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*The Reasonableness and Extent of
Religious Reverence :*

A

S E R M O N

Preached at the

BRETHREN'S CHAPEL

IN FETTER-LANE,

On the Afternoon of the FAST-DAY,

Feb. 6, 1756.

By JOHN GAMBOLD.

*“ If ever any Good is done in the Societies of Chri-
stendom, Men must once more become attentive,
reverent, and have something of Devotion: for
at present, they are too much relaxed.”*

L O N D O N,

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PSAL. CXIV. 7.

*Tremble thou Earth, at the Presence of
the LORD.*

THESE words follow after a repetition of the solemn circumstances, which accompanied the Passage of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, and the giving of the Law at mount *Sinai*.

They may be construed either as an Epiphonema of the Psalmist address'd to the *material Earth*; and answering his own questions just before, *What ailed thee, O thou Sea?—ye Mountains!—ye hills!* as if he had said, "Thy shaking so remarkably at that time, O Earth, may indeed well be accounted for; it was at the PRESENCE of the LORD; his Hand was there:" And thus they contain an Assertion, who is the Author of earthquakes and other interesting phænomena here below. Or else they may be taken as an Exhortation to us, the *Inhabitants* of the Earth: "Since the LORD is so great in power, and in all respects so excellent; let a holy shuddering, at least a becoming awe, come over your spirits, O Men, when ye consider with whom ye have to do." And thus they will inculcate a frame of mind so very necessary, that the absence or decay thereof happening in any age, must indicate, worse than

all other Totterings, that the *foundations of the earth are out of course.**

We will take the Text in both senses.

I. As an Address to the *Material Earth.*

So construed, the words will assert, That GOD is the proper Author of Earthquakes and suchlike important phænomena. What they directly affirm, is indeed no more than this, that *one grand shaking* of the earth was to be ascribed to Him: that, I say, at the opening of their Dispensation, the *Jews* could remember at mount *Sinai* a trembling and concussion of the solid Mass, which was undeniably præternatural and divine. Nor is it unworthy of notice, that the Christian Dispensation, even in this kind, was ushered in with an equal solemnity: for the shock was repeated at mount *Catvory*, the earth then *did quake, and the rocks rent.*†

Here it may be replied, “What inference would you draw? these were always look’d upon as single and uncommon instances; they were Miracles.” This is readily allow’d: but we affirm, they were such single instances, as by their peculiar evidence were intended to serve for a key to a thousand others less clear; such uncommon events, as were designed to explain what is called the *common* course of things. For of miracles in general, and particularly those in the history of *Exodus*, it has been very justly remarked, that they were calculated on purpose to *claim* unto GOD that continual and regular agency, which He has in the elementary motions and sublunary events; and which, because it doth happen daily, and proceeds in a
gentle

* *Pf.* lxxxii. 5.

† *Matt.* xxvii. 51.

gentle and (if I may so say) modest Manner, is apt, without such rousing vindications, to be argued quite away by atheists.

For, however common it is on the tongue, Atheism it must ever be, to dare to term any effect or occurrence *natural*, with the intention to deny thereby that it is *divine*, or to exclude GOD entirely out of it. Which is, at the same time, most extremely absurd: For must not the great Architect necessarily preside still over, and direct every wheel of his own machine? *He doth*, if we will believe the Scripture, *whatsoever pleaseth Him, in Heaven and in Earth, and in the Sea, and in all deep places.** HE gives Corn, and Wine, and Oil.† It is he also that sends Famine, Sword, Pestilence; and determines the operations of these his messengers. One time (says the Bible) an epidemic distemper raged; and that no man hereafter, on such occasions, might look alone to noxious qualities in the air, or the like, the veil was for once drawn aside, and presented to open view the destroying Angel of the most High.‡ This is the Scripture-account of occurrences here below.

Neither let any reasoner flatter himself, that this is a system only for those who believe a Bible. It is impossible to conceive any Religion at all, even exclusive of Revelation; that is, in other words, to conceive any *trust*, comfortable *resignation*, *repentance*, or *gratitude* towards the Deity, adapted to the successive scenes of human life; upon any other foundation. For what a dreary void are we left in, what a sullen and total suspension of all those sweetest emotions of the soul towards its Maker,
(which

* *Pf. cxxxv. 6.*

† *Hos. ii. 8.*

‡ *2 Sam. xxiv. 17.*

(which are to it, what respiration or drawing breath is to the body,) the moment the least *exception* is but imagined from that general Rule, that "the Finger of GOD is in all things!" As, on the one hand, with respect to such an excepted instance, there would be no intelligent and gracious Being for us properly to honour, love, and trust in, to *supplicate* or *thank*, in *that* event: so, on the other, if but some things, were they ever so few, did thus come to pass *without* Him, more might; and then, to make short work, why not all? and so we are *without* GOD in the world.

If any one could warrant, that this melancholy issue in practice shall not follow, and if we could be assured that the Almighty shall every where be acknowledged as concern'd in some manner or other; be it as acting by a pure *immediate* power, or, for purposes of Favour or Chastisement, *overruling* the already *settled* causes, (restraining secretly here, impelling and guiding the aim there, tho' sometimes perhaps barely approving the spontaneous course :) we might with more patience suffer men to abound each in his own philosophy, to delineate the mechanical rise and process of Earthquakes, as they trace up every other accident, turn or emergence, to some ingenious if not true spring. For, as to the result, each of the above-mention'd suppositions are much the same. Altho' we must declare, that the shortest, and withal most *wholesome* way of thinking, will always be, with the wise vulgar, without refinement or enquiring how? simply to say, "All these things are GOD's doing!"

'Tis through this glass a faithful *Jew* or Christian views all that happens in the World. The
Jew

Jew must think the same of every subsequent earthquake, as of that at mount *Sinai*; namely, that the earth each time *trembles at the presence of the LORD*: And the Christian cannot but think, not only that the concussion during the Scene on mount *Calvary* had a sacred reference to his incarnate suffering GOD, as being a reproof to the world for its insensibility of the great evil of *Sin*, and of the awful tho' gracious *Price* then paid for its remission; but that every solemn Warning of the like kind since, comes from the same Hand, and has some, yea and the very same *meaning*. And then an impartial self-examination will presently follow, together with all the wise and happy fruits of such exercise of heart.

But this leads to the

IId. Sense wherein the words may be taken: namely, as an exhortation to *us*, the *Inhabitants* of the Earth, to tremble, in *heart* and spirit, before the LORD.

The present Juncture is a season, when this frame of soul, and indeed a particular earnestness therein, has been recommended to us moreover by the highest human Authority; as it had, surely, been called for loudly enough by our *late* and *present* circumstances. First an Earthquake, (which, we have shewn, is always to be look'd upon as coming from GOD's own hand;) an earthquake, unusual in its extent and in some appendages of its *shocks*, so that it put us in mind of that Time, when *the elements shall melt with fervent heat*;* a concussion, which only gently shaking Our Land
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* 2 Pet, iii, 10,

in some parts, had wrought its devastation however in a Realm at no great distance: This (I say) lately happening, solemnly called upon us, both to thank our good GOD for his merciful reprieve, and to implore his farther Long-suffering, yea his entire Forgiveness of our Offences; and that, at the same time, his *converting* and *reforming* Grace might duly qualify us to obtain this.

As urgent a Call for humble and serious application to the Throne of grace, is the War we are in prospect of. This is also a scourge of GOD, the supreme management of which He reserves in his own Hands, leaving it but in part to be wielded by men. To be forced to recur to this sharp Means, (for a Nation sometimes cannot avoid it) is always unpleasant: and to try to remove first, by true repentance, whatever might possibly become a curse or impediment to our endeavours, is much more expedient and becoming, than gay, boastful and presumptuous expressions. It is no impeachment to our courage, along with military preparations, to make enquiry how we stand in our *Covenant* towards GOD. This therefore we are by Authority admonish'd to do on this Day; to confess our manifold sins and demerits; to intreat the LORD, that He would here notwithstanding espouse our just cause, put a stop to the invasions of our enemies, and secure and protect His Majesty's Realms and Dominions, and the lives and Properties of his Subjects.

The greatest part, if not all, in this place assembled, are, I hope, not now to learn or acquire a deep and serious Respect for the *Divine Being*; as they are also not now to begin feeling a good-will and sympathy for their *Country*: the state of mind is already

already habitual to them. And so neither my Text, nor the enjoined meditations of the Day, can have any new or unaccustomed operation in their case. Tho' both will suggest to them an employment, for that very reason, the more *welcome*. These must, (because they so well can, because their heart teaches them no other lesson) sincerely observe this Day in conjunction with all their Fellow-subjects: they must feel the distress, lay to heart the interest, and concur in the supplications of the Land they live in; they must spend the Day (as, I make no doubt, they have spent the past hours of it,) *before the LORD*, in a spirit of private self-examination and penitence, as well as of public charity, "to the obtaining the Pardon
 " of our crying Sins, to the averting of his Judg-
 " ments, and for the continuance of his Mercy,
 " in the support of the protestant Religion and
 " our liberties, in the prosperity of our Country,
 " and in the welfare of our most gracious Sove-
 " reign and the Royal Family."

But it is also to be endeavoured, supposed and hoped, that on this Day, in all parts of the Nation, many a *thoughtless* person, scarce ever serious before in his life-time, alarmed by the late and present threatening appearances, may feel an *unwonted religious awe* come over him; and be, by this Occasion at least, brought to his sober senses, to be no more a giddy delinquent from the duty and general spirit of the Universe.

I say, the *general* spirit. For, (we must not forget it) an awful impression of GOD is what alike pervades the insensible Earth under our feet, and the most intelligent worshipping Seraph over our head. They both *tremble*, or stand abash'd

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at the presence of the great GOD. Shall not we, intermediate beings, do the same? It is indeed a state of soul, which, from the tenor of Scripture and the nature of things, is, when rightly defined, of *universal* and *perpetual* obligation: And therefore we will consider it more particularly. But first we will remove what may, now under the *New Testament*, very well be separated from the idea of the Psalmist and other Old Testament writers on this head. (I say, *may* be so: for in fact there are thousands of minds still, upon whom the Gospel improvement does not take place; and these must be overawed in the way that they by their spiritual condition are capable of, until they become susceptible of a better. But if we shall describe how at present it may, yea *ought* to be,)

1st. The Impression need not, *ought* not, to be only or chiefly occasioned by divine Chastisements. We have indeed shewn, that every calamity of the earth is to be considered as GOD's act, a Judgment of his; and therefore there can be no impropriety in learning Awe at that school, if a man has not learnt it before; yea, in bowing and paying homage so long, when he *will perhaps do it* no longer. *When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.** All I would say, is, there are still *better*, and those *permanent* reasons, for being in this situation of soul before GOD.

2dly, As to its Nature, it need not, *ought* not, to be a servile Awe. By *servile*, we mean such, where a man cannot believe GOD to be his Friend, but apprehends rather that all his motions are

* *Ijai. xxvi. 9.*

are motions of enmity and wrath seeking utterly to devour him; and consequently, strives to please him more thro' necessity than liking. This seems to have been, for the most part, the state of mankind under the Old Testament; and is still the state of those who internally stand on no other bottom. But under the New Testament, where an *All-sufficient Sacrifice* has been made, and the joyful and real *reconciliation of man with GOD* through the Blood of Christ is laid as the foundation; it must be confess'd, that that antient *fear of GOD* is dubiously spoken of, and with but a half-approbation. *There is no fear in Love: but perfect love casteth out Fear,*—are the express words of St. *John*.*

In the mean while, tho' something in the ancient state of mind is manifestly rejected here; it is as certain on the other hand, that some other part of it (or else something analogous thereto) is for ever to continue. There is to be a *profound regard*, an *affectionate and filial fear*. And this impression, (even supposing the former alarming Motives, *unexpiated guilt*, distrust, and *fearful looking-for of judgment*, to be ever so entirely set aside,) may still be, upon very different considerations, so truly *overpowering*, that it might be called not improperly, in the Psalmist's language, *Trembling*. That word however, it must be confess'd, carries rather a harsh sound: the Apostle furnishes us with another! *Reverence* at least, deep religious Reverence, we must still term it; and so we shall term it in the remainder of our discourse: *Let us, saith the Epistle to the Hebrews, have grace, where-*
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* 1 Epist. iv. 18.

by we may serve GOD acceptably with REVERENCE.*

The too general decay of this Religious Reverence, is the most threatening and ruinous symptom of our Times. Happy should I be, could I contribute in the least towards re-establishing it among men ! I must however bear my Testimony. For a gay negligence about all that can be called *Worship* or *piety*, and a hardy presumption in *Theory*, have been cherished so long among us, (as being, what indeed they are, an effectual purging-off of Superstition;) and the difference between ours and all former Ages, is so flagrant and obvious in this particular; that one or another may be in danger of looking upon it as a sign perhaps how much we stand on the shoulders of our Forefathers, if it be not seasonably suggested sometimes, that it is rather a sign of our being grown pygmies even in point of human sense and understanding.

Let us hear a Thinker of elder Times, the venerable author of the *Whole Duty of Man*. “A seventh duty to GOD (says he) is Honour, that is, the paying Him such a reverence and respect, as belongs to so great a Majesty : And this is either inward or outward. The inward, is the exalting Him in our Hearts, having always the highest and most excellent esteem of Him. The outward, is the manifesting and shewing forth that inward ; and that is the first general in the whole course of our lives, the living like men that do indeed carry that high esteem of GOD.”—“But (proceeds he) besides this general way of honouring GOD, there are
“ many

* Heb. xii, 28.

“ many particular acts by which we may honour
 “ Him, and these acts are divers, according to the
 “ several particulars about which they are exer-
 “ cised : For we are to pay this Honour not only
 “ to Himself, but also by a due estimation and ac-
 “ count of all those things that nearly relate or
 “ belong to Him. These are especially six : *first*,
 “ his House ; *secondly*, his Revenue or income,
 “ (as I may say ;) *thirdly*, his Day ; *fourthly*, his
 “ Word ; *fifthly*, his Sacraments ; and *sixthly*, his
 “ Name : and every one of these is to have some
 “ degree of our reverence and esteem.” *

I hope no one will find fault with this descrip-
 tion of religious Reverence, as if it were too com-
 plicated. To honour GOD, is indeed to honour
 almost all things. It is, to be struck with veneration
 for innumerable objects ; sometimes for one so
 small that a thousand eyes overlook it, if it does
 but connect with Him ; tho’ at the same time set-
 ting the greatest at defiance, that is contrary to
 Him. For the Object, (as this author well ob-
 serves) is not only, tho’ principally, that great and
 good Being under a kind of what we might call
personal consideration ; but it includes also (out of a
 reflection that they are *his*, from or for Him) many
 transactions past, present, and to come, many
 outward circumstances, and many notions of the
 mind. To be more particular : we cannot but
 take in, along with his amiable Self, the *acts* and
appointments of his Providence ; especially such more
 important *Dealings* of his with Mankind, as He
 himself lays the *greatest* stress upon, and seems to
 recommend as his master-piece ; any *instituted me-*
merials

* Sunday II,

morials of these important Dealings; lastly, those *moral sentiments*, or rules of thinking and acting, which have been discovered in Him, and which we, more or less, have learnt or ought to learn from Him.

All this, put together, makes up that grand picture, which, thro' all its strokes, must for ever engage our attention. But, (which is well to be remark'd) this picture must not only like others amuse and please, but command and bind. For 'tis not some common passive portrait, but a highly living one, before which we rather, and our whole-being, are passive. 'Tis one that can *look at* us, yea look us thro' and thro'; sufficient to abash, and keep us blushing, at our best estate; productive not only of *deference* and tender *fidelity* towards our Object, with an impatience after nearer approaches to it, but withal of some chagrin always and dissatisfaction at our own selves, yea a pungent and unfeigned *self-contempt*.

These are all ingredients in what we call Religious Reverence: (he that questions it, may try whether he can conceive such a thing without including every one of them?) And we affirm, Man is born to pass his days in this disposition: he was both *created* and *redeemed*, to feel *Reverence*. Does any one account this obligation a hard lot? there is one, and but one way of evading it; Let him declare at once, that he is no thinking being! For, as long as we pretend to think and reflect, there is no excusing ourselves from it. This will appear, if we review, ever so little, the abundant *Matter* for this affection indispensably arising from the two now-mentioned great works of GOD, Creation and Redemption. By occasion of which *Works*,

we

we have indeed learnt all that we know of Him; and each of them has also placed Man in a certain systematical condition towards GOD: and consequently, we cannot better range the *reverential affections* which man is called to, (regarding objects out of all the several *classes* already-hinted) than under these *Two* heads. I will therefore very briefly, instancing but in a few particulars out of many, shew, what holy reverence the contemplation of *Creation*, and the contemplation of *Redemption* do inculcate.

First, As soon as we open our eyes upon the *Natural World*, what do we see in general, but one majestic temple, full of the invisible Mind himself? full of nothing but good and worthy movements and transactions, unless we (for none but *we* have that faculty) will add trifling, ludicrous and absurd ones? In this temple, Man ought to be the constant *worshipper*. The Creation is sufficiently considered in our days as a subject for scrutiny, for nice experiments and disquisitions; and those perhaps well intended, to induce veneration towards the Author: but after all, the best, most extensive and practical veneration is what is occasion'd by the *plain* and *first face* of things, as they present themselves to the peasant, or to a child, who has not yet learnt to be profane, and barely thinks in the gross, "GOD made all this World! GOD gave all these good creatures!" The former way produces panegyricks upon GOD's Art; but this produces solid *Worship*.

We laugh perhaps at an old woman, who says to her grand-child, "Don't throw your bread on the ground; it is a sin to waste bread!" but
yet

yet this is an oracular Saying, fit for the largest mortal understanding. Why! will a pert objector say, what is then the mighty purchase of a bit of bread? Poor novice! thou supposest, the value is only the few pence that it commonly costs. But there is another manner of calculating; bread is a creature of GOD, prepared by his sun and rain, bless'd by Him for human use, and has something so peculiar and immediately *divine* in it, that should it fail, man could never create any *succedaneum* that should be like it in its kind. And so 'tis with many other things.

Nothing more justly keeps Man in a perpetual awe, than the *inscrutability* of his own *Soul*, in its nature, capacities and manner of acting. A tame and feeble bird that accidentally has hatch'd an eagle's egg, and is afterwards affrighted at the strength and impetuous tendency of what had been foster'd under its own wings, cannot find itself in a more critical case, than a Man, when holding dialogue, like *Aurim*, with his own *Soul*. He perhaps hath been an indolent unmeaning thing; but that immortal part *within* him, carries a *keener edge* than has ever yet been unsheath'd: and how this edge is likely to be employ'd in a long Hereafter, he has but either bad omens of, or at least must be in a trembling suspense, till Grace gives a competent determination. But why do we talk of the *Soul*? we can't call our very *body* our own: We cannot add *one cubit unto our stature*,* or make *one hair white or black*.†

Beside this wondrous system of nerves and muscles, which each of us bears about him, there is another

* *Matt. vi. 27.* † *ch. v. 36.*

another Body, which is also *fearfully and wonderfully made*; and that is, the Body-Politic. This is likewise GOD's structure, wisely framed and put together; and we may justly apply to it, what is said of a still more peculiar Oeconomy, *Not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.** How should therefore every new guest that treads the stage of human life, wish that he may weaken, displace, or ruffle nothing! no-ways hurt the wholesome *order* and coherence of *Society*; but by his services and good example in his generation, rather promote its welfare! For, looks he at the *Whole*? it is GOD's benign scheme. Looks he at any *Individual*? (let it be even some poor and contemptible one, whom in an hour of passion he might be tempted to injure and trample upon :) Such a one is, as well as himself, the workmanship of GOD; has a *Body alike* noble, a conscious Soul *alike* tender and sensible of all treatment that happens to it, and at least alike (perhaps much *more*) entitled to fair and honourable treatment.

These are some of the sentiments which Creation inspires us with.—But does not *Redemption*, or the new Creation, overthrow them again? Many very wise men have been jealous of this; have, from the theological scheme of Redemption, been apprehensive of no other fruits, but haughty *self-flattery*, *rash liberties*, a destruction of the balance of Things, or at least of that of the Mind. But herein they have not been quite wise enough; they have shewn, that they did not understand what they judged of. For

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Secondly,

*Isai. xxxiii. 20.

Secondly, Redemption heightens all the foregoing.

What it first of all turns our eyes upon, is the Person of our Redeemer. When we learn, that GOD, the *very Maker* of heaven and earth, in compassion to us fallen and wretched creatures, (who did no more answer the Law of our Creation) and to make propitiation for our Sins, came down, conversed, *suffered* and *died* as a real meek *Man* in this world; that by the merit of this Act we might be everlastingly relieved, pardon'd, and exalted to greater privileges than we had lost: what must be the effect, but an *overwhelming* admiration, an agony of insolvent gratitude, and *prostration* of our spirit in the dust before our Benefactor? Can a human heart, after this, ever any more find the way to its former stoutness and indolence? tho' it may, and does, to a divine peace! Would not the first be too great an incongruity? for can we, in reason, to all eternity recover ourselves out of the astonishment we were thrown into by the sight of the *danger* we have escaped, and by the sight of this *unparallel'd generosity* of the Deity? — Which is, indeed, that above intimated *latest* Manifestation of his, never to be out-done; and on which, among all divine actions, He himself lays the greatest stress.

I have hinted, that Redemption is not only a rescue from perdition; tho' that is saying a great deal, especially when we add, "through the Incarnation and Sufferings of GOD." But it admits us moreover to privileges entirely new; to *adoption* with the Father of Jesus Christ; *espousals* with GOD the Son; fellowship and *tutelage* of the Holy Spirit; a right to the ministry of angels, and
many

many more. Now here surely we, sons of the earth, may be allow'd to be as much at a loss, as much abashed and confounded, amidst such a theatre of glories, (well described in the xiith chapter to the *Hebrews*, *But ye are come unto mount Zion, &c.*) as some raw peasant, when suddenly transported into a King's presence-chamber. And lest any one should think, the awe will wear off at least by custom; the nature of these privileges is such, that different parts or instances of them, or fresh worth in each, is continually turning up, meeting our observation, and renewing the surprize.

If the contemplation of Redemption itself, as mere matter of enjoyment, weighs us down; 'tis no wonder, that a reasonable concern how to *walk* henceforth *suitably* to it, does the same. Our Lord's sacred Form, as wounded and bleeding for us, wholesomely haunts us all our life long: Can this even according to common sense, be any other than a death's-head to all corrupt joy, to all *luxuriancies* of spirit whether gross or subtle, that might be supposed remaining? as, on the other hand, 'tis a daily-cherishing Sun, and like the former and latter rain, to the *new* nature. Which nature, whether you will conceive it grown up, is never levity, but *wisdom, and power, and a sound mind*;* or whether you will conceive it as young and struggling to grow, is then mingled yet plainer with pain and humility.

The new nature and soundness is partly indeed an immediate fruit of this reflection, "I am pardon'd!
" I thro' the immense labour of my Surety, am
" translated into a new condition!" For, thinks

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* 2 Tim, i. 7.

the soul—“I see then that the former condition must have been, in the eyes of my Deliverer, some kind of death and putrefaction to my true life, some madness or enchantment to my better intellect: What should therefore be my manner of thinking and acting for the future?”—“Why! just the reverse of the former: he that has learnt to know sickness, has withal some notion what Health must be.” But chiefly and more fully, it is derived from, and nourished by, the Understanding a pardoned sinner is endowed with of the *mind, will, sentiments, and example* of his Saviour on all occasions. An understanding, which he cannot but thirst after, considering he is now so closely allied to that Holy-One; and, for the same reason, cannot but have sufficient opportunities to acquire it. For not only His *imitable* Perfections shine forth in some measure in the Creation; not only his written Volume lies unscaled henceforth before us; but his very *human* soul converses with ours, and he bestows at present by his Spirit a regular education upon us, tending to build us up into his lovely Image. Now if there are thus manifold Rules, sentiments, and principles; and these so precious, and grounded in our Lord's own Heart and Nature; to be by us *investigated, gleaned up, practised* in our life and conversation, and turned by all possible concoction into our very juices: none can imagine this to be done without a certain trepidation of spirit thro' zeal and high regard, a *quivering* (as I may so say) of every limb, partly from modest solicitude, partly from the same cause as it happens to the war-horse when he *swallows the ground*.^{*} O
when

* Job xxxix. 24.

when shall I attain, when shall I shew forth the whole mind of Christ !

As we are surrounded with beauteous *mental* images, with written precepts of a welcome, but not therefore less *sacred*, obligation ; (for surely a *friend's* mind, when he has something to do or observe for his friend's sake, can no more be heedless or unbent than a *slave's*, tho' it be in a different way :) so, as Christians, we are encompassed likewise with *outward Memorials*, that are continually to put us in mind of that, which so above all things bows down the believer with gratitude and shame. Beside the Scriptures themselves, which, in whatever part almost we open them, testify of and refer to the *death of our GOD*, and our amazing and extensive redemption ; the very institution of a *Christian Church*, and not only the best times thereof, but the bare existence of such a Society, holds forth the same. The church is, thro' every age, a pillar, a monument, as much sepulchral as triumphal, of that great Fact. Which is inculcated still more palpably by the *Sacraments* ; yea presupposed, at least, in *every act* of our Religious *Worship*. So that if the prophet speaks once of a Lover of mankind, who was *wounded in the house of his friends* ; * we Christians are as if we always dwelt in the very chamber, where that affecting scene was transacted. The marks of it are to be seen fresh on every wall : we eat even all our passovers of thanksgiving, joined with that bitter herb, the remembrance of the Agonies whereby our peace and safety was purchased. And if the frequent ecclesiastical repetition of this knell cannot
now

* *Zech*, xiii. 6,

now be said to be *shocking* to us, (in the common sense of the word) after we are once reconciled, thro' the light of Faith, to our Lord's Death; any more than a passing-bell is shocking to one who is reconciled to his *own* death: yet exceeding *revelential* however, tender and deeply serious, its effect upon us, be we ever so familiarized and accustomed, must still be.

But, in order to be breathed upon by a solemn and sacred air like that of a temple, we need not go so far as instituted commemorations or consecrated places: we have it nearer home. Our own Bodies are *Temples of the Holy Ghost*.^{*} If therefore St. Paul makes it so arduous a matter for young Timothy, to know *how he ought to behave himself in the House of GOD*; † if, of old, priests were tied to numberless rules, observances and cautions in their ministrations: let none now put this away from himself to the sacerdotal order. For each regenerate man is a priest; and the temple which he is to keep in *purity*, and towards which he is to observe a more exquisite uninterrupted decorum than can be set down in any ritual, is his own mortal body.

As the body is thus to be treated like a divine temple; so the *new spirit* within us, the inward man of the Heart, is to be treated like a *son of the prophets*. *Mamoah*, understanding that his son was to be a *Nazarite*, a consecrated person, solicitously asked, from the first moment of his conception, *How shall we order the child? and how shall we do unto him?* † The very same concern every Christian should reasonably be in with regard to his own Heart,

^{*} 1 Cor. vi. 19. † 1 Tim. iii. 15. † Judg. xiii. 12.

Heart, considered as the place, where a hopeful particle of higher life is now kindling, where the Likeness of Christ is beginning to be delineated, (which important rudiments, who would not *tremble to disturb* by any thing?) and where the Holy Spirit vouchsafes his instructions. Every syllable from that Teacher is invaluable; if we should be so unhappy as to disobey or check any Light of his, restored it may be again, but no creature can insure or *promise* the restoration of it. Thus we see, a man's own Soul and Body, instead of making free with them as his *own*, become now a *depositum* with which he stands intrusted from his Lord, (just as one may be intrusted with any other affair exterior to himself,) and about which, at his peril, he is to shew fidelity and diligence. So that, *Reverence thyself!* which was a saying of some old philosophers, has now a most substantial ground and meaning: but a meaning, so far from carrying in it self-sufficiency and pride, that it implies a constant sense of *insufficiency* for a *weighty trust*, and a dread of committing oversights.

Nor is a man only obliged to consider his own self in a respectful light, but the objects for a like manner of consideration multiply even *ad infinitum*; it being, in some view or other, applicable to *every human soul* we see about us. And with regard to ourselves, we are indeed divided betwixt *two* affections, (very contrary to each other, yet agreeing in this, that both do press down the mind,) namely, a *religious esteem* for our Substance in itself, and for what has been divinely wrought therein without our assistance; and on the other hand, *shame and grief*, more or less, for most of the acts we ourselves have done, or, at least, for circum-
stantial

stantial defects attending them : But with regard to others, the esteem is predominant, and *unalloy'd*. For we view *them* only on one side. We see in every human face at least that Being or creature, which, 'tis true, not only the 8th psalm, but daily experience shews to have been made *a little lower than the angels*, but which the Scripture nevertheless represents as a kind of favourite *before* them : we see, I say, infallibly, (if it be but a Man we look at,) a jewel, which the Creator thought worth while to *purchase* with his own Blood. Suppose that redemption is not effectually applied to him at present, yet it *can* be ; and in the mean while, we may probably find even in such a one many qualities, which tho' they will not bear the balance of the Sanctuary, are, however, amiable in their kind, yea may put us, who have received more Grace, to the blush.

But if the person be an actual fellow-partaker of the Gospel-salvation, we shall certainly discern reasons for so much honour and reverence towards him, as, if the modes of human life did but permit it, would cast us numberless times at his feet. For he is then not only supposed to have, in general, a spirit, soul, and body, *under preparation* for eternal life, like our own ; but we must needs, at several opportunities, have discover'd in him beyond contradiction, (be he even the lowest and least eminent member of the mystical Body) some special and striking instances of *fidelity, uprightness, or generosity* ; yea tokens and proofs in word and behaviour, symptoms and rays on the very countenance, of that precious *mind and nature* of Christ. Here a child of GOD has a penetrating eye ; as well as a tenacious memory, to treasure up whatever he has
has

has once seen in his Neighbour: And all this worth of his brother is sure to appear to him in so advantageous a light, that he shall make a great doubt whether he himself possesses, in the degree at least, or could in like circumstances do, any thing fit to be once named with it.

This may serve as a short summary of the effects, which Redemption, in this respect, has upon the mind.

Shall we now conclude in one word, since it seems so plainly to be the result,—That whoever knows either what Creation or Redemption means, must needs *serve GOD with Reverence*? yea, as the *Calls* for, and *exercises* of, such reverential disposition, are withal found to be numberless, must indeed stand in a *perpetual* uninterrupted awe? So that I could almost say, the Walk of a *Brachman*, who is continually afraid of treading upon some insect, might, (only that *our* reasons are juster, and his gloom and littleness of mind far removed,) in point of the soft and *considerate* step, serve for a pretty near emblem of ours. Or, shall we first hear, what can perhaps be objected against this?

From two quarters one may expect objections.

1st, From the Moralist. “Is not this a degrading and depressing of human nature too much? “I do not like to have such a *weight* hung upon “Man.” Why! let us then take it off, and see what will be the consequence. Every man has also a column of gravitating Air over his head, and a quantity of it compassing him all round: let us remove *this* incumbrance too, and see who will be the gainer. Does not that pressure of the air create the very strength and firmness of bodies? So it is

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here. You speak of moral worth in man: That worth is the effect of principles: And what is a *principle*? It is a certain thought or idea, which by its excellency keeps the man in constant admiration of it; more properly has master'd *him*, than he is master of *it*; not only impels his mind as the weight does a machine, but from some higher chair corrects him like a school-boy for his defects. Could we conceive any principle so low and unelevated, that the person is able quite to come up with it, and owes it no blushing reverence of this sort; it would, at the same time, cease to be what we call a principle. A man of principle therefore, (be it of what nature it will) is a *bashful* man, dissatisfied with himself, and a true devotee. Not only the cloyster'd monk falls down before a shrine; not only every pious Christian has an Object for his constant obeisance; but all men in general must have something of the same turn of mind, (happy he who directs it to the very *best* and most profitable scope!) or else they are mere triflers all their days, exceptions from the gravity and dignity of human Nature, and lighter than vanity itself. A man of worth must have his *ballast*; and that ballast is Reverence, of some kind or other: he that reverences *nothing*, has at the same time *no* Worth. But without discussing the point so far, a sensible objector might only be asked, Have you then been called to any posture of mind, but what is the pure consequence of thought and reflection, (that glory, as you deem it, of the human make) on supposition that you have either been created, or redeemed, not to say both?

2dly, From the Man of more than common *spiritual* attainments. "Tho' (may this Objector be
" supposed

“ supposed to argue) such a posture of reverence,
 “ yea trembling, may be wholesome for the hu-
 “ man complexion in general, and may properly
 “ attend also the beginnings of Religion; yet sure
 “ there must be a time, when an advanced Chri-
 “ stian shall have *out-grown* it.” I answer: *When,*
 and from *what* consideration, shall we imagine
 him to outgrow the species of Awe now contended
 for?

That which bids fairest for superseding all affec-
 tions of this kind, is the spirit of *Love*, that state
 of *intimate* and *confident* familiarity with our Lord.
 We have seen, St. *John* even affirms, that this,
 when *perfect*, *casteth out fear*; some sort of fear.
 But that it cannot be the sort we here mean, needs
 no other proof, than barely to look back and see,
 whether all the *parts* and *expressions* of Reverence
 by us enumerated, be not at the same time so ma-
 ny natural and quite inseparable *characters* and *fruits*
 of the most ardent, entire, and devoted *Love*, that
 can possibly be imagined?

A second plea for an exemption, we will suppose
 to be gifts, talents, illuminations, &c. Do not
 these exempt the owner from the common condi-
 tion of mankind? Yes,—in order to charge him
 double with obligations to the state of mind we are
 speaking of. Because, the more of these, the more
 he becomes answerable for; and the more oppor-
 tunities there are for hurting one or other delicate
 part of his commission. For a commission it is,
 and such a one as constitutes him the mere Servant
 of those about him.

A third ground may be, when a person thinks
 himself enabled to say, “ What need I to fear
 “ now in any kind whatsoever? *Sin* and *corruption*,
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“ the cause of all fear, is *conquer'd* and mortified
 “ in me.” Now there is certainly such a thing,
 as *real* Victory over Sin; and it belongs even to
 young and old that trust in Christ. Only it still
 belongs in *such* a manner, that whoever has it in
 truth, possesses it always with modesty and trem-
 bling. *He that thinketh he standeth, says the Apostle,*
*let him take heed lest he fall.** On this head, let
Macarius speak. “ As merchants on their voyage,
 “ tho’ they have a favourable wind and smooth
 “ sea, yet till they reach the port, are always in
 “ some fear, lest a contrary wind arising, the sea
 “ be agitated into waves, and endanger the ship :
 “ So Christians, tho’ they have a prosperous wind
 “ of the Holy Spirit breathing within them, yet
 “ are still apprehensive, lest possibly some wind of
 “ the adverse power might come upon them, and
 “ by its blowing occasion at least waves and distur-
 “ bance to their Souls. There is need therefore
 “ of much diligence, in order to arrive at the Ha-
 “ ven of rest, the perfect World, that everlasting
 “ life and joy.”†

How far an *experience* in our Redeemer’s ways,
 a discovery of his thoughts of peace concerning our
 Individual, and especially an affectionate reliance
 on the fidelity of his character, an acquaintance
 with his Heart’s disposition, may *mitigate* the an-
 xiety described by this spiritual writer; (inasmuch
 that perhaps it cannot well be stiled *anxiety* any
 more in the loving Believer :) this we will not now
 enquire into. In the mean while it is, we see, never
 quite annihilated; but even in the most advanced
 Christian, (consequently far more, according
 to

* 1 Cor. x. 12.

† Hom. xliii.

to justice, in every mortal man beside) so much at least of that frame of mind unalterably remains, as answers to the idea of humble *caution* about one's steps: as there remains also besides, an admiring and tender *veneration* for a great number of holy things and objects.

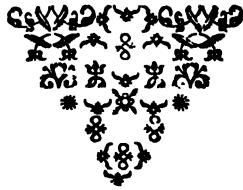
So that our assertion from the Text stands good, That both Man and Christian were made for Religious Reverence: since even the latter, when his joy in the Holy Ghost is at the highest, when he has peace and life and the kingdom of Heaven within him, is still to *rejoice with trembling*.*

But I must confess all the while, whoever else needs it, the true and sincere Christian does in reality not need *my* admonition on this head: he is, in this particular also, *taught of GOD*. The requisite Awe or Trembling, which is in truth only equivalent with *solidity of thought* upon being *intrusted* with certain inestimable pearls, Grace will not fail, by its own operation, to create and maintain in each Soul. There remains therefore nothing properly to wish, but this, May our good and gracious Lord vouchsafe to bestow on every one *the Joy itself*, which is to have this concomitant; those *pearls themselves*, that deserve to be handled with trembling! That is the main, the *first* point; and the point, with good reason, oftenest treated of from this pulpit. May He, I say, grant us all the knowledge of Himself, a *Communion with Him*; not only that sort which we might have by Creation, but especially that which is grounded on Redemption, even *the free and full Remission*

Remission of Sins thro' faith in his Blood; Adoption of Children; Sanctification; and that Rejoicing in Hope of the Glory of GOD, which will one day cause them, amidst the crush of elements and the most general consternation, to lift up their heads, who otherwise were used to think and speak here with modesty, to refrain their soul, and keep it low, even as a weaned child.†* These saving graces may he grant us all, and that speedily, for his own Death and Merits sake: To whom, &c.

* Luke. xxi. 28. † P. cxxxi. 2.

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