both, beyond all contradiction. For the apostle—having asserted this as the reason why he had made himself a servant unto all men, in bearing with the humours and weaknesses of men in the course of his ministry; namely, that he might be partaker of the Gospel with them; and, again, that what he did, he did it to obtain an incorruptible crown—plainly shows, that what he sought to prevent by running and fighting was, not the blame of some such misbehaviour, under which, notwithstanding, he might retain the love of God, but that loss of his portion in the Gospel, and of that incorruptible crown, which he sought, in the exercise of that severe discipline, to obtain.

The next Scripture-testimony we shall produce and briefly urge in the cause in hand, is, "Now, the just shall live by faith: But if any man shall draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Our English translators, doubtless out of good-will to a bad cause, have almost defaced this testimony by substituting "any man," for "the just man." The Greek is, "And if he," that is, the just man, "draw back from his believing, my soul shall have no pleasure in him;" that is, My soul shall abhor him unto death; as it is also expounded in the words immediately following: "But

we are not of them who draw back to perdition," &c. From hence, then, it is evident that a man who is "just" or righteous, and under the promise of living for ever by "his faith," may "draw back," so as to incur the sore displeasure of God, and everlasting destruction in the end. If it should be supposed that the just man, who is in the way and under the promise of living by his faith, were in no danger of drawing back, and that so as to lose the favour of God and ruin his soul, God must be conceived here at no better rate of wisdom than thus: "The just shall live by his faith: But if he do that which is utterly impossible for him to do, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." How foolish does it appear to caution men against such evils, which there is no possibility for them to fall into! Therefore this testimony, for confirmation of the doctrine we maintain, is like "a king upon his throne, against whom there is no rising up."

The opportunity which error commonly takes to erect herself a throne amongst men, and reign over the judgments and consciences of those who are under the greatest obligations of reverence and subjection to the truth, consists not so much in the strength or beauty of those arguments which she is able to produce in her cause, as either in the weakness or negligence of the friends and professors of the truth; as when they are either not able or not industrious enough to exhibit her to the world like "Solomon in all his glory," and to display that light and conviction round about her which is her peculiar property, and which will commend her as a daughter of the Deity in the eyes of men. Truth, whose native residence is in the depths, remote from the apprehensions of the vulgar, cannot be brought forth into clear light but by much labour and intense meditation. God himself is said to "inhabit a light that is inaccessible," that is, being capable of more and more glorious attributions, or of having a greater number and



more excellent things spoken of him, and that with the greatest evidence of truth, than either men or angels are able to comprehend, much more to declare unto the world. The truth is, that many truths dwell in such a light as is not accessible without much difficulty, being only discoverable in their certainty and perfect beauty by such arguments and considerations which they who desire to discover must dig deep for; and they must look narrowly, and with a single eye, who wish fully to comprehend them, being set before them. Whereas error, being of near affinity to the corrupt and dark minds of fallen men, dwells, as it were, at their right hand; and though her servants be all flesh, and not spirit; all show, and no substance; yet, having the advantage of a natural compliance in those with whom they have to do, their cause is readily accepted and approved as just and good. When the disciples saw the Lord at a distance, and in the night, walking on the sea towards them, "they were troubled," supposing they had seen an evil "spirit, and cried out for fear;" but when he came near them, and said to them, "Be of good comfort, it is I: Be not afraid," they perfectly knew that it was their dear Lord and Master. So many, looking on the doctrine which we now defend by the dim light of some sensual principles, and in a superficial manner, as it were at a distance, are much troubled at it, as if it were contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, and would bring them into a bondage of fear, and torment them; which doctrine, would they look into it narrowly and with an unprejudiced mind, and by the clear light of such considerations as exhibit it in its own native beauty to them, they would soon acknowledge it to be a doctrine which was designed, not at all to curse, but to bless them altogether.

I plead the agreement it hath with that righteousness of God, which the Scripture calls a "non-acceptation of persons," thus: That doctrine which frees the Almighty

from that unrighteousness which the Scripture calls "a respecting the persons of men," is a doctrine perfectly consistent with the Scriptures and the truth.

The doctrine which teacheth a possibility of the saints declining even to death, is a doctrine of this import.

The reason of the former proposition is plain, inasmuch as the Scriptures frequently assert that God is "without respect of persons," a principle the most worthy the "Judge of all the earth." The latter proposition needs no labour to prove it. It is evident that this doctrine represents God as a non-respecter of persons, as it exhibits him as a Judge, maintaining the same righteous severity against the sins of his own children and friends, as towards his enemies and strangers to him, on the like provocations. This doctrine subjects the saints, as well as others, to this righteous law of God: "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, &c., shall inherit the kingdom of God;" meaning, undoubtedly, without repentance. Whereas the doctrine of unconditional perseverance exempts all who have at any time been true believers from the penalty of this law; teaching, that though such should turn "fornicators," &c. yet they retain their right and title to the kingdom of God, and that they are still the objects of the greatest love that God can show towards men, the love of election, even in the midst of these sore provocations. And thus it makes God the greatest acceptor of persons in the world, rendering him implacably severe towards less sinners, and indulgent above measure towards the greater. For those who have had the knowledge of God, and faith in Jesus Christ, when they turn fornicators, &c. are far greater sinners than men committing the same sins in ignorance; for the Scripture always represents God as more severe in punishing where superior privileges and means of doing good have been vouchsafed. It cannot be denied but that true believers have fallen into the worst of sins, yea, and have



remained impenitent in them for a long season. Therefore, if, during the time of such impenitency, they should not be in the same or a worse condition than those who were always strangers to God are when they live in the same impieties, God must needs be an acceptor of persons, and show a thousand times more favour to the worst delinquents than to ordinary offenders.

As this doctrine renders all the exhortations and threatenings useless which the Scriptures exhibit as means to promote the faith and holiness of the saints, so doth it all the promises designed to procure the same end; their efficacy and power are destroyed by this supposition, that believers stand bound to believe that it is absolutely impossible that they should finally fall away. For when men are secured, and this by the infallible security of faith, that the good things promised are already theirs, and that they shall certainly persevere to the end, what need is there to persuade these men to do that which becomes them, in order to their perseverance, by any argument drawn from the promise of such things? A promise of what is already enjoyed and possessed is no promise; hath not the nature of a promise in it; especially, not of a promise engaging to the use of means in order to the obtaining of the good promised. A promise that is in any ways likely to engage to the use of means must be of some good thing so circumstanced, in relation to the subject of it, that he hath not the least ground to expect the enjoyment of it, but on condition of complying with the proper means. If those means which are proper and necessary for obtaining the good promised be unpleasant to the subject of the promise, it is a clear case that he would not lift up his hand towards them, but only for the obtaining of such a good which he has reason to believe would not be obtained any other ways. For who will trouble himself to run for that which he

knows he may and shall obtain by sitting still? Thus it appears that the doctrine of absolute perseverance makes nothing of the most serious and weighty exhortations, threatenings, and promises in the Scriptures, which concern the perseverance of the saints, and are directed by God to them for this purpose; that by them they may be stirred up to the use of those means which secure their perseverance.

That doctrine which represents God as weak and inconsistent with himself, in his applications to men, is not of God; and, consequently, the contrary must be the truth. But the doctrine of perseverance, which we oppose, puts this dishonour upon God; it represents him weak, inconsistent, &c. *Ergo*. The major proposition in this argument will not admit of a doubt. The minor is evinced by this consideration, namely, that the said doctrine represents God as speaking in the Scriptures to the following purpose: "You that truly believe in my Son Jesus Christ, and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and, therefore, are fully persuaded in your own minds that you cannot possibly, by the most abominable sins you may commit, finally fall away from your faith; that, in the midst of your foulest falls, there remains a seed of grace within you, which is sufficient to preserve you from falling away finally; that you know and are assured that I will, by an invincible power, work perseverance in you, and that heaven is already as good as yours: Yet, you who are fully persuaded of the truth of this, I earnestly charge, admonish, exhort, and beseech, that you take heed to yourselves, that ye continue in the faith, that you fall not from your steadfastness. Yea, I profess to you, that if you draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in you; that if you deny me, I will deny you; that if you turn away, all your former righteousness shall not be remembered, but you shall die in your sins, and suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. On the other hand, if



you continue to the end, my promise is, that you shall be saved. Therefore, 'strive to enter in at the strait gate;' 'quit yourselves like men;' 'be not slothful, but followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.'" He that duly considers what a ridiculous incongruity there is between the one and the other must doubtless be obliged to own, that one of them is not from God, nor according to his mind. For, how preposterous it must be to threaten a man with suffering the vengeance of hell-fire, if he should not persevere, whom we have before encouraged to believe that God will invincibly cause him to persevere!

If there be no possibility of the saints finally falling away, then their persevering to the end is incapable of reward from God. This is demonstrated thus: No act of the creature, to which it is necessitated, is by any law of God, or rule of justice, rewardable. Therefore, if the saints be under an absolute necessity of persevering unto the end, their final perseverance is not, according to any law of God or principle of sound reason, capable of reward, any more than actions merely natural are, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, &c. For, to what purpose should a reward be promised to me, to persuade or induce me to engage in such or such a course, or to perform such or such a service, if I be necessitated to the same in some other way? Or what room is there left for moral inducement, where physical necessity hath done the execution? Now, that all the rewards promised in the Scriptures to those who persevere to the end, are promised with this view, namely, to work on the wills of men, to induce them to persevere, is a truth so replete with evidence, that it needs no proof. When Christ saith to the church of Smyrna, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," can any man reasonably imagine but

that the "crown of life" is promised by way of motive, to engage them to be "faithful unto death?" And when he saith to his disciples, "He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved," doth he promise salvation to him that shall be necessitated to "endure to the end?" Or is there any more savour in the promise thus understood, than there would be in such a promise as this?—"He that breatheth to the end, the same shall be saved." Therefore, without doubt, our Saviour's design in promising salvation to him that should endure to the end was to animate and encourage men to persevere, in view of obtaining so great a blessing. Therefore, it is very evident, that final perseverance in the saints is truly and properly rewardable by God; it is also clear from what has been said, that it is not any thing produced by a physical necessity, or invincibly wrought in them by God, but that it is such a course of holy obedience to God, wherein they act freely, and have it as well in their power to decline as to exhibit.

Another argument to the same purpose is this: They who are under a possibility of committing the works of the flesh are in a possibility of perishing, and, consequently, of finally falling away. But the saints are in a possibility of committing the works of the flesh." Therefore, &c. The major proposition in this argument is clearly proved from such scriptures which exclude all workers of iniquity from the kingdom of God, of which sort there are many: "Of which," saith St. Paul, speaking of the lusts of the flesh, adultery, fornication, &c., "I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Again: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived," &c. From such passages as these, addressed to believers, it is as clear as the sun at mid-day, that they who may possibly commit such sins



may as possibly perish, and be for ever excluded from the kingdom of God.

Now, to pretend that the threatenings in the Scriptures last quoted are not bent against true believers, though they should commit the sins specified, but only against unbelievers, is to set up darkness for light. For the said passages are addressed to true believers, and to such only, or, at least, to those whom the apostles judged to be such. If, then, this threatening, "They that do the works of the flesh shall not inherit the kingdom of God," concern only unbelievers, to what purpose should it be addressed, especially with so much seriousness and peculiarity as it is, to true believers only? Or what is it to true believers, that God will shut out unbelievers from his kingdom, for the perpetration of such sins, if they themselves may commit them without any such danger?

In respect to unbelievers, they are in such a state as will exclude them from the kingdom of God, whether they commit these works of the flesh mentioned or not. Their unbelief alone is sufficient to exclude them. Now, how trifling and unworthy of the Spirit of God is it to threaten men with such a punishment, if they commit such or such particular sins, who are at present liable, and shall certainly suffer it, whether ever they commit any of these sins or not!

To affirm, that God excludeth unbelievers from his kingdom for the committing of such sins which they have no power to refrain; and to affirm, also, that he doth not exclude believers for the like commissions, is to represent God most notoriously partial or unjust.

Though the tenor of the threatenings in the scriptures mentioned be indefinite and not universal, yet, from other passages of the same import with them, it may be clearly proved, that all are comprehended, believers as well as unbelievers: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and

whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone," &c. Again: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie," &c. In the former of these passages, all liars, and, consequently, all whoremongers, &c., are adjudged to have their portion in the lake, &c.; in the latter, any thing that defileth, or whatsoever worketh abomination, shall in no wise, or on no account whatsoever, enter into the new Jerusalem. Therefore, when God threatens, that "neither fornicators, nor idolaters," &c., "shall inherit the kingdom of God," it is evident, that believers as well as unbelievers are included.

If it be objected, "But true believers have a promise from God, that they shall never lose their faith," I reply, that this hath often been said, but never yet proved. On examination of those scriptures where such promises are pretended to be found, we find no such thing in them. We find, indeed, promises of perseverance; but all of them conditional, suspended on a careful and diligent use of means to persevere. To affirm, that true believers cannot, by the commission of the most vile and abominable sins, either make shipwreck of their faith, or fall away from the grace of God so as to perish, what is it but to provoke the flesh to sin, and encourage the remains of the old man in them, to the practice of unrighteousness? And it is to be feared, that the teaching of this doctrine hath proved a snare in the way of many simple followers of the Lord, to draw them aside out of the way of holiness, to the dishonour of God and their own ruin.

Others plead, that "there is no reason to judge, that true believers, though they do commit the works of the flesh, should be excluded from the kingdom of God, on this account, because their sin is from infirmity, and not from malice." I answer:—



To say, that believers, or any others, perpetrate the works of the flesh out of infirmity, involves a contradiction ; for, to do the works of the flesh, implies the predominancy of the flesh, which in sins of infirmity it hath no place.

Another argument, demonstrating the truth of the doctrine under consideration, is this, That doctrine which is according to godliness, that is, the natural tendency of which is to promote godliness in the hearts and lives of men, is evangelical, and of unquestionable agreement with the truth. Such is the doctrine which teacheth a possibility of the saints finally falling away. *Ergo.* The reason of the major proposition is, because the Gospel itself is a doctrine which is according to godliness, a truth according to godliness, a mystery of godliness, &c., that is, a system of truth, calculated, contrived, and framed by God, with a peculiar fitness for the advancement of godliness in the world. Therefore, what doctrine soever is of the same tendency must needs be a natural branch thereof, and perfectly accord with it. This proposition is unquestionable.

The minor is equally clear to him that impartially examines and weighs the import of it. For, what doctrine can be more powerful to promote godliness in the hearts and lives of men than that which, on the one hand, promiseth a crown of glory and blessedness to those who persevere in godliness to the end, and, on the other hand, threatens those with the vengeance of hell-fire who shall turn aside to sin and folly, and not return by repentance? Whereas that doctrine which promiseth all fulness of blessedness and glory, with the greatest degree of certainty, to those who shall at any time be godly, though they may the very next day degenerate and turn loose, is most manifestly destructive to godliness, and an encourager of sin.

XIX.—DEATH.

CONCERNING the natural lives of men, neither is the continuance of these so absolutely determined by God, but they may be either shortened or protracted to a longer period by proportionable means. By sin men may bring the evil day of death nearer them ; as by righteousness and a prudent conversation they may put it further from them. “ But thou, O God,” saith David, “ shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction : Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days ; ” that is, the half of those days which, according to the course of nature, they might have done. To this same purpose it is said by Eliphaz : “ Hast thou marked the old way, which wicked men have trodden ? who were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflowed with a flood.” It is probable he here speaks of the old world, who, because of their exceeding great wickedness, were destroyed by a great deluge of waters, which otherwise they might have escaped ; according to what our Lord saith to Capernaum : “ If the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day.” It appears, then, as God hath not by any decree determined that men should be wicked, so neither hath he determined that abbreviation of the lives of particular men which their own voluntary wickedness brings upon them.

Again : That men, by a prudential care, in preventing disorders, and such inconveniences as are known to be destructive to the life of man, may prolong their lives to a greater length than under the contrary neglect, is very evident. God informed David, that if he stayed in Keilah till Saul should come thither to demand him, the men of this city would “ deliver him up ” to him ; in which case, he had been a dead man. Therefore,



David, by departing from Keilah before Saul came down to demand him, protracted his life above what it would have been had he not attended to the Divine oracle. The men who were with St. Paul in the ship, by attending to his advice, and causing the mariners to "abide in the ship," prolonged their lives, which, upon their leaving the ship, would have been most certainly lost.

It is true, that the days of man's continuance on earth are but few ; yet they are not strictly determinate, or absolutely fixed, by any decree of God. "It is," indeed, "appointed unto man once to die ;" yea, as Job says, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days." But it is not said of all particular persons, that it is appointed unto them to die precisely at such a time, or that they shall neither die sooner nor live longer. Job, when he saith, "Seeing his days are determined, and the number of his months are with thee ; thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass," &c., doth not suppose that the limits of all men's lives are so immovably fixed by any decree of God, that they cannot possibly live beyond them, but only this,—that if God will at any time interpose by his power to cut off the life of man, he may determine and put a period to it, without being resisted by any. According to this interpretation, Beza renders it, "The number of his months is in thy power ;" signifying, that God makes them fewer or more as he pleaseth. Doubtless, if either David or Hezekiah had believed the period of their lives to have been irreversibly fixed by the decree of heaven, they would not have interceded with that affectionate importunity which is found in their prayers for a continuance of them. David saith, "O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days." And again : "O spare me, that I may recover my strength, before I go hence, and be no more." From these expressions it is evident, that

David apprehended a liberty in God, as well as an executive power, either immediately to take away or to continue his life and being in the world. Now, such a liberty in God as David here supposeth, was entirely inconsistent with any peremptory decree concerning the duration of his natural life.

Nor doth it follow from hence, but that God doth frequently interpose, and sometimes in a very remarkable way, for the preservation or the shortening of the lives of particular men. When God undertakes to preserve a man, "a thousand shall fall by his side, and ten thousand at his right hand," and the danger "not come nigh him;" he shall be as safe as if there were no danger near him. "He shall not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day." But daily experience teacheth us that God doth not engage in this extraordinary way, to protect the lives of all good men; many of these falling by the hand of death, while thousands round about them remain untouched. Nor have any persons, though ever so pious, any sufficient ground from the above passages to expect protection of life in the like dangers, but upon this condition,—if God will vouchsafe to undertake for their preservation and peace. Such scriptures exhibit to us the constant power, not the uniform will or pleasure, of God. On the other hand, when God "taketh no pleasure" in the life of man, a very slight and inconsiderable occasion will serve the purpose of his providence in the dissolution of it. But neither of these dispensations amounts to any demonstration of any such decree in God, respecting the precise number of days man is to live on earth, without any possibility of their being increased or diminished.



XX.—JUDGMENT.

THE Scripture, from place to place, declareth that God will “judge the world in righteousness and with equity;” that he will judge every man, and render unto every man according to his works; that he is no respecter of persons; with much more of like import. Now, we cannot understand how God can be said to judge the world in righteousness, and with equity, or to reward every man according to his works, and this without respect of persons, in case it be supposed, as our brethren suppose, that he rewards some men with eternal blessedness and glory, who do nothing but what they are irresistibly necessitated and overruled by a strong hand of power to do; and adjudgeth others unto the vengeance of eternal fire for not doing that which is impossible for them to do, yea, for not doing that which is possible only for God himself to do; especially considering that these, adjudged to hell-fire, may very possibly have done more which, in a way of equity, is rewardable, (the scantiness of their strength and means considered,) than they who are rewarded with heaven,—considering not only the superabundant strength and means wherewith they were supplied by God, above the others, for the doing of whatsoever they did, but also that they were absolutely necessitated to do that for or according to which they are so highly rewarded.

The Scripture representeth the condition of all and every person of mankind, as well of those who shall perish as of those that shall be saved, in the parable of the talents; in which we hear of no man questioned or called to account, but only those that had received talents, one or more. They who had received more brought in accounts of a proportionable improvement, and were accordingly commended and rewarded. He that received only one is sorely reproved by his Lord,

and commanded to be “cast into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,” as having been an “unprofitable servant,” and “hid his talent in the earth.” These talents must needs be supposed to have all been of one and the same kind, and, therefore, equally capable of improvement, to the approbation and reward of those who received them. Otherwise, if his talent, who was condemned by his Lord for hiding it, should have been so conditioned that it was not possible for him to have improved it as well as his fellow-servants improved theirs, the sentence of condemnation given against him by his Lord would have been very unreasonable, hard, and unjust, as having no other ground for it, but only this, namely, that a poor wretch did not do more, yea, a thousand times more, than was possible for him to do.

Christ, by the almightiness of his power, will so alter the property and condition of the bodies of the saints, which now in the state of mortality are vile, (that is, of an abasing and humbling complexion and frame,) as to invest them with an heavenly splendour and brightness, of the same kind with that wherewith his own body is made most transcendently glorious: Not but that he should be known amongst them by the surpassing glory of his body above theirs, as readily as the sun may be known from the rest of the stars, whose light, nevertheless, is of the same kind with the light of the sun, and derived from it; nor yet, as if all the saints, who shall all partake of this glory, should partake hereof in the same measure or degree. As though all the stars in the firmament of heaven, which to us are without number, shine with one and the same kind of light; namely, that which is originally vested in the sun; and is by and from him communicated unto them; yet are they not equal among themselves in the participation of this light; the apostle himself attesting the judgment of our sense in this, that “one star differeth from another in



glory ;” meaning, not in respect of the nature or kind, but in the quantity, measure, or degree, of that light which makes them all glorious.

The saints of old are said “not to have accepted deliverance” when they were tortured ; meaning, when it was offered them upon unworthy terms, or else not to have accepted it ; that is, not much to have desired or minded it ; “that they might obtain” and receive the “better resurrection.” “There is one glory,” saith the apostle, “of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars. For one star differeth from another star in glory ; so also is the resurrection of the dead,” &c. ; meaning, that there will be a proportionable inequality in the glory and blessedness of the saints in the resurrection. This exuberance or redundance of reward that we speak of is clearly held forth in the parable of the talents, delivered out by the master unto several servants. And there is this reason why it should be so, as we have now presented the case unto you, why God should reward some above the line of others ; supposing, that which we all know to be true, an inequality among the saints in zeal, and service, and faithfulness unto God ; namely, because, though the collation or bestowing of eternal life upon the saints be, in one respect, an act of free grace and bounty in God ; (in which respect it is said to be the gift of God, and that which is conferred in this kind upon them is sometimes termed a “reward,” which may be the same where services have been different, if the Donor pleaseth ;) yet, in another respect, this act of God we speak of is an act of justice, of distributive or remunerative justice, and so most frequently represented in the Scriptures ; and, consequently, must of necessity proceed and be carried according to all the variety and diversity of worth and excellency that shall be found in the ways and works and services of all those that shall be rewarded.

XXI.—HELL.

“THE wages of sin,” saith the apostle, speaking of sin in general, “is death.” His meaning is, that death, that is, the eternal ruin, misery, and destruction of the creature, is but a stipend or consideration, most justly due unto, and deserved by, sin, as wages or hire for labour is the most just and due debt amongst debts of all kinds, howsoever growing or accruing. There is no more hardness or inequality in it, that God should destroy a creature for ever that hath sinned against him, than there is that a man who hath hired a labourer to work for him should give him his hire for his work.

That God doth punish sin and sinners differently, the scripture is yet more manifest: “And that servant that knew his Lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he,” &c. Nothing can be more plain, than that men that shall sin against knowledge, and contrary unto knowledge, shall be punished more than they that sin out of ignorance, especially if it be not voluntary or affected. So again: “It shall be easier for Tyre and Sidon, in the day of judgment,” &c. And so, “easier for Sodom and Gomorrah,” &c.; which clearly showeth, that God doth intend different punishments, proportionable to the several degrees of sin and wickedness committed in the world; rods for lesser and fewer, scorpions for greater and more, sins.

If it should be asked, “But why should not men, who are cast into hell, be able, in continuance of time, to pay the uttermost farthing, and so in the end be delivered from thence? Or, how can it consist with the justice or equity of God’s proceedings, to inflict everlasting punishment on men, for sinning only so short a time?”——

Sin being, in its own nature, an injury offered to an



infinite majesty and goodness, the demerit of it must needs be inconceivably great. The greater the person is in dignity, to whom an indignity is offered, the greater, in proportion, is the offence committed, and obnoxious to the greater punishment. When those who stood by said to St. Paul, "Revilest thou God's high priest?" they plainly intimated, that the sin of reviling a person invested with so great a dignity as the high priesthood was highly blamable, and deserved exemplary punishment. Therefore, allowing proportionably for the inconceivable and endless dignity, sovereignty, and majesty of God, in conjunction with eminency of worth and goodness, every ways commensurable to them, the injury which men offer to him, by voluntarily sinning against him, plainly appears to be of infinite demerit, and so binding over the sinner to an infinite punishment; infinite, I mean, either in respect of the nature of it, or in respect of its duration. Now, the creature, not being capable of suffering infinite punishment in the former sense, the just severity of God subjects him to that which is infinite in the latter.

The infinite purity of the Divine Nature, and most perfect hatred of sin ruling therein, may well be conceived as little less than necessitating him to the denunciation of that most severe punishment we are speaking of, for the prevention of it; and, consequently, to the execution hereof, when the sinner shall despise his atonement, and neglect to wash in that "fountain" which he hath most graciously opened "for sin and uncleanness." In whatever degree the nature of man abhors any thing, and apprehends it to be contrary to his being, or happiness, in proportion to this he useth means to prevent it. The devil had an eye to this principle in man, when he said, "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." Death, being "the king of terrors," is dreaded by all; and the generality use every prudential mean to withstand his

approaches, and to deliver themselves out of his hands. Now, what death is to men, in point of abhorrency, sin is to God ; and, therefore, it ought not to seem strange that he should make the strongest and sharpest bridle for the restraint of it in the world ; or, consequently, that he should subject the perpetrators of it to a penalty as deep and dreadful as the vengeance of eternal fire. Any thing beneath this would not be proportionable to the infinity of his abhorrence of sin.

The severity of that punishment of sin now under consideration will be found the more equitable and just, if we consider, on the one hand, how graciously and bountifully God deals with men, in order to their deliverance from it ; and, on the other hand, how wilfully, how desperately, and how irrationally men must act to ruin themselves.

God hath discovered to men, in the clearest manner, the great deformity and the most detestable nature of sin. The devil was never presented to any man's mind in such a monstrous, horrid, affrighting form, as sin is exhibited to the judgments and consciences of men in the Scriptures.

He hath made known to us what an inveterate enemy sin is to the peace, comfort, and happiness of men. Poverty, shame, sickness, the most exquisite tortures, death, the grave, &c., are but as the hummings of a gnat, but a small enemy to the comfort and happiness of men, in comparison of that most enormous and confounding contrariety which the word of God represents to be in sin.

Concerning those accommodations of human nature, in the enjoyment of the good things of life, by the prospect of which sin is wont to commend herself to the children of men, and to draw them aside into folly, God hath engaged to confer the same upon them, so far as will be for their good, in ways of righteousness, if they will be persuaded to walk in them.



In case men, either through ignorance or unwatchfulness, should be overtaken in any sinful practice, God hath, at the expense of his dear Son, in the most bitter sorrows and sufferings, reared up a golden altar, I mean that of repentance, for them to flee unto, and to take hold of; from whence he hath most magnificently promised never to take any man to destroy him, how unrighteous or unworthy soever he has been.

God hath forewarned men, in the plainest terms, of that eternal wrath and vengeance which he is determined to bring upon all persons who shall be found finally impenitent; whereby he hath taken a very effectual method, not only to bring sin into disrepute, but to make it the object of the utter detestation and abhorrence of men.

Unto all those who shall be found obedient to his word, refraining from all sin, he hath promised, and on such terms, that men may be fully satisfied, on clear and evident grounds, of the reality and truth of these promises, the most bountiful, magnificent, and glorious reward of life and immortality. By this he hath taken a most gracious and effectual method to exalt righteousness and holiness of life and conversation in the children of men.

To put himself into a capacity of making such promises as these, and of making them good unto men, he hath delivered up to death, the most bitter and ignominious death of the cross, his only-begotten Son, in whom his soul delighted. Hereby, he hath given unto men the most certain evidence, with what ardency of affection and desire he seeks their salvation and eternal happiness, how transcendently great his love, how tender beyond all conception his compassions are towards them.

He vouchsafes to them the assisting and strengthening presence of his Holy Spirit; and if they regard and comply with him in his first operations, they shall have an increase of his presence, and be strengthened by

him mightily to oppose temptations to sin, to walk in the paths of righteousness, and, finally, to escape the future wrath and vengeance of almighty God, and obtain that life and glory which he hath promised to them that love him. The consideration of these particulars makes it fully evident, that men are under the strongest engagements, and have the most efficacious means vouchsafed to them, to induce them to refrain from sin, and follow after righteousness: In regard of which, the most severe punishment that can be inflicted upon them for wilful obstinacy in the ways of sin is but just and equitable.

The demerit of sin which may be instantaneously committed, may be so enormous as to deserve punishment of a long continuance. The act of murder may be committed in a moment; yet all men acknowledge it to be just that the murderer should have his life taken from him; which, in reality, is a perpetual punishment, because a perpetual deprivation of that which was most dear to the offender. And, generally, the law of retaliation is judged most reasonable and equitable. A man may, in an instant of time, strike out the eye of another; and yet the loss of one of his own eyes, according to the law we are now speaking of, would be a punishment to him as long as he lives. Also the proportion which reason and equity require to be observed between sin and punishment, consists not in an equality of time between the committing of the one and the suffering of the other, but in an equality between the demerit in the one, and the suffering in the other. Now, it hath been clearly proved, that there is a just proportion between sin which is committed but in a short space of time, and the punishment of hell-fire, though continuing for ever. On the whole, it plainly appears, that there is no unrighteousness at all in God, in punishing wilful and obstinate sinners with everlasting misery.



XXII.—HEAVEN.

WE shall add a few scriptures and some arguments to demonstrate the truth of what is supposed in the reason in hand, namely, that God distributeth rewards unto his saints by different measures and degrees. "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many unto righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." Doubtless the Holy Ghost would not particularize a special and eminent service, such as the "turning of many to righteousness" is, as that they who have been diligent and faithful in it should be signally rewarded by God in the great day, if all services, or the most profitable kind of services otherwise, should be rewarded and recompensed by God upon equal terms with them. Consider the plain tenor of the words: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many unto righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." If so be that he had intended, or if this had been his sense, that all believers, or that all the servants of God, all that fear God without exception, should have been partakers of these rewards signified by the "shining of the stars for ever and ever;" there can no reason be given, nor a colour of reason, why he should single out a certain vein of persons from amongst the great community of the saints; namely, such "as turn many to righteousness," that is, that have endeavoured, and done that which was in their power to do, to "turn many unto righteousness," as if none should be rewarded at the resurrection with that peculiarity of reward but such. Nay, doubtless his intent is to show, that whereas there shall be very many rewarded, and that very graciously and bountifully at that day; yet there will be appropriate rewards, crowns, as it were, made

on purpose, more weighty and massy in glory than the rest, for such persons as these. Then, again, consider that passage of our Saviour to the mother of Zebedee's children. She came to him desiring a certain thing of him, which was, that he would grant that her two sons "might sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left hand, in his kingdom." Now, I suppose, that here, by "sitting on the right and on the left hand of Jesus Christ in his kingdom," are meant, (and I think no man did ever lift up a thought to the contrary,) the chiefest and highest places of glory and spiritual preferment in his kingdom. Possibly she might look to an earthly kingdom, and direct her request in reference thereunto; but when Christ gave his answer unto her, he doth not deny but that there was a "right hand" and a "left hand" in his kingdom; some more honourable and richer manifestations and communications of the infinite blessedness of God than others. For thus saith he, "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized; but to sit on my right hand and left is not mine," &c. He here supposeth, and giveth that to her for granted, that there was such a thing, such prerogative honour, in his kingdom, as sitting on his right hand and left, but withal informeth her thus, that they were not his to give, save only to such for whom they were prepared of his Father; implying, that God hath prepared these places for persons of the greatest worth and eminency in his service, on whom only they shall be conferred. "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." The latter part seems clearly to imply thus much: That every man hath a labour of his own, that is, a measure or degree of service so appropriately his that the service of no other saint shall be precisely in worth or value commensurable to it; and, consequently, that he shall have a reward of his own, in the same sense, somewhat which doth, according to the standard

of Divine bounty, exactly answer his labour. So that that which I conceive to be hinted here is not simply this, that there are either different or indifferent rewards reserved in the heavens by God to be conferred upon different saints, but that there will be no two saints in heaven whose rewards shall be equal. For though we cannot find a real difference between the serviceableness, the faithfulness, and worthiness of every saint throughout the world, throughout the whole armies of them ; yet God, who weigheth with a more exact balance than men do ; if so be there be never so little more, if any saint hath but the advantage of an hair's breadth in any spiritual worth above another ; God, I say, is perfectly apprehensive of it, and will interpose by his righteousness that he shall have his own reward. Now, if we shall suppose that every one shall receive another's rewards, and so according to another's labour, which he must needs suppose that holdeth all rewards equal, then shall no man, or no more than one, receive his own reward, in the sense lately declared, or that which is exactly proportionable unto his own labour.

“ Whatsoever a man sows, the same shall he also reap.” It cannot reasonably be understood, only of the sameness of the seed, as if his meaning was, that he should reap the same kind of seed with that which he soweth ; as when, for instance, he that soweth wheat reapeth wheat ; so he that soweth the seed of sanctification, or of good works, shall reap a harvest of sanctification, or of good works ;—this cannot, I say, reasonably be judged to be the meaning of the apostle ; but thus : “ Whatever a man sows,” that is, whatever seed, either for quantity, or proportion, or of nature and quality, any man soweth, as whether it be the seed of life and glory, or of shame and punishment, “ he shall reap ” in life and glory, and so in shame and punishment accordingly. “ Whatsoever a man soweth ; ” it doth not only import the species or kind, but the

degree, also, or the proportion of the goodness or badness of the seed that shall be sown in any kind.

“Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.” The particle “whatsoever” must needs be comprehensive and distributive of all a man’s good actions, whether they have been hundreds, or thousands, or millions of thousands, together with all the degrees of their several goodnesses respectively, which are all exactly known unto, weighed, and estimated by God. Now, these good actions of men, be they never so many for number, or so excellent in worth and goodness, yet the doers of them shall receive the same things of the Lord, that is, shall have in their reward a particular and appropriate consideration, which shall answer, not in strictness of justice, (for God doth not reward according to such a rule,) but in the most gracious and bountiful esteem of God, both every one of their said actions, and every degree of goodness found in any of them, and in them all. Suppose a person who, from his youth up, until old age, and the hour of his death, should continue diligent, and faithful, “fervent in spirit, serving the Lord,” should receive no better or greater reward from him than he who, amongst believers, shall have brought forth least fruit unto God, and been coldest in his service ; this person could not, in this case, be said to receive whatsoever good thing he had done, but only some few of these things ; namely, so many of them as shall answer in number and worth the services of the other, who is supposed to have done little ; unless we shall say that this other shall receive of the Lord, not only whatsoever good thing himself hath done, but whatsoever any other hath done in this kind. But this word “whatsoever” is, as was said, comprehensive, and includes the whole body of a man’s service and obedience, or laying out of a man’s self for God, and for righteousness’



sake; and implieth so many particular services, so many particular rewards upon the matter; for that very reward, whatever it be, which such a man shall receive, will have all his worthy actions and services in it; there will be a crown calculated and framed by God, as it were, on purpose for him, and fitted to his head, wherein every thing that he hath done for God, and upon the account of Jesus Christ, will be found in a suitable weight of glory. I shall insist only upon one place more: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." You see, he enforceth this point of advice or exhortation to them, "always to abound in the work of the Lord," upon this motive or ground, because they knew,—namely, in their continual abounding in the work of the Lord,—that their labour "should not be in vain in the Lord." But if we shall suppose, that they that abound most of all in the labour and work of the Lord, shall receive no more upon the account of such their abundant labour than they that should labour least of all, being the most unprofitable of all believers, and whose faith should be little better than an empty vine, in this case their labour—namely, in the excellent degree or abundance of it—would be in vain; that is, it would turn to no account of profit, or recompence of reward, to him that should undergo the burthen of it. For certainly the apostle, reminding them that their labour in the Lord, how abundant soever, should not be in vain, doth not speak of the fruit or success of such their labour in the world, as that they might or should do good unto or convert many by such their example, or the like, but of the bettering their own accounts at the great day; giving them to understand, that if they should not slack their hand in so great and blessed a business, they should consult honour and glory in abun-

dance for themselves in the day of Christ. Now, if you please, let us add to the scriptures opened and argued a few reasons to strengthen your faith yet further in the point in hand.

Such a dispensation of God, as his conferring of rewards with an equal inequality, giving greater things to those that do more, and be more faithful ; such a dispensation, I say, as this being proclaimed in the midst of the world, hath more spirit and life in it to provoke and strengthen every man's heart and hand unto godliness, and this in the highest degree, than to declare, that they that sow most sparingly shall, notwithstanding, reap as plentifully as they who sow most liberally. For such a declaration as this, in effect, they ascribe unto God who make him a distributor of rewards without any distinction of the services rewarded by him. But, doubtless, such a notion or doctrine as this, that all believers shall fare alike, is of a dangerous and quashing import to the spirit of all signal excellency, and of a destructive antipathy to all heroic conceptions of Christianity. When men have an opportunity to raise an estate and get wealth for themselves, how will they rise early, and go to bed late, and eat the bread of carefulness ! They will be more industrious by far than when they work only for stinted wages, which they know they shall have, whether they work little or much. Alas ! working under such a notion weakeneth the hand and enfeebleth the arm of any man. But, on the contrary, when there are rewards held forth, and promised according to that which any man shall lift up his hand unto in working ; (" Do more, and have more ;" " Do more, and receive more ;") this raiseth, incites, and quickens the spirit to its utmost activity. Were it so that all should be equal, that they that wrought least should have as much from God as they that laboured most, such a disposition of things as this must needs be of this tendency, namely, to debase



the Spirit, and unnoble the hearts of the saints themselves ; to plant the Lebanon of the church with shrubs instead of cedars ; to produce a generation of dwarf-Christians. We see many that pass for Christians, (and possibly they may be such indeed,) that study and cast about and inquire, as narrowly as they can, what is the lowest degree of faith and obedience under which it is possible for men to be saved ; because they desire to do as little of the will of God and as much of their own as will any ways stand with the saving of the great stake of their souls. Whether the minds of such men as these be touched with the evil spirit of that doctrine, which confounds the lowest and highest services together, in their reward, I know not ; but certain I am, that such a doctrine as this is of a most clear and manifest tendency to work the hearts and spirits and consciences of men to such a pass. For if there be no more for the greatest servants of God than for those of the least faithfulness of all, alas ! men, as we know, being apt to be guided, or rather hurried on, in their way by principles suitable to their flesh, they will presently cast about and reason with themselves after some such manner as this : “ Since it is so, that our portion in the world to come is fixed, and we cannot add to it, nor lay up any more treasure for ourselves there, than only that which will accrue to us merely upon our believing ; therefore, we will make ourselves as wise for this present world as we can ; we will treasure up riches, and live at ease, and take our comforts and contentments freely in the world, and go as near the brink of hell and destruction as we can without falling into it.” And the truth is, that the conceit we speak of, (I mean, of an equality of reward,) is a dangerous snare unto men, not simply to beat down, as it were, the price of their salvation as low as they can, and to keep out of the way of all excellency as far as they dare, but also never to advance so far in a course of godliness and

obedience as whereby or wherein to be saved. My brethren, let me say this unto you, and consider it well, that he that will be intent and wary of doing any thing more than what is simply necessary to salvation, it is ten thousand to one that he will never do so much. He is like to shoot short of his mark that is afraid of over-shooting it; so he that is loath to do any thing upon a religious account, or for Christ or the Gospel, without the doing of which he may be saved, is in imminent danger of not doing that, without the doing of which he shall never be saved.

Such a dispensation as that for which we plead excellently commends and sets off unto the world the great love that God bears unto righteousness and well-doing. For if he should recompence and reward the less excellent and the more excellent ways of men alike, would it not argue that he did not bear any great affection unto holiness or Christian worth, at least in their exaltation, and where they advance flesh and blood to the nearest proximity unto the holy angels? Or would it not rather import some such thing as this, (which is very unworthy of him,) namely, as if he did not care to have men singularly holy, or that any man amongst his saints should be more excellent than another, or outshine him in good works? For if he doth so highly approve of, and take delight in, those that strive to outrun their fellows in the ways of his commandments, why doth he not encourage men of this strain and temper? Or why doth he not take a course to propagate such a generation in the world? Or is there any means so natural and proper to do it, as to distinguish and sever persons of this honourable character from those of a more vulgar and ordinary allay, by promises of greater and more honourable rewards to be conferred on them?

God, by raising his promises higher unto those that shall quit themselves at an high and worthy rate in his



service, than unto persons that shall move in a more common sphere of Christianity, declareth that he seeketh a generation of such as will excel in holiness, and that he delighteth to be served with prince-like strains of zeal and faithfulness. Yea, if God did not regard righteousness and true holiness where they are found in greater perfection, more than where he findeth them in less only, he could not reasonably be thought to regard them at all. For, those degrees of the one and of the other which, in persons highly qualified with them, do super-exceed that measure or degree of them which are found in Christians of a lower pitch and stature, are true righteousness and true holiness as well as they.

Such a dispensation or disposition as that for which we plead a collation of rewards, an inequality answering the inequality of the services of men, commends that manifoldness of the wisdom of God, of which the Scripture speaketh, which a contrary dispensation would not do, nor afford any opportunity for the doing it. For, if there be but one and the same degree of glory, one and the same reward, for all the saints, here is no matter for choiceness of wisdom to show itself in finding out and setting forth every man's reward in a true and exquisite proportion to his works and labour, to his love and faithfulness. But now, if we shall suppose this to be the case, as doubtless it is, that God hath an innumerable company of saints to be rewarded in glory, and to receive crowns of blessedness from him, proportionable to the endless variety and difference of their ways and doings in the world; — now, for him perfectly to understand and compute the just and exact weight and worth of every man's service, and to set out respectively unto the persons to be rewarded rewards exactly proportionable, must needs argue and declare a mighty depth, a marvellous comprehensiveness and exquisiteness, of wisdom in him.

If God will punish differently, more or less, according as men have sinned more or less, according to the different degrees of their demerits, then there is little question to be made but that he will proportionably reward men, more or less, according to the different degrees of their righteousness and faithfulness. Now, the reason of this consequence, namely, that if God will punish sinners more or less, according as they have sinned in greater or lesser measures, then, it is reasonable to conceive, that he will reward righteousness accordingly; the reason, I say, of this consequence is, because otherwise he would seem to be more intent upon the punishment of evil-doers than he is upon the rewarding of the righteous. We see, that he is intent and resolved upon a course of justice in the punishment of wicked men, both according to the nature and measure of their wickedness, which showeth that he hateth sin with a perfect hatred. So that, if he should not reward righteousness where it is exalted to a greater degree, and shines with greater beauty, answerable to the line and lustre of it, it would argue, that his affection of love were but cold and dead to righteousness in her greatest advancements, in comparison of what his affections of hatred and revenge are unto sin in the high provocations of it. But it is a common saying among learned divines, and, questionless, not more common than true, that God always punisheth all sin short of the demerit and desert of it; yet, it is more unquestionably and apparently true of the two, that he rewardeth all righteousness over and beyond the worth and desert thereof: This, many expressions in the Scriptures, concerning the bounty of God in rewarding his saints, do fully manifest.

It may be objected, "Eternal life is said to be 'the gift of God;' if so, then must it not be supposed that he giveth it freely, and so may give it uniformly, unto all his saints, and without any unequal distribution of



it unto them, according to their several attainments in righteousness respectively?"

I answer, 1. That eternal life may be called "the gift of God," because the collation of it proceedeth from the free purpose and good pleasure of God, to make a donation of it unto men, upon any terms at all, upon any condition or conditions whatsoever, or without condition. He might have kept it without any breach of justice, had he so pleased, as an appropriate treasure to himself and his holy angels for ever. 2. Because he is now pleased to confer it upon them without any merit or desert of theirs, which in strictness of justice can be so called.

But it doth not follow from either of these senses, wherein eternal life may be called "the gift of God," that therefore he divideth it unto his saints by a line of equality. For, supposing that this life may be enjoyed in several proportions or degrees of the glory and good things of it,—as the land of Canaan was possessed and enjoyed by the Israelites and their respective tribes by unequal portions, and as Christ saith, that in his Father's house there were many mansions,—the collation of it in any of these may properly be called "the gift of God."

Nay, though God, simply considered, and as not having made any disposal of what is his own, as either by promise, agreement, or the like, may do with his own what he pleaseth, yet, having once made a disposition of it in one way or other, and ratified it by his word, he is not at liberty to do with it any thing contrary hereunto; for he cannot, he is not at liberty to, deny himself.

When the apostle Paul promiseth or declareth, that crowns of righteousness shall be given to all the saints by Christ, (for these he meaneth by "those that love his appearance,") as well as unto himself, although there will be found very few or none of them equal in service

unto him, his meaning only is, that they shall be advanced to royal honour and dignity, and wear crowns as well as he. But amongst kings themselves there is, we know, a great difference in respect of riches, extent of dominion, number of subjects, strength for war, and, consequently, in magnificence, grandeur, majesty : Yea, all crowns are not of equal weight or value. Nor doth the apostle, in the place in hand, give the least intimation of an equality in worth or richness in all the crowns that shall be given by Christ unto his saints in glory.

Desires and hopes of the lesser and lower enjoyments in heaven will not wind up their hearts to that height of zeal and resolution for the glory of God and Jesus Christ which the greater things there would do, were they ardently desired, and accordingly hoped for and expected. It is somewhat more than probable unto me, that the neglect of that duty, the face whereof we have now endeavoured to unveil, (I mean, the duty of desiring and designing, not the bare, but the heaped up, measure of salvation,) hath occasioned and bred that dwarf generation of professing Christians, which I cannot suddenly resolve whether I should rather call "the shame" or "the honour" of the churches of Christ in the world.

That God should reward his friends and faithful servants that have done his will and sought his glory, as the saints have done, is reasonable and equal in the eyes of all flesh ; such an act as this is no ways obnoxious to any ill resentment or interpretation whatsoever. Nay, if God should not do it, there are thousands of his creatures that should, in such a respect, be more excellent than he. There is no man of ingenuity, and that savours the things of his honour, but that will remember and consider, proportionably to his power, the faithfulness of friends and servants showed unto him.



When men have erected and set up any kind of exercise, or trial of masteries, as by running, wrestling, or the like, and have made their orders and laws for those that shall exercise, and thus have drawn men of activity and worth in that kind from several parts, to try their strength and activeness by engaging themselves in the exercise; it is but reason and equity that he that striveth, and striveth lawfully, as the apostle speaks,—that is, observing all the laws and orders of the exercise, and overcoming,—should be crowned, or receive the *bravium*, or price, that is held forth for the conqueror. Now, God in the Gospel propounds, as it were, a noble exercise of faith and holiness; he hath appointed his laws and orders for this exercise; he hath designed a crown of life and of immortal glory to those that shall overcome; he draws persons from all quarters of the world, whose hearts will serve them, to engage in his exercise. Now, then, it is but just and reasonable that those that do strive, and strive lawfully, and overcome, should receive the reward that is promised, and, consequently, should be by a strong hand put into possession of eternal life.

When soldiers have stood by their general, endured much hardship, and ventured their lives with him and for him in any hard and hot service, in case the day goes on their side, and their general triumphs, it is but equal that such soldiers should partake, according to their measure, of the joy and honour of the triumph with him. Now, the saints are good soldiers of Jesus Christ; they stand by him in this present world; they undergo much hardship from the world for his sake; they are partakers with him of his sufferings, as well by mortification as by persecutions by men: Therefore, Jesus Christ himself triumphing in eternity of life and glory, it is but equal that they should partake of the same triumph with him.

There is not only an equitableness in the thing, I

mean, that the saints shall be highly honoured by God, but there is an excellency of wisdom in it also ; yea, that they should be honoured with the height of honour, that, according to the Gospel, shall be conferred and cast upon them by God.

The great and glorious God, in rewarding those that have served him, with crowns and kingdoms, and the great things of eternity, draws, as it were, a lively and happy portraiture of his own infinite worth and goodness ; and declares, in the sight of heaven, and earth, and hell, at what a high rate he values himself and his own glory, by showing himself so above-measure bountiful unto those that serve him.

THE END.

LATELY PUBLISHED,

In One Vol., 12mo., Price 6s. 6d., in Cambric,

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY,

BY JOHN HOWE, A.M.

SELECTED AND SYSTEMATICALLY ARRANGED :

WITH A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

BY SAMUEL DUNN.

TO BE SUCCEEDED BY SIMILAR SELECTIONS FROM THE MOST APPROVED DIVINES, BOTH DISSENTING AND EPISCOPAL.

LONDON :—Printed by James Nichols, 46, Hoxton-Square.

LATELY PUBLISHED,
In 1 vol. 8vo., Price 10s. 6d., Boards,
THE GOSPELS HARMONIZED;
WITH NOTES,
EXPLANATORY, EXPERIMENTAL, AND PRACTICAL,
CHIEFLY
BY ADAM CLARKE, LL. D., F. A. S.
ARRANGED FROM THE BEST AUTHORITIES,
FOR THE USE OF MINISTERS AND STUDENTS ; AND DIVIDED
INTO SECTIONS OF CONVENIENT LENGTH FOR
FAMILY READING.
BY SAMUEL DUNN.

LONDON:—PRINTED FOR THOMAS TEGG AND SON, 73, CHEAPSIDE;
AND R. GRIFFIN AND CO., GLASGOW.

“ We have great pleasure in noticing and recommending this excellent volume. There are a large number of explanatory notes, for the most part of a highly practical character. They are chiefly taken, as the title states, from Dr. Adam Clarke ; but, besides these, there are many of Mr. Watson's, some of Mr. Wesley's, and some valuable and appropriate extracts from the published sermons of Wesleyan Ministers, and others. Altogether, Mr. Dunn has given us a very useful work, and his spirited publisher has *got it up* well. We thank them both ; and can assure our readers that they will find this Harmony of the Gospels a very profitable companion.”—*The Watchman*.

“ The general arrangement of the Harmony is supported by the most approved authorities. The Notes, which are very judiciously selected, embody a large and edifying portion of experimental and practical divinity.”—*Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*.

“ This volume contains a mass of well-digested information upon all subjects connected with the practical interpretation of the Gospels.”—*Evangelical Magazine*.

“ Mr. Dunn has, by this publication, rendered an important service to that portion of the religious world, who wish to cultivate an acquaintance with Biblical literature, and with practical and experimental religion. We have no hesitation in saying, that we know not of any Harmony of the Gospels superior to this ; and when we consider the mass of valuable notes and reflections attached to it, designed to illustrate and improve its various portions, we pronounce it a volume of *incomparable worth*. The industrious and discreet author may console himself with the reflection of having done a great work. The spirited publishers have executed their part of the undertaking in a manner highly creditable to themselves.”—*Methodist New-Connexion Magazine*.

LATELY PUBLISHED,

In 1 vol. 12mo., Price 6s. 6d., in Cambric, lettered,

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY:

BY ADAM CLARKE, LL.D., F.A.S.,

SELECTED FROM HIS PUBLISHED AND UNPUBLISHED WRITINGS,
AND SYSTEMATICALLY ARRANGED:

WITH A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

BY SAMUEL DUNN.

THIRD EDITION.

“ THERE are many persons to whom the memory of the late Dr. Clarke is justly dear, who can never purchase his voluminous and valued writings, however they might be benefited by the perusal. By such persons a volume like that which Mr. Dunn has produced must be highly prized. Mr. Dunn has rendered a valuable service to the cause of true religion by this publication, which forms a concise body of experimental and practical Divinity. The Life of the Doctor, with which the volume is introduced, embraces the principal events of his personal history, and is drawn up with a filial respect and affection, and with an elegance of sentiment and manner, highly creditable to the writer.”—*Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*.

“ Another example of a good and popular use made of the writings of Dr. Adam Clarke. From its selection and arrangement, we can cordially recommend the volume to the admirers of that distinguished author.”—*Literary Gazette*.

“ Mr. Dunn, in furnishing the religious world with the *spirit* of Dr. Clarke’s ‘published and unpublished writings,’ has furnished it also with the *spirit* of Christianity, and with much that is important for all Christians to know. Mr. Dunn was the particular friend of Dr. Clarke, and is evidently well-qualified to furnish a sketch of his character and life. The copious Index placed at the end of the volume is an advantage, certainly, of no small value.”—*Methodist New-Connexion Magazine*.

“ Mr. Dunn’s choice of topics does his head and heart equal credit: His quotations are all made in reference to the instruction of his readers in those religious truths which are essential parts of our belief, subservient to Christian experience, and conducive to holiness of heart and life.”—*The Watchman*.

1. PLAIN THINGS FOR THOSE WHO NEED THEM :

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE EBENEZER WESLEYAN-METHODIST CHAPEL,
SHEFFIELD.

BY SAMUEL DUNN.

Fourth Edition, Price Fourpence.

"THIS Sermon reproves, with uncompromising fidelity, the sins and vices of merely nominal Christians."—*Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine.*

2. THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THE COMMON PRIVILEGE OF BELIEVERS.

BY SAMUEL DUNN.

Second Edition, Price Fourpence.

"It is a very able train of argument in favour of a doctrine which cannot be disproved."—*James Montgomery, Esq.*

"Mr. Dunn is more intent upon the conversion and edification of his hearers, than upon the graces of rhetoric, or the parade of secular learning—though not without either. These discourses are sound in doctrine, forcible in style, scriptural in illustration, and cheap in price; and therefore calculated for great and, we trust, extensive usefulness."—*The Sacred Star.*

3. A PRESENT FOR FEMALE SERVANTS :

OR,

THE SECRET OF THEIR GETTING AND KEEPING
GOOD PLACES.

BY SAMUEL DUNN.

Third Edition, Price Sixpence.

"It is very suitable to be given to female children when they leave the Sunday-school; and many families will find it worth their while to supply their household servants with it, and kindly to explain and enforce the salutary advice which it contains."—*Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine.*

"This is an excellent little manual. It comprises judicious illustrations of many valuable maxims, and thus points out the secret which will enable females to obtain and keep good places."—*The Sacred Star.*

"THESE are three valuable and cheap pamphlets, by the Rev. S. Dunn, an esteemed minister of the Wesleyan body. They contain important truths in energetic and plain language."—*Family Magazine.*

•• TO SUNDAY-SCHOOLS AND TRACT-SOCIETIES CONSIDERABLE ALLOWANCE WILL BE MADE.

4 2186 043



