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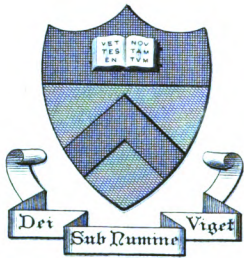
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THE  
WHOLE WORKS

OF THE

LATE REV. JAMES HERVEY, A. M.

RECTOR OF

WESTON-FAVEL, IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

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IN SIX VOLUMES.

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VOLUME V.

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PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY W. W. WOODWARD, NO. 52, SOUTH  
SECOND-STREET.

1810.

.....  
W. M'Colloch, Printer.



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# SERMONS, TRACTS,

AND

## LETTERS,

ON SEVERAL IMPORTANT AND INTERESTING

## SUBJECTS.

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BY THE LATE

*REV. JAMES HERVEY,*

RECTOR OF WESTON-FAVEL, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

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*PHILADELPHIA:*

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### ADVERTISEMENT.

*THOUGH* the three first of the following Sermons of the Rev. Author are posthumous, yet we have chosen to place them first in this collection, not only on account of the order of time in which they were delivered ; but also, because we apprehend the connection of the subjects requires it.—The first two Sermons, entitled, “ Many made righteous by the obedience of One,” made their appearance only in the year 1769 ; and how they came to do so, is accounted for in the following Preface.

## PREFACE.



THE following two sermons have been adjudged too excellent to be suppressed. They were preached, according to the best information, at Biddeford in the year 1743.

As to their authenticity, they carry in themselves the strongest internal evidences of their being genuine. Whoever reads them, will know who wrote them. "Celebrated writers," as this excellent author observes elsewhere, "have a style peculiar to themselves." This was eminently true of himself. His performances (some of his letters excepted, written in the younger part of his life) are indeed *as apples of gold in pictures of silver*: transmitting the most precious truths, through the channel of the most elegant, correct expressions; and adorning the doctrines of God our Saviour, with all the heightening graces of exquisite composition. When Hervey's pencil gives the drapery, truth is sure never to suffer, by appearing in an ill dress. His prose is, in general, more lovely and harmonious, more chastely refined, and more delicately beautiful, than half the real poems in the world. With Mr. Hervey in their hands, his delighted readers will nigh find themselves at a loss, which they shall most admire; the sublimity and sweetness of the blessed truths he conveys, or the charming felicity of their conveyance. There is, if the term may be allowed, a sort of family-likeness, discernable in all this author's pieces.—You discover the lively signatures of the parent in every one of his offspring. They not only carry the superscription of his name, but likewise bear the image of his genius, and are himself at second-hand. Among others, the ensuing performance may be considered as a transparent medium, a screen of crystal, through which the original writer is distinctly seen, and known from every other: A circumstance, which, with me, has more convincing weight, than the extrinsic attestation of a thousand witnesses.

The copy, from which these sermons are printed, was lately transmitted to me, for publication, by a most valuable

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friend, of Exeter. I deem it a particular happiness, that so choice a treasure should pass, through my unworthy hands, to the church of God. And I rejoice the rather, as I have, by this means, an opportunity of doing myself the honour to bear the most open and public testimony to that grand, fundamental, inestimable doctrine of a sinner's "full, free, and final justification, by the alone obedience and sacrifice of Jesus Christ the righteous."

I shall not detain the evangelical reader from this feast any longer, than just to assure him, that neither my excellent friend, who communicated the copy to me, nor myself, who communicate it to the world, propose to ourselves any sort of pecuniary advantage from this publication; nor will we accept of any, should the sale be ever so great.

Respect for the memory of that holy man of God who preached these sermons, and in hope of their being made useful to such as read them, were the motives which induced us to send them abroad. One would wish to *gather up the very fragments that remain* of so distinguished a writer, and that *nothing* so apparently calculated for general benefit, might be lost.

I thought it necessary to add two or three occasional notes; of whose propriety the reader will judge for himself.

AUGUSTUS TOPLADY.

WESTMINSTER,

July 8th, 1769.

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MANY MADE RIGHTEOUS BY THE OBEDIENCE OF ONE:

**TWO SERMONS**

**PREACHED AT BIDDEFORD, 1743.**

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# SERMON I.



ROMANS V. 19.

*By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.*

*BY the works of the law shall no man living be justified,* was, not long ago, the subject of a public discourse ; and, I hope, has frequently been the subject of our private consideration. O ! that the important truth may be written most intelligibly upon our hearts, and beget in us a sound humility and an evangelical poverty of spirit ! We then pulled up the wrong foundation ; and, now permit me to establish the right. We then warned you of the sandy foundation ; and, now, permit me to lead you to the rock of ages ; where you may safely repose all your confidences, and build, with the utmost security, for a blissful eternity. This is pointed out in the scripture before us ; which, though concise in its expressions, is rich and copious in its meanings, and breathes the very spirit of the gospel.

*By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*—The One mentioned in the text, is the man Christ Jesus. The obedience spoken of, includes both his active and passive obedience ; the labours of his life, and the agonies of his death : all which he exercised and suffered, in conformity to his Father's will, for the sake of fallen men ; that they, by his righteousness, might be made righteous ; that, having these credentials, they may be admitted into the court of heaven ; and, carrying this passport, may be admitted into the everlasting habitations.

This doctrine I take to be the most sweet and precious part of our christian faith ; that which gives the most pure and undivided honour to God ; which yields the most reviving and solid comfort to the sinner ; and, in the most endearing and effectual manner, promotes every interest of holiness. But inasmuch as it is little understood by some, entirely exploded by others, and scarce ever thought upon



by more ; let us crave your impartial attention, while I clear up and confirm it : and not only crave your attention, brethren, but implore the renewing and enlightening influence of divine grace ; without which, I am aware, my words will be unintelligible to some, and appear, perhaps, ridiculous to others : *for the natural man discerneth not the things which are of the Spirit of God ; on the contrary, they are foolishness unto him.* Depending, therefore, on divine grace, let us examine,

I. How the obedience of another can make us righteous.

II. How sufficient Christ's obedience is for this purpose.

III. How *worthy* this method of becoming righteous is of all acceptation :—and then,

IV. Give some few directions, that may dispose us to rely on, and prepare us to receive the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

I. Let us examine how the obedience of another can make us righteous. This point may be proved and illustrated,

- (1.) From the nature of a surety.
- (2.) From Christ's dying as a sinner for us.
- (3.) From Adam's sin being imputed to us.

(1.) The doctrine of our being made righteous through the obedience of Christ, may be proved and illustrated from the nature of a surety : who is one that undertakes and engages for another. Let us suppose the parties were Paul and Onesimus. Onesimus was Philemon's slave. The slave disobeyed his master, ran away from him and his service ; not only deserted his service, but stole his goods ;—turned fugitive and thief at once. For the first of these crimes he deserves stripes and a rod ; for the last, death and the gallows. St. Paul meeting with Onesimus, learns the state of his condition : and, having been the means of his conversion to christianity, by his preaching, and of his reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ, offers to become his mediator with his offended master. In order to execute which office more effectually, he puts himself in the criminal's stead ; becomes answerable for his villainy, and takes upon him to make full reparation for the injuries he had done to his master : *If he hath wronged thee ought (says the beneficent apostle) or oweth thee ought, put that to my account :*

*I Paul hath written it with mine own hand, I will repay it.* By this means, the renegade slave is discharged, and Paul the innocent apostle becomes debtor. But how? Not actually, but imputatively; for neither has Onesimus repaid, nor Paul stolen ought; but, by virtue of the undertaken suretyship, Onesimus' debt lies upon Paul, and Paul's freedom turns to the acquittance of Onesimus.

Thus it is in the matter of justification. We had all sinned in Adam; forfeited the favour of God. In order to our reconciliation, God required a full satisfaction to his justice, and a perfect obedience to his laws. These we could not possibly render in our own persons; therefore, Christ graciously presented himself, and undertook to perform both in our stead. Upon me, says the compassionate Redeemer, upon me, be their offences laid. If they have transgressed, let vengeance make its demands on me; I will repay to the very utmost farthing; and forasmuch as, through the weakness of their mortal nature, they are not able to yield an exact conformity to the divine laws, I am willing to fulfil all righteousness in their stead and behalf. *Lo! I come to do thy will, O my God!* I do it, not for myself, but for them, that the merit of my obedience may redound to my people, and that they, through my righteousness, may be made righteous.

(2.) The doctrine of our being made righteous through Christ, may be inferred from his dying as a sinner for us:—'Tis a very remarkable passage, and full to our purpose, where the apostle declares, that the almighty Father made his Son, *who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

How you may be affected at present with such a scripture, brethren, I cannot determine; but if ever you come to the knowledge of yourselves, and the heinousness of your sins, and the worthlessness of your duties: such a text will be sweeter to you than the honey or the honey-comb to your taste, and more refreshing than the richest cordial to your souls. However, from St. Paul's declaration, we gather this precious truth, that we are made righteous before God, in such a manner as Christ was made a sinner for us: not by any personal demerit; for he had done no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; but *the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all.*

In like manner, how are the greatest saints made righteous before God? Not by any personal merit. They have done nothing that can deserve God's love, or that is worthy of a reward; but God looks upon them as interested in his dear Son's obedience, and so rewards them purely for their Saviour's sake. God visited our sins upon him; and God rewards his merits upon us; God accounted our transgressions to be his; and, on this footing, he was punished as a malefactor; and God esteems his righteousness as ours; and by virtue of this imputation, we are accepted as complete.

(3.) Once again, the doctrine of our being made righteous through the obedience of Christ, may receive stronger proofs and fuller illustrations from *Adam's sin being imputed unto us*. This is an undoubted truth, written, as it were, with a sun-beam, in almost every page of scripture. St. Paul assures us, that *in Adam all die*. And if so, 'tis certain, that *in Adam all sinned*. Tell me now, how came that personal sin of Adam to be charged upon us? how can his having eaten the forbidden fruit, render us liable to death and damnation? How, but by imputation? Adam was a public person: he represented the whole race of mankind; his act was imputed to his whole posterity. Such a communion there is between Christ and his elect: he, too, was a public person; he was a representative of all his chosen ones, and his obedience is looked upon as theirs. Thus believers are made righteous by the obedience of their everlasting head, Christ Jesus, even as they were made sinners by the transgression of their mortal father, Adam; because of the analogy and similitude there is between his righteousness to justify, and Adam's iniquity to condemn.\*

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\* Mr. Hervey seems here to have had an eye to 1 Cor. xv. 22. "For as in Adam all die: even so in Christ shall all be made alive." The *pantes*, or all, affirmed by the apostle, to have died in Adam, are the same *pantes*, or all, that shall be made alive in Christ; namely, all the members of Christ's mystic body; all that church, which he loved, and for which he gave himself to death. There are two reasons, in particular, which determine the meaning of the word *all*, in this passage, to the elect, and to them only. 1. Throughout the whole context St Paul treats solely of the first resurrection; the resurrection of the just; the resurrection to life eternal. He says not one word in this chapter, concerning the resurrection of the ungodly; but confines himself singly to that of true believers. 2. He, in the very next

Let us now make a pause, and review our attempt. We have endeavoured to render the doctrine of the text somewhat clearer, by considering the nature of a surety, from Christ's being made sin for us,—and from the imputation of Adam's offence to us. But these, alas! are points little known to the world. Corrupt nature is prejudiced against them; and Satan is studious to hide them from our eyes. Let us beseech the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to reveal the mystery of godliness in our hearts; that we may believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and only Saviour of the world; and that believing we may have life, not through any fancied goodness of our own, but entirely through his name.

II. Let us now just take notice, how sufficient Christ's obedience is for the purpose of justification. It is a most incomparably excellent obedience: it exceeds not only the righteousness of innocent and upright Adam, but the righteousness of angels, principalities, and powers. Extol this righteousness as high as words can reach, or ideas soar! for it is the righteousness of incarnate divinity; wrought out by HIM, who was GOD and MAN in one CHRIST; whose divine nature gave an infinity, both of efficacy and of dignity, to all he did. To you that believe the godhead of JESUS, his righteousness must needs be inconceivably precious: you will not, you cannot think it strange, that a whole world of believers should be accepted through it, and owe all their salvation to it. The prophet, in the most express terms, sets his seal to this truth, when he affirms, that the Lord, the supreme and incomprehensible Jehovah, is our righteousness: and who would forsake the everlasting Rock, in order to lean on a bruised reed? who would quit an illustrious robe, for scanty covering and filthy rags? St. Paul accounted all things but loss, in comparison of his Saviour's righteousness. Yea, his own eminent holiness, and transcendent usefulness, he regarded no more than dross and dung, that he might win Christ and be found in him. This

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verse, expressly points out the persons of whose resurrection he here speaks: these, he tells us, are those that belong to Christ, and are his own peculiar property; who were given to him, by the Father, in the covenant of redemption; and in whom he has a special, ineffable interest.

is the righteousness, whose influences extend to the earliest days, and will reach to the most distant ages. By this the holy men of old enjoyed the favour of God; by this alone, the generations yet unborn will enter into their Master's joy. In a word, this is the *hope*, the sure and sole hope of *all the ends of the earth, and of them that remain in the broad sea*: for in every nation under heaven, and through all the revolutions of time, God is well pleased with sinners, only in his beloved Son. Let me draw one remark from the whole, and I have done. Let me observe the difference between the law of nature and the law of Moses, and the law of faith. The law of nature says, "Live up to the duties of thy reason, and the conviction of thy own mind; and thou shall be safe." The law of Moses saith, "Keep the commandments, and execute all the statutes, and thy salvation shall be sure." But faith saith, "Thou needest not attempt these impossibilities. Christ hath done both, hath done all, in thy stead. He hath improved the light of nature, and fulfilled the whole law of God; and this in the capacity of thy Surety." Go then, to thy Redeemer; lay hold on his righteousness. Believe truly in Christ Jesus, and what he hath done, shall be accounted thine. Thy eternal felicity is already procured. Thou hast nothing else to do, but to look upon it as thy certain portion, and unalienable inheritance, through Christ; and to live in humble and cheerful expectation of that great day, when thy free title shall be changed into actual possession. And, in the mean time, love that divine Benefactor with all thy heart, and study to please him in all holy conversation and godliness.

## SERMON II.



ROMANS V. 19.

*By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.*

IN the book of Job, iv. 13,—17, we have a very awakening lesson of humiliation, most admirably calculated to impress the thought, and to bring down the conceited mind. Eliphaz relates a vision.\* When midnight drew her black curtains over the world, when darkness and deep silence reigned through the whole universe; in these solemn moments, a spirit passed before his face. Fearfulness and astonishment seized the beholder; his bones shivered within him; his flesh trembled all over him; and the hairs of his head stood erect with horror. In the midst of these tremendous circumstances, a voice broke forth from the fiery phantom; a voice, for its importance, worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance; and, for its awfulness, enough to alarm a heart of stone. It spake to this effect, "*Shall mortal man be just before God? shall a man be pure in the sight of his Maker?*" The words, thus translated, breathe a wonderful dignity of sentiment; and lead our minds into the most exalted notions of God Almighty, immaculate and inconceivable. Certainly, they comprize one of the most powerful antidotes against the pride and haughtiness natural to fallen man, that can possibly be imagined. They are a token, in this sense, truly worthy of the awful being who uttered them, and the air of vast importance with which

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\* See Mr. Hervey's Contemplations on the Night. In the present sermon, the description of Eliphaz's vision resembles the primary sketch, the naked, imperfect outlines of a masterly picture: but, in the Contemplations (published about four years after this was preached) we behold the picture completely finished; and touched, I had almost said, into the very perfection of grandeur and beauty.

they were introduced. Our translation sinks the idea exceedingly. It tells us no more than what all the world must acknowledge at the very first reflection; and so scarce deserves to be ushered in with so great solemnity. It seems also to oppose what no one can deny, or have insolence enough to maintain: for none, I should imagine, even Lucifer himself, could ever presume to think himself more just, more pure than the original and standard of all perfections. No: let a person be esteemed ever so just, in comparison of his fellow-sinners: let him be accounted most eminently holy, by those that are polluted clay like himself; yet, before infinite and uncreated purity, O! let him be greatly abased; let him put his mouth in the dust, take shame to himself, and cry out, unclean! unclean! According to this translation of the words, you see the doctrine of man's universal depravity is as ancient as the times of Job; and, that there is no possibility of being justified by any personal accomplishments or acquirements, was expressly taught in those early ages.

O! that it may be as unfeignedly believed in these latter days! "But if this be the case," says an inquisitive hearer; "if all men are become abominable; if their best deeds are stained, and there are none that are righteous before God, —no not one; how shall they be accepted, when they are judged? Why, by a method that lies vastly beyond the reach of human wisdom or device. By a method, that was but dimly\* hinted at in the generations of old, but is clearly revealed by the apostles and preachers of the gospel; even by the obedience of Jesus Christ; by a righteousness not wrought by us, but imputed to us. The nature of which imputation we have already illustrated, and shewn the sufficiency of our Redeemer's obedience for this purpose. Which two points being dispatched,

III. I am to shew you how worthy of all acceptation this method of becoming righteous is. And that as it is perfectly consonant to the tenor of ancient prophecies. In the patriarchal age, God promised to Abraham, and renewed the gracious assurances to Isaac, "that in his seed all the nations

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\* That is, dimly hinted at, in comparison of that more perfect knowledge, which has been since brought to light by the gospel eminently so called. See Eph. iii. 5.

of the earth should be blessed." Now, what was this, but a discovery of this evangelical doctrine? 'Twas, indeed, somewhat obscure then; but 'tis clear as the day now. The seed of Abraham, is doubtless our glorious Mediator,—who, in the fulness of time, took flesh and was born of a descendent from Abraham. In him all the elect under heaven shall be blessed. Observe, not in themselves, not for any excellency that is in them; but in him they shall inherit all heavenly blessings. He is the Alpha and Omega of our happiness; the beginning and the end, the cause and the consummation, of all our joy. He is the only spring and fountain of all blessedness, as much as yonder sun is the only fountain of this light that now shines around us. Every ray of light that falls upon our eyes, proceeds altogether from that bright luminary; we do nothing towards enkindling it: we only use its beams, and rejoice in its splendor. So fallen man can do nothing towards procuring the favour of his almighty Maker: but can only, by faith in Jesus Christ, receive it already procured; and testify his gratitude for it, by a cheerful obedience.

In the prophet Isaiah, we find the following passages. God the Father, speaking of his obedient and beloved Son, has this remarkable expression; *By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.* Here, infinite wisdom informs the whole world, how they must expect justification, and final acceptance. 'Tis entirely through his dear Son, our divine Mediator; his holy life, and propitiatory death, are the only procuring causes of our forgiveness, the only conditions of our salvation; and a true knowledge of him,—a right belief in him, make the merit of both our own.\*

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\* From a saving knowledge of Christ, and by faith in him, we are manifestatively interested in what he has done and suffered. Our interest in his righteousness, must in the very nature of things, have been prior to our sense of interest in it: otherwise, all sense of it would be delusive, and conversant with a non-entity. Faith is, as it were; the medium of spiritual vision; a divine light whereby we see our interest in Christ, which we cannot see, till we believe the faith that works by love. Faith is the *ελεγχος* or conviction of things not seen before; and of justification among the rest, Heb. xi. 1. But, surely, the blessings, of which faith is the conviction, had a real existence before ever faith was acted; they are only unseen, till faith is given to discern them by.



God says not, he shall make them capable of reconciliation ; he shall in part justify ; he shall fill up their deficiency, and perfect what is wanting in their duties. No ! but he shall accomplish the whole work ; he shall execute the great office without a rival ; without a partner, he will justify the faithful, and not they themselves.

2. This method of becoming righteous, through the obedience of Christ, is worthy of all acceptance, because it gives the highest glory to God. Nothing can be so effectually calculated to abase the sinner, and exalt the Saviour, as this way of obtaining salvation. This will bring down the lofty look of man ; this will lay every assuming thought in the very dust, and leave the Lord alone glorious and exalted. This thoroughly secures to God his great prerogative, and utterly excludes human boasting, and brings unmingled honour and glory to the surety of men. Whereas, was life eternal the reward of their own works, there would be some pretension for self-admiration. Men would arrogate some of the merit to themselves, and say in their hearts, My power, and the might of my hands hath gotten me this wealth. If they were to expect the blessings of the eternal state as wages which they have earned, O ! what a damp would this strike on their thankfulness ! how little would they think themselves obliged, and, indeed, how little would they be obliged, to God their Saviour, on this footing ! But, when saints in light view their heavenly inheritance ; when they survey that great, exceeding great and eternal weight of glory, and remember that they did nothing to deserve all this ineffable felicity ; that, if it had not been procured entirely by their dying and obedient Saviour, they had been everlastingly banished from the realms of blessedness ; O ! what pure and fervent gratitude must this inspire them with ! — what an emphasis and ardour, while they utter that devout acknowledgment, “ *Not unto us, O Lord ! not unto us, but unto thy dear and adorable name be the praise ! We were enemies in our minds, and, by our wicked works ; but thou hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood : all our choicest actions were polluted and unclean, but thou hast worked out for us a perfect and everlasting righteousness.*”

Thus will adoration and love be given to the Lamb that was slain ; every crown will be cast low before the throne, and wear this humble motto, Not by works of righteous-

ness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us. O! the depths both of the wisdom and goodness of God! Goodness, in establishing such a method of salvation for us; in all things so well ordered and sure! Wisdom, in cutting off all occasion of self glorying, and bringing man to the deepest humiliation, even while it exalts him to the heaven of heavens.

3. This method of becoming righteous through the obedience of Christ, is worthy of all acceptation, because it administers the richest consolation to man; it is an inexhaustible spring of satisfaction and repose.

Luther, that renowned reformer, and great champion for the protestant cause, when he broke away from the mists of popery, and began to understand this most noble peculiarity of christianity, declared, that, 'the gate of Paradise seemed to fly open to his view: that he had a glimpse of its beauty, in contemplating this sacred truth; and a taste of its delights, in believing it; so sweet a composure, and such a charming tranquillity, did it diffuse through his mind.' Nor do I wonder at his saying, "For, while we are ignorant of this doctrine, there is nothing but horror and dread around us." If we strike this text from our bible, or this article from our creed, all is dismal and distressing. Turn which way you will, the prospect is uncomfortable. If we look to ourselves, we shall find misery and guilt; if to God, nothing but indignation and displeasure. But this brightens up the whole scene. Let us observe, in the character of a feeble christian, and of an awakened profligate, what glad tidings the gospel is, by virtue of this doctrine; and what a miserable comforter it would be without it. The language of the former, in his private meditations, must proceed in some such manner as this: "Wherewithal shall I come before the most high God? Shall I offer him my pious services? Alas! they are miserably deficient; they issue from a corrupt stock, and cannot be but corrupt shoots: I have done nothing that is worthy of his acceptance: how then shall I stand in his sacred presence? I strive to be perfect and entire, and wanting nothing; but I feel myself to be poor and indigent, and wretchedly defective. O! whither shall I go, but to him who is appointed for this very purpose? that the bones, which are broken by misery and guilt, may rejoice; that the hands which hang down, through self-

condemnation and despondency, may be lifted up. Thither then will I turn, frail and dispirited as I am, and cast all my burthen upon the Lord Jesus Christ: in his unspotted righteousness, and in nothing else, can the sole of my foot find any rest. When doubts arise, and fear, like a gloomy cloud, thickens around me, the Sun of righteousness shall dissipate the gloom in all my pilgrimage; this shall be my constant song; in all my anxieties, this shall be my only cordial: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me? O put thy trust in Jesus Christ! His merits, and not thine own works, are the horn of thy salvation: whosoever believeth in him shall not be confounded." And as for the poor sinner brought to a sense of his enormous crimes; methinks, I hear him bewailing his condition, in some such disconsolate manner: "O wretched man that I am! how shall I attain the favour of God? My sins are multiplied above number, and aggravated beyond expression. I cannot make any satisfaction for what is past, much less can I win the divine good will for the future. I am polluted, root and branch: what can I do?" Truly, sinner, I know not what thou canst do, unless thou comest to Jesus Christ: there is not a gleam of hope, or a grain of comfort, in all the universe besides. If thou lamentest thy folly, and seest thy undone state, with the Lord there is mercy, abundant mercy, and with the Lord Jesus Christ there is plenteous redemption. If thou canst rely on Christ, thy iniquities shall be done away like a morning cloud; if thou canst believe in him, thy debts are cancelled through his blood; and that which thou art unable to perform, he hath fulfilled for thee. See, how consonant this doctrine is to the whole series of scripture, and the voice of ancient prophecies! See, what an unshared revenue of glory and thanksgiving it brings unto the blessed God: both supporting the feeble christian amidst all his infirmities, and opening a door of hope to the awakened sinner, notwithstanding all his impieties! Surely, then, this precious doctrine is worthy of all acceptation: surely we have reason to receive it with all imaginable thankfulness! But, lest it should, after all, seem to us an idle tale, rather than glad tidings of great joy, let me,

IV. Give some directions that may dispose us to rely on and prepare us to receive the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

*First.* Bring a child-like mind to the consideration of it. Lay aside propositions,\* and meekly receive the ingrafted word with a teachable simplicity. Let us sit at the feet of Jesus, and, like very little children, learn heavenly wisdom from his gospel. If we are conceited of our abilities, and lean to our own understanding, God may punish our pride, by leaving us in the dark; for he *hides these things from the wise and prudent, and reveals them unto babes.*—You must acknowledge your natural ignorance, and implore the teachings of his blessed Spirit; for this is his peculiar office, to *convince the world of righteousness*: that is, to convince the world of the fulness of the Redeemer's righteousness, of its unsearchable riches, and of its absolute sufficiency to justify his people.

*Secondly.* If you would not be offended at this doctrine, get a deep sense of *your own unrighteousness*. It is the want of this conviction, that indisposes men for a reliance on Christ; so long as they fancy themselves *rich and increased in goods*, they will never be concerned to seek the *fine gold* of their Saviour's obedience.—*And indeed, he came not to call the righteous*; his gospel is of such a nature, that the self-justiciary will discern no comeliness in it: it will feed the *hungry and poor in spirit*, with good things; but the *rich*, and those that are *righteous in their own eyes*, it will send empty away.

Labour, therefore, to see your own vileness, and then the merits of a Saviour will be precious. Be sensible of your own nakedness, and then the robe of a Redeemer's righteousness will be prized indeed. Consider yourselves as insol-

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\* "Lay aside propositions," a mistake, perhaps, for prepositions. However, the sentence, as it stands, conveys a very useful direction: "Lay aside propositions;" i. e. Submit your wisdom to God's; embrace his gracious method of salvation; without arguing yourself into needless doubts and perplexities.—Mr. Hervey seems, here, to intimate, what another excellent divine has since expressed more clearly: "Believe simply, with the meekness of a child, just as you are told by God, without murmuring or disputing. Depend as absolutely, day by day, on the teaching of Christ, through his word and Spirit, for the knowledge of all things needful to salvation, as any pupil at an academy, depends on the instructions of an able and celebrated master."

vent wretched bankrupts, who have nothing, who can do nothing that is spiritually good; and then the perfect obedience, the full satisfaction of your divine Surety, will be *as health to your soul, and as marrow to your bones.*

*Thirdly. Pray for faith.* It is faith that unites\* to Jesus Christ. By faith you are implanted into him. Faith is the hand that lays hold on the Saviour's merits: *By faith ye are saved*, says the apostle. This appears, to the soul, the great salvation purchased by our dear Redeemer: therefore, beseech God to beget in you this lovely and lively faith, whereby you may lay hold on Christ, cleave most inseparably to Christ, and, renouncing every other refuge, lay the whole stress of your souls solely on Christ, as a shipwrecked mariner relinquishes all his sinking cargo, and clings only to the planks that may float him safe to shore. Seek this blessing to yourselves, brethren; and, if ever I forget to join my best supplications to yours, *let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth. My heart's desire, and prayer to God, shall always be, that you may believe to the saving of your souls.*—And a holy conversation will be a sign unto you, that your faith is real.—A life of sincere holiness can spring from nothing but from this divine head, Christ Jesus. *By this shall all men know that ye are his disciples, if ye live by his Spirit, and walk as he walked.* By this, likewise, your own consciences may be assured, that God hath given you an interest in his dear Son, and sent him to bless you; if he has *turned you from your iniquities, and created you anew unto good works.*

Give me leave, at the close of all, to ask you, with all simplicity, Have you understood these things? do you believe this report? or, am I as one that speaketh a parable?

If any be of this opinion, I shall address them in the words of St. Paul to the Galatians, and commit them to enlightening grace. The apostle, inculcating this very point, and

\* Sensible union with Christ, or actual fellowship with him, in a way of comfort, occasioning

*"The soul's calm sun-shine, and the heart-felt joy,"*

is, no doubt, a result of faith. But then, this is not so properly union itself, as communion, flowing from an union that subsisted between Christ and his church from before all time; and of which union, that communion, which follows upon faith, is no more than the perception, discovery, and enjoyment.

persuading them to this self-same belief, says, *Brethren, be as I am, for I was as ye are.*\* Thus the words I would translate; and then they are very pertinent to the purpose, and applicable to you and me; and, when paraphrased, will run thus: "I don't wonder, brethren, that ye are prejudiced against this doctrine. I myself was strongly possessed with such prejudices. I verily thought, that my own righteousness would, at least, bear a part in procuring my acceptance with the eternal Majesty. Determined I was, in some measure, to stand on my own bottom; and advance my plea, for life everlasting, from my own holy endeavours. But now these arrogant resolutions, and vain confidences, are dropt. I now disavow all such pretensions. God hath brought we to a sounder mind.—And, as ye have been partakers with me in my mistake, be partakers also of my righter judgment. I trusted to I knew not what: but *now I know in whom I have believed.* I put myself, and the whole of my salvation, in my adored Immanuel's hands; and doubt not of his sufficiency for my security. Henceforward, I set my heart at rest, not because I have gone through such offices, or done such duties; but because my Redeemer is mighty and meritorious. *'Tis God, the incarnate God, that justifies me; who is he that shall condemn me?* Never, never shall my heart cry to divine justice, *Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all:* this were the language of gross ignorance, or great presumption. But, in all my temptations, in every discouragement, this shall be my acknowledgment, this shall still be my earnest prayer, *The righteousness of thy obedience, most blessed Jesus, is everlasting; O grant me an interest therein, and I shall live.—Amen, amen; so let it be, O Lord.*

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\* Gal. iv. 12.



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THE  
MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION,  
A  
SERMON

Representing the benign tendency of the gospel; and that it is the friendly office of ministers, as the ambassadors of Christ, to press men with all imaginable tenderness, humility, and earnestness, to accept the treaty of reconciliation, as established in him, and urged by him, while on earth.

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PREACHED  
AT THE PARISH-CHURCH OF ALL-SAINTS  
IN NORTHAMPTON.

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*We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: We pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God, 2 Cor. v. 20.*

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

*AS this is a posthumous piece, it may be necessary to observe, for the satisfaction of the public, that Mr. Hervey was, many years ago, solicited to print this sermon, by several who heard it; but as he was a man of great modesty, and had not then appeared as an author, he could not at that time be prevailed on, by any solicitations, to comply with their request.—However, at a particular friend's desire, he transcribed it from his short-hand copy, and gave it to him.—Some years afterwards, this friend desired Mr. Hervey to revise it, with a view of its being published; which (in conjunction with a very eminent divine) he accordingly did; and then returned the copy to his friend; telling him, that as *Meditations on the Tombs, &c.* had been so well received, he had now no objection against publishing it, with some other sermons; and that he might one day or another require it of him again for that purpose.—This sermon is printed from that very copy; and Mr. Hervey himself would probably have added it to the volume which contains his four sermons, had he happened to recollect that it was in the possession of a friend, who would willingly have relinquished it to its author, for publication.*

## SERMON III.

### THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION.



2 COR. V. 18.

*All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.*

• THE love of God, that supremely glorious, and supremely gracious Being, is of all other tempers, the most delightful and divine; a sacred flower, which, in its early bud, is happiness, and, in its full bloom, is heaven.—To plant this noble principle in the breast, to cultivate its growth, and bring it to maturity, is the grand-end of all religion, and the genuine fruit of faith unfeigned.—Angels are happy, because the love of God triumphs eternally, and without a rival in their exalted affections.\* True believers are happy, because the love of God, in a prevailing degree, is shed abroad in their hearts. The gospel is a dispensation of happiness, because it discovers the superabundant loving kindness of God to man, and urges the most engaging motives for our ardent love to his almighty Majesty.

The gospel represents the great God, not only as bestowing upon his creatures all the good they enjoy, but as effecting their reconciliation to his own adorable self; effecting this most desirable of all blessings, not barely by vouchsafing a pardon, but a pardon procured by the death of his Son; and by this enriching circumstance, infinitely enhanced; arrayed in all the charms that Heaven itself could give.—To

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\* To be good is to be happy;—Angels are happier than men, because they are better.

Guilt is the source of sorrow; 'tis the fiend,  
Th' avenging fiend, who follows us behind  
With whips and stings: the bless'd know none of this,  
But rest in everlasting peace of mind. ROWE.

render the purposes of his love more effectual and extensive, he has instituted an order of men to publish these glad tidings ; and to invite, yea, to beseech the world, to partake of the exceeding riches of his grace.—All which the apostle has expressed in my text, with his usual energy and conciseness: *All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.*

From which words, permit me, with all that simplicity which becomes a minister of the humble Jesus.

I. To enlarge a little upon that glorious and amiable representation of the blessed God, discoverable even by the light of nature.—*All things are of him.*

II. To remind you, how much more illustriously the delightful attributes of the Deity are displayed in the accomplishment of our redemption ; in that *he hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.*

III. To observe the benign import and beneficial tendency of the gospel-ministry, expressed in that remarkable clause, *He hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.*

*First, then, Let me enlarge a little upon that glorious and amiable representation of the blessed God, discoverable even by the light of nature, All things are of him.*—Heaven, and the heaven of heavens are his, with all their hosts. Thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, all the happy beings, that sit at the fountain head of felicity, were produced by his power, and are supplied with blessings from his hand, are filled with joy from his countenance.—If we trace the various emanations of comfort and advantage that refresh our lower world, we shall find reason to acknowledge with the psalmist, “ All our fresh springs are in God.” The day is thine, says the same sacred writer, and the night is thine ; thou hast prepared the light and the sun. The magnificent luminaries in the sky, are lamps of the Lord ; hung up on high, to dispense the cheering gift of light amidst all the families of nature. The interchanges of night and day, with the vicissitudes of revolving seasons, are his ministers ; all sent on errands of kindness, and bringing the most valuable presents in their hands. The innumerable variety of living creatures, and of nutrimental vegetables, are the portion, not which our own industry has procured, but which our heavenly Father’s bounty has settled upon us.

Every great endowment, bestowed on the children of men ; every noble achievement, accomplished by renowned personages ; these derive their original from the uncreated fountain of perfection and of power. If Solomon is possessed of enlarged wisdom, and kingly qualities ; he expressly acknowledges, it is from the Lord, superintending human affairs, that such kings are advanced to reign ; and by the Lord enlightening their minds, that such princes decree justice. If, at one period, Nebuchadnezzar pursues his conquests with irresistible impetuosity, it is to scourge the offending people of the Lord ; and banish idolatry from their worship, as the driving wind swept the chaff from their floors. If at another juncture, Cyrus is equally victorious, and ‘ comes upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay ;’ it was the Lord of hosts that raised up this accomplished commander from the east, and bid him execute his designs of restoring love to his reformed nation. All those arts which meliorate, and sciences which embellish life, even these are from the Lord, ‘ who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.’

The time would fail me to enumerate particulars. Whatever is beneficial to communities, or comfortable to individuals ; whatever springs from the rain of heaven, or is produced by fruitful seasons ; whatever administers to the improvement, or cheers the heart of man ; all, all acknowledge God for their Author. He is the Giver of every good and perfect gift. The whole earth is filled with the profusion of his beneficence. And where, where is the creature, that has not tasted, that does not subsist on the inexhaustible stores of his bounty ? And, though affliction also comes from the Father of our spirits, yet this is no derogation from his tender mercies : since he chastens, not with an arbitrary severity, but with a parental pity ; he chastens only to amend ; and these light, these transient tribulations, are preparatives for an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory.

And is not such a Being worthy of our highest admiration, and our devoutest love ? Has he not, by such ineffable excellencies, such unmeasurable benignity,—has he not an undoubted claim to the affections of our hearts, the praises of our tongues, and the unintermitted services of our lives ? He is the source of all our good ; should he not also be the centre of all our gratitude, and of our whole obedience ?—

But our obligations will rise immensely higher, if we consider,—

*Secondly*, How much more illustriously the delightful attributes of the Deity are displayed in the accomplishment of our redemption; in that *he hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ*. Man was created upright, immaculate, and in the image of God. Heavenly wisdom shone bright in his understanding, and true holiness sat enthroned in his heart. But how soon, how fatally, did he fall! from what height of perfection, to what depth of degeneracy! Since that destructive transgression, all flesh has corrupted his way; every man is become brutish in his knowledge; and the imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually. 'Our iniquities separated between us and our God, and our sins hid his face from us,' as from an abominable object. Nay, our sins accused us at his righteous tribunal, and, like the blood of Abel, cried to heaven for vengeance. Vengeance and fiery indignation was our expected doom, and eternal death the wages due to our offences. What rendered the misery of mankind still more excessively deplorable, and only not desperate, was, that they were without strength; without any power to make satisfaction for their provocations, or extricate themselves from this abyss of woe. O wretched, wretched man, if left in this state of guilt and ruin! If abandoned by the God, from whom thou hast ungratefully revolted, better had it been for thee never to have existed.

But behold the kindness and love of God our Saviour! Harkena to the sounding of his bowels and of his mercies towards us! 'I have seen,' said he (as in the case of enslaved Israel) 'I have seen the affliction of my fallen creatures. They have undone themselves, but in me is their recovery,' Hos. xiii. 9. 'Satan has deceived, and, deceiving, has destroyed them; but I, even I will deliver them.' Wherewithal will the Lord accomplish this design? By his free unmerited goodness. By the blood of bulls, or of goats, or of all the cattle upon a thousand hills? Contemptible to the lost degree are such beggarly oblations; only so far as they typify the all glorious sacrifice. Was an angel charged with this important business, or the highest seraph bidden to interpose as the repairer of our breach? The angels were absolutely incapable of executing so great a work. It re-

quired a far abler agent, to negotiate our reconciliation. It must cost incomparably more to redeem guilty souls.—Therefore, the God of our salvation ‘laid the help upon One that is mighty.’ He appointed, to the most momentous of all offices, the most illustrious of all beings. He appointed his own Son, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.

Behold then the Son of God, taking our nature, that he may act as our Mediator. Admirable constitution! full of wonder, and full of grace! How joyful to the sinner! The work must infallibly prosper in such hands. Such a Surety cannot fail of succeeding, in all he undertakes. How gracious in the Father! Could there be a stronger assurance, or a more emphatical demonstration of his boundless beneficence, than to send the Son of his bosom; the Son of his eternal delight; the Son dearer to him than all worlds?—How condescending in the Saviour! Would Ahasuerus abdicate his imperial diadem, or the great ruler of Babylon forego the honours of his enlarged dominions, to attend on the welfare of some ignoble captive that grinds at a mill, or of some infamous malefactor that is chained in a dungeon? Yet the everlasting Potentate of heaven and universal nature, undertakes a more humbling office of friendship, for a race of abject creatures, that dwell in dust, and were doomed to hell. Let every child of Adam look unto Christ by faith, as all the people of Israel looked unto Moses, when he went into the tabernacle of the congregation to intercede before the Lord. (See Exodus xxxiii. 8)

We have seen the person reconciling, let us next contemplate the manner of reconciling. A subject equally astonishing and delightful! The Father reconciled us to himself, by laying upon his Son the iniquities of us all; by admitting him to stand in our stead, and by exacting from him, the punishment which we had incurred. God reconciled us to himself, not only by the humiliation, but by the suffering of this Prince of heaven; and not by some slighter suffering, but by his suffering unto death; and not by his undergoing a common death; but the most ignominious and tormenting of all deaths, the death of the cross. ‘It pleased the Father,’ says the apostle, ‘to reconcile all things to himself; making peace by the blood of the cross.’ Because we deserved shame, the Lord of glory was numbered with male-

factors, and loaded with infamy. Because we deserved the bitterness of death, the Lord of life endured the pangs of dissolution, in their unabated and most racking extremities. Because we were obnoxious to the curse of the law, therefore the ever-blessed 'Jesus delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.'

Glorious propitiation! and altogether as complete as glorious! What now shall terrify the true believer? What shall stand between him, and his eternal hopes? Shall Satan muster up his accusations, and set them in frightful array? Yet, though there may be much guilt, there is no condemnation to them that are in Jesus Christ. Does the law take the guilty mortal by the throat, and, with its rigorous severity, say, 'Pay me that thou owest? It is paid, fully paid by the intervention and suretyship, not of a mean man, but of the mighty God made flesh. Does divine justice demand satisfaction, for the wrongs received from sinners? It is not only satisfied, but most awfully glorified, by this wonderful oblation. In short, this is a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It vindicates the honour of God's holiness; it displays his unsearchable wisdom; it manifests his unutterable goodness; it gives the most magnificent and lovely lustre to all the divine perfections. May we not then, looking unto our bleeding Saviour, and pleading his inestimable propitiation, venture to adopt the apostle's challenge? 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth;' not imputing our trespasses unto us, but transferring them to his dear Son. 'Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died;' and by his precious death, hath made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

I have been the more copious upon this subject, because it is not only the grand point in my text, but is the very heart of the gospel; the fountain of all our comforts, and the foundation of all our hopes. But I proceed, and with greater brevity,

*Thirdly*, To observe the benign import and beneficial tendency of the gospel ministry, expressed in that remarkable clause, *He hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation*. Here I am not attempting to magnify my office, or to aggrandize the ministerial character; but only to render our services acceptable to our brethren. Some persons,

whether through prejudice or mistake, are apprehensive of being terrified by our message, or 'tormented before the time' by our doctrine. But can the news of reconciliation to the Lord God of hosts terrify, or the offer of remission of sins torment? How welcome should be the approach, or, to speak in the elegant language of a prophet, 'how beautiful the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!' And can there be better tidings, more reviving, or more transporting, than those of the everlasting gospel? which saith unto Zion, 'Thy iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged: thy God is reconciled; and, instead of abhorring thee as a rebel, is willing to embrace thee as a child. When our armies have been in the field, and some very important, some decisive engagement drawing near; with what eagerness have you expected, and with what delight have you received, the account of complete victory gained? And is not our report equally worthy of all acceptance, which declares Satan vanquished, and sin destroyed: declares death abolished, hell deprived of its prey, and all the rich advantages of peace with heaven restored? When Peter lay bound in prison, was the angel an unwelcome minister, who struck away his fetters, opened the gates of iron, and transmitted him, free and unmolested, to the cordial salutations of his friends? As you are all, by nature, in bondage to sin, our business is, to take you by the hand, and lead you out of this ignominious slavery, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; while the Spirit of the Most High breaks off your shackles, and makes you free indeed. What manna can be more refreshing than such a message? what balm more healing than such a service? If, at any time, we arm our words with terror, and denounce the vengeance of God on every soul of man that doth evil; this is only to awaken you from that gay insensibility, which would lull you into irretrievable ruin. It is like the gathering clouds, and the distant bursts of thunder, which might warn Noah to retire into the ark, before that infinitely more tremendous deluge came, which was to sweep the careless world away. Whether, therefore, we display the allurements of divine love, it is for your delight; or whether we bend the bow of divine indignation, it is for your benefit; to win you to happiness, or drive you from misery. So that in every respect, and by all our ministrations, we are to be 'helpers of your faith, and furtherers of your joy.'



And let not any one suspect, that a message of such free and rich grace, has a tendency to soothe men into supineness, or serve the cause of licentiousness. It is, 'of all other expedients, most effectually calculated to reconcile us to God, in another sense of the word ; to subdue our enmity, and captivate our perverse affections ; to impress our alienated hearts with adoring gratitude, and engage our refractory wills to dutiful obedience. For, can we be cold and indifferent to such immense benignity ; can we affront and grieve such unspeakably tender kindness ? What effect had David's clemency in sparing Saul's life, when it was in the power of his hand to have dispatched that implacable enemy ? It overcame, for a while, even malice itself ; it fetched tears of sorrow from the persecutor's eyes, and expressions of the most endeared affections from his lips, 1 Sam. xxiv. 6. And when God, the God to whom vengeance belongeth, not only spares us guilty wretches, but punishes his immaculate Son in our stead ; when he bids the sword of justice pass by our devoted heads, and sheathe itself in the heart of his beloved Son ; can we resist such heavenly goodness ? can we spurn such bowels of mercy ? Must not love, so divine and infinite, melt even the most obdurate heart ; make us fling down, with abhorrence, the weapon of rebellion, and constrain us, sweetly constrain us to obedience ?\*

Let me now, conformably to my sacred commission, beseech you all to be reconciled. Especially let me beseech the humble penitent, and the haughty, self righteous moralist.—Ye humble penitents, that are convinced of sin, and mourn for sin, be of good comfort. God has abounded in the riches of his grace towards you, and has given you a ransom to rely on, of higher dignity than all heavens, of more value than all worlds. The men of Tyre made Blastus, the king's chamberlain, their friend, Acts xii. 20 ; the God of glory has constituted his dear Son, your atoning sacrifice, your prevailing advocate. The men of Tyre desired conditions of peace ; the Lord Jesus hath both obtained and ful-

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\* Mr. Hervey has added, by way of a note, the following words, in the copy which he transcribed, and from which this is printed. " When I preached this sermon, I recapitulated, in this place, (as you, or any reader may do if he pleases) the preceding heads ; but I thought it unnecessary to transcribe such a recapitulation."

filled the conditions of your peace. Could there be a more glorious person chosen to act as your reconciler, than the Prince of heaven, and heir of all things? could there be a more effectual method of reconciliation, than his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross? Fly then to this all-sufficient Redeemer. Rely on his most meritorious and satisfactory sufferings. Be your sins ever so numerous, ever so enormous, these need be no bar to your acceptance. For God has received an atonement; an infinite atonement God has received. So that he can admit you to his favour, unworthy as you are, without the least blemish to his avenging justice. He can, he will admit you as freely, as if you had never done amiss. Trust, therefore, in your reconciling Saviour. Place a cheerful confidence in his propitiating merits. Only let the grace of God, which has appeared with such transcendent loveliness in the bleeding Jesus, let this grace teach you, with a prevailing efficacy, 'to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.'

As to those of a contrary character, who are righteous in their own eyes, what shall I say? Shall I decry the exercise of morality, or disparage the duties of holiness? God forbid. The gospel is a doctrine according to godliness, and true holiness is the health, is the happiness of the soul. These duties, issuing from faith, and recommended by the intercession of Christ, are acceptable to the divine Majesty. But these are not your Saviour. God has not reconciled the world to himself by their own pious practices, but by his Son Jesus Christ. Can your charitable deeds expiate your innumerable offences? As soon may a single drop of pure water correct and sweeten the unfathomable brine of the ocean. Can your defective performances satisfy the demands of a perfect law, or your wondering devotions screen you from the displeasure of an injured God? As well may your uplifted hand eclipse the sun, or intercept the lightning when it darts through the bursting cloud. There is no other name given under heaven, whereby you may be reconciled to God, and saved from wrath, but only the name, only the name, remember, of Jesus Christ. Here fix your hopes, and you shall never be disappointed. Fix them on any other object, and everlasting confusion will ensue. We beseech you therefore, in God's stead, we beseech you for your own soul's sake, re-

ject not this abundant mercy, neglect not this great salvation.

Now unto Him who has reconciled us to himself, and washed us from our sins in his Son's blood, be glory and thanksgiving, love and obedience, henceforth and for ever.



*A DEFENCE, by R. Y. of the foregoing Sermon, from the groundless Objections raised against it by some inconsiderate readers.*

IT is scarcely credible, that any one should assert, that Mr. Hervey's posthumous sermon on the *Ministry of Reconciliation*, is contradictory to the dialogues in *Theron and Aspasio*, and affirm, that it has done injury to the work. But such an assertion is easily refuted.—This complaint is either lodged by the friends or foes of the deceased: If by his friends, then I suppose it is because the doctrine of imputed righteousness, which make so great a figure in those dialogues, is not mentioned, in the sermon. These people would do well to consider, that if it is not mentioned, it is strongly implied; and what is strongly implied in this place, cannot be contradictory to what is expressed in others. In that sermon, do we not read in the strongest terms, 'That our iniquities are imputed to Christ, by the Father's admitting him to stand in our stead, and exacting from him the punishment which we had incurred?' Do we not here find 'God reconciling us to himself, not only by the humiliation, but by the sufferings of the Prince of heaven? and not by some slighter sufferings, but by his sufferings unto death; and not by his undergoing a common death, but the most ignominious and tormenting of all deaths, the death upon the cross?'

And, as we find the imputation of our sins so plainly asserted here, so we find in the Dialogues, that 'this part of our Lord's meritorious humiliation is, by a very usual figure, put for the whole. The death of Christ includes, not only his sufferings, but his obedience. The shedding of his pre-

cious blood, was at once the grand instance of his sufferings, and the finishing act of his obedience. In this view it is considered, and thus it is interpreted by his own ambassador, who, speaking of his divine Master, says, *He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* When the scripture ascribes our justification to the death of Christ, we are not to think that it would set aside, but imply his obedience? Now, if we are not to think this of the scripture, in Mr. Hervey's opinion, how then can we think it of him? And, without thinking it, where lies the inconsistency between the sermon and the dialogues?

But I rather imagine, that the charge is brought by Mr. Hervey's enemies. Some of these people, to avoid being thought Socinians, seem willing to allow the satisfaction of Christ, while they declare against the doctrine of justification by the imputation of his righteousness; and such are extremely willing to interpret Mr. Hervey's silence into a consent to their own pernicious sentiments: Theron and Aspasio is a dead weight upon them; they have not, nor can they answer it; willingly, therefore, would they come off, by saying the author had contradicted himself. But false is their pretence, and as false is their profession. That they allow the satisfaction of Christ for imputation, is as reasonable, and as justifiable, in the one case as in the other; they both stand upon one and the same footing, so he that throws down one, throws down both; whoever rejects the doctrine of our Saviour's righteousness being imputed unto man, rejects, by so doing, the doctrine of man's sins being imputed to our Saviour, and all the consequences of it; or, in other words, he who rejects the doctrine of free justification, rejects, by so doing, the doctrine of Christ.

As the main design in writing Theron and Aspasio, was to prove the fundamental doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ; and as it appears that the sermon does not contradict it in this most important article; I suppose it will be allowed, that the charge of contradiction, as to what is most material, is entirely got over. But, perhaps, in a matter of less consequence, it may still be objected, that Mr. Hervey, in the Dialogues, appears plainly to be Calvinistic, in the doctrine of *particular* redemption; but in the sermon, he says expressly, that *Christ's death is a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole*

*world.* The church of England says this, as well as Mr. Hervey, in the office for the communion; and yet no unprejudiced person will question, but she is perfectly Calvinistical in her articles and homilies.

The truth is, there is no Calvinist but will allow, that the satisfaction of Christ is full, perfect, and sufficient for all; but then they distinguish between the sufficiency and efficiency of his sacrifice. With regard to the value of the oblation, it is sufficient for the redemption of every man; with regard to its efficacy, as every man is benefited by the death of Christ, so Christ died for him: but these benefits are not of one kind. Some are common to every man: all the earthly blessings which unbelievers enjoy, are the fruits of Christ's death; so far as they are benefited by him, so far he died for them; other benefits belong to the members of the visible church, and are common to all those who live under the gospel: many graces such may receive from Christ, which, through their own fault, are not saving; and, so far as they are benefited by Christ, so far Christ died for them; other benefits still, according to the will of God, and the intention of the Mediator, are peculiar to those which he himself says are given unto him by the Father; his sheep, his elect, such as a true faith, regeneration, sanctification, adoption, &c. In this sense, say those Christians called Calvinists, Christ died for his people only, to bring them effectually to grace and to glory. This system only is consistent with Mr. Hervey's notion of free grace.

The Arminian scheme is, That Christ died with a purpose to make the salvation of every man in the world possible, without any manner of difference, whether they are believers or unbelievers: that he died, not to bring any man actually to salvation, and make him a partaker of righteousness and life, but to purchase a possibility of salvation and reconciliation, so far as that God might, consistent with his justice, receive men into favour, upon condition of faith and repentance. This faith and repentance, say they, Christ merited not; for if he had, then God had been bound to give them unto every man, and so every man must have been saved. Thus, you see, according to these gentlemen, Christ died equally for all the world; and the reason why some are saved, lies wholly within themselves, in attaining to that faith and repentance, by the good use

of their natural powers, which Christ did not purchase for them. This is the meaning of every Arminian,\* let him

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\* That the reader may still more clearly apprehend the doctrine of Mr. Hervey, who was a Calvinist,—and the difference between him and the Arminians, the following note is subjoined.

“The Arminians are supposed by some (who are not sufficiently acquainted with their tenets) to maintain that we are to do something for ourselves, and Christ to do the rest, or, in other words, that we have partly a righteousness of our own, and that Jesus Christ is to make up the deficiencies of that righteousness. This, however, is not the common divinity of the Arminians. They have no such notion of a patch-work justification, or that we are saved partly by the imputation of Christ’s merits to make up the deficiencies of our own. But the principles of their scheme are briefly these. That Christ is the sole and only author of our salvation, not by imputing his righteousness to us, but by purchasing such favourable terms of reconciliation for us, and by restoring to us such abilities to fulfil them, by means of which we can only become capable of being justified in the sight of God. Therefore we say, that those in this life, who have used well the grace that is given them, and conformed to the terms of the gospel, “God doth justify.” That is, were he to call them to the bar of judgment and try them, he would acquit, or pronounce them not guilty. Because Christ, by his meritorious death and sufferings, having purchased for them the law of repentance, as the law by which they are to be judged and tried; and they having through grace fulfilled the law, i. e. become true penitents, God therefore for the above merits of Christ, admits of their qualifications, forgives them their offences, and rewards them as if they had never offended. Here then is no splitting of the imputation, no co-partnership with Christ: but Christ’s righteousness is represented, as the sole procuring cause, of our salvation, and ours as only the applying cause, by performing the requisite conditions: i. e. they both tend to different ends; one to procure terms of justification, and the other to perform them. So that in short, according to this scheme of the Arminians, our justification, is not made up partly of Christ’s righteousness, and partly of our own; for his righteousness is not partly imputed, but not at all imputed, in the Calvinistical sense of imputation. In order to make this difference of opinion still clearer, it must be observed, that the Calvinists (being accustomed to their ideas of imputative righteousness) imagine, that when the Arminians affirm the necessity of inherent righteousness, in order to justification, that they mean a borrowing of Christ’s imputative righteousness, to make up the deficiencies of our own. Where-

express himself however he will. And how far this is consistent with Mr. Hervey's exhortation to the self-righteous moralist, in the close of this sermon, I believe I need not tell you. Indeed, Mr. Hervey engages not here in the controversy at all; but (going upon what both sides are agreed in, viz. the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice to save all that will believe) he invites all his hearers to fly unto him for salvation. Now, if he never enters into the merits of the cause, how can he be guilty of inconsistency?

Upon the whole, then, this is a most excellent sermon. As the dialogues in Theron and Aspasio were, so is this, the true offspring\* of him who now rests from his labours, and his works do follow him; the offspring of him who always sought to exalt the Saviour, to humble the sinner, and promote holiness.

as, the Arminians, indeed, suppose, that Christ did not, in any degree, fulfil the terms of justification in our stead; but, on the contrary, having purchased them for us, and procured us sufficient powers and abilities of performing them, he left us to cooperate with those powers, and so to fulfil them ourselves." This is a fair, candid, and consistent state of the Arminian doctrine. No one can say it is misrepresented; for it is here given in the very words of an eminent divine, and dignitary of the church of England, who is himself an Arminian. How much superior the Calvinistic (which was Mr. Hervey's) doctrine is, to humble the sinner, to exalt the Saviour, and to promote holiness, let every reader judge.

\* The sermon itself, in Mr. Hervey's own writing, is now in the hands of the Rev. Mr. Robert Knight, the present Rector of Weston-Favel, who married Mr. Hervey's youngest sister.

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**THE CROSS OF CHRIST**

**THE CHRISTIAN'S GLORY:**

**A SERMON,**

**PREACHED AT THE**

**VISITATION OF THE REV. JOHN BROWN, D. D.**

**ARCHDEACON OF NORTHAMPTON,**

**Held at All-Saints Church in Northampton, on the 10th of  
May, 1753.**

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## SERMON IV.



GAL. vi. 14.

*God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

THE cross of Christ was the favourite topic of St. Paul's contemplation: the cross of Christ was the chosen subject of his sermons, and the grand theme of his writings. At all times, and in every capacity, he professed, he avowed, he gloried in the cross of Christ. Nay, what is very remarkable, he gloried in nothing else; and, what is still more observable, he abhorred the thought of glorying in any thing else. He speaks of such a practice in the language of detestation and dread, accounting it a high degree both of folly and of wickedness: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

It may therefore be an employ worthy of our present attention, to inquire into the nature, the reasonableness, and the wisdom of this resolution. All which, I hope, will appear, if we consider,

- I. In what the apostle would not glory.
- II. In what he did glory.
- III. What reason he had to glory in the cross of Christ.

These points being briefly dispatched, I shall beg leave to add a word of application, suggested by the tenor of the discourse, and adapted to the circumstances of my several hearers. And may that adorable Jesus, who has exchanged his cross for an heavenly crown, accompany all with his divine blessings!

Let us then inquire,

- I. In what the apostle did not glory. Not in the greatness of his learning, as a scholar. He was brought up the feet of Gamaliel; educated by the most famous tutor of the age. Nor was his genius, or his industry, inferior to

the other advantages of his education. Yet all these advantages, with their correspondent acquisitions, he accounted no better than pompous ignorance, or refined folly.

Not in the strictness of his life, as a Jew. In this respect he profited above his equals; "was taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers," Acts xxii. 3. "After the strictest sect of their religion he lived a Pharisee," Acts xxvi. 5. Zealous, exceedingly zealous, of the whole ceremonial law, and of all the traditional constitutions. Which accomplishments must finish his character among his countrymen; must open his way to some of the first honours of the nation, and give him a name among those worthies, who were reputed "the excellent of the earth." But what others counted gain, this he counted loss for Christ.

Not in the eminency of his gifts, nor in the extent of his usefulness, as a christian minister. He had been caught up into the third heaven; had heard the words of God, and seen the vision of the Almighty; had wrought all manner of wonders, and signs, and mighty deeds. What was still more valuable, he had planted churches, and converted souls. His labours were gone out into all lands, and his words into the ends of the earth. Yet all these acquisitions, before the infinite God, were defective; all these performances, in point of justification, were insufficient. Therefore, in none of these he gloried. Which reminds me of the second inquiry.

II. In what the apostle did glory. He gloried in a cross. Strange! What so scandalous as a cross? On a cross rebellious slaves were executed. The cross was execrable among men, and accursed even by God, Gal. iii. 13. Yet the apostle glories in the cross. Crucifixion not being used among us, the expression does not sound so harsh, neither is the idea so horrid. But, to the ear of a Galatian, it conveyed much the same meaning, as if the apostle had gloried in a halter, gloried in the gallows, gloried in a gibbet.\*

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\* Some persons, I am informed, were disgusted at these words, halter, gallows, gibbet; they are so horribly contemptible! To whom I would reply, that the cross, in point of ignominy and torment, included all this, and more. Unless the English reader forms to himself some such image, he will never be able to apprehend the scandalous nature, and shocking circumstances of his divine Master's death.

"Stupid creature," perhaps some may reply, "to undervalue the most substantial endowments, and glory in infamy itself!" But stop a moment, and hear the apostle farther. He glories in the cross of Christ; that illustrious person, who was anointed to be the all-instructing Prophet, the all-atoning Priest, and the all-conquering King of the church. In the cross of Christ Jesus; who, by the discharge of all those important offices, should save his people from the dominion of sin, and from the damnation of hell. In the cross of Christ Jesus our Lord; and not ours only, but Lord of all; who doth according to his will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, Dan. iv. 35. "who hath on his vesture, and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords," Rev. xix. 16.

And is it possible for any human heart to contemplate the cross of so divine a being, and not to glory? Is it possible to say, Angels, he rules over you; but he died, he died on a cross for me; and not exult in such transporting beneficence? This will be more evident, if we examine,

III. What reason the apostle had to glory in the cross of Christ. The cross, though in itself an ignominious tree; yet being the cross of Christ, is infinitely ennobled. It becomes the tree of life; it bears the divinest fruit; its clusters are all spiritual and heavenly blessings. Two or three of those clusters you will permit me to select; and may the God of all mercy make them better than a feast to every humble soul!

One blessing is the pardon of sin: the pardon of all sin, original and actual; sin that is remembered, and sin that is forgotten; sin, however circumstanced, or however aggra-

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The words I must confess, were diversified, and the sentiment was reiterated, on purpose to affect the mind with this astonishing truth. Neither can I prevail upon myself to expunge the expressions; unless I would substitute others of a more ignominious and execrable import. Only I would beg of the serious reader, to spend a moment in the following reflection: "Is it so, that a polite and delicate ear can hardly endure so much as the sound of the words? How amazing then was the condescension! how charming and adorable the goodness of God's illustrious Son to bear all that is signified by these intolerably-vile terms! bear it willingly, bear it cheerfully, for us men, and our salvation!"

vated. The pardon of all was purchased by the death of Christ; completely purchased: so that, against the true believer, sin shall never rise up in judgment, "shall not so much as be mentioned unto him," Ezek. xviii. 22. shall be done away, as though it had never been. For thus saith the ambassador of the Prince of Peace, *Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things*, Acts xiii. 38, 39. Oh, my soul! my guilty soul! what are all the kingdoms of the world, and the glories of them, compared with this ineffable blessing! Yet this is but one among a multitude.

Another benefit, accruing from the cross of Christ, is *reconciliation with God*. *When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son*, Rom. v. 10. Not pardoned only, but accepted; from a state of enmity, restored to a state of favour; even that "favour which is better than life," Psalm lxiii. 3. A privilege of such superlative excellency, that it was celebrated in the hymns of angels. When the heavenly host uttered a song, this was the subject of their harmonious joy; "Glory be to God in the highest; and on earth, peace, good-will towards men," Luke ii. 14. "By the birth of this wonderful child, and the death he shall sustain, peace is made between heaven and earth; and not peace only, but a divine friendship\* commences. God regards the poor apostate race of men, not only without indignation, but with complacency and delight. He rejoices over them to do them good." Deut. xxviii. 63.

Another benefit is holiness; or, if you please, the true,

\* There seems to be a beautiful gradation in this angelic hymn. Good-will is more expressive and denotes a richer blessing, than peace. The original ΕΥΘΟΚΙΑ is a word of the most amiable and noble meaning. It signifies a very high esteem, and a very tender benevolence. By a word of the same import, the Almighty Father expresses his infinite satisfaction in the person and undertaking of his beloved Son. Matt. iii. 17.

Would my reader have the liveliest paraphrase on this passage, or see the actings of this divine complacency described with inimitable delicacy, let him attend to the prophet Zephaniah; "The Lord thy God, in the midst of thee is mighty. He will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing," chap. iij. 17.

the Christian morality. Let none think, the believer in Jesus disparages true morality. True morality is the image of the blessed God; it is most charmingly delineated throughout the whole Bible; it is the beginning of heaven in the human soul; and its proper origin is from the cross of our divine Master. For, through the merits of his death, sinners are made partakers of the Holy Spirit; who writes upon their hearts, and makes legible in their conversation, what was anciently written upon the mitre of the high priest, Holiness to the Lord. And oh! what a motive is the cross of Christ to the exercise of every virtue! *He died; my Lord, my Judge, my King, died; to redeem me from all iniquity, and make me zealous of good works.* How powerfully, far beyond any naked instructions, or abstract reasonings, do such considerations invite us,—urge us,—constrain us, 2 Cor. v. 14. to renounce all ungodliness, and adorn the gospel of God our Saviour!\*

Another blessing is victory over death. This also is the fruit of that once detested, but now ever beloved tree. For thus it is written, *That through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage,* Heb. ii. 14, 15. The devil is said to have the power of death; because by tempting too successfully our first parents, he brought death into the world; because, by tempting their posterity to sin, and too often prevailing, he arrays death in horror; he arms death with its sting. But Christ, by expiating our guilt, has disarmed this last enemy; has taken away its sting; and made it not loss, but gain to die. Philip. i. 21. The gay, and the healthy, know not how to form any estimate of this deliverance: nor can any words of mine describe it with proper energy. Go to dying beds; there you will learn its true worth. Ask some agonizing friend; he, and he alone, can tell you, what a blessing it is, to have the king of terrors covered into a messenger of peace.

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\* Religion! thou the soul of happiness:  
 And, groaning Calvary, of thee! There shine  
 The noblest truths: there strongest motives sting!  
 There sacred violence assaults the soul;  
 There nothing but compulsion is forlorn.

NIGHT-THOUGHTS. No. IV.

One blessing more I would mention, and earnestly wish it, in due time, to all my hearers; an entrance into heaven. This too is the produce of our Redeemer's cross. St. John saw a bright assembly of happy beings, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, rejoicing before the throne of God. *These, said one of the venerable elders, are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* Therefore, *are they before the throne*, Rev. vii. 14. 15. *They came out of great tribulation*: they suffered, it is probable, in the service of Christ: perhaps they laid down their lives for his sake. But this was not their passport into the regions of bliss. *They washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb*: they had applied to their own souls the merits and atonement of the crucified Jesus. By this means, they were presented without spot, and blameless; on this account they were admitted to "see the King of heaven in his beauty;" Isa. xxxiii. 17. and to be ever, ever with the Lord.

Since then the cross of Christ was demonstrative of such stupendous love; since it is productive of benefits innumerable, invaluable, and eternal; was there not a cause for the apostle to glory on this behalf? Nay, might not the very stones have cried out, to reproach him with insensibility and ingratitude, if he had neglected to glory in the cross of Christ? And since this love was shewed, these benefits were procured, not for him only, but for us, and for all generations; does not this afford me an opportunity of applying the doctrine to each particular hearer?

1. Let me address, or rather let me congratulate, my brethren in the ministry. Though you cannot control the laws of nature; though you cannot see into the secrets of futurity; you have the same cause of glorying with the very chiefest of the apostles; a cause of glorying, which that holy man of God esteemed far above all such miraculous abilities. You have the cross of Christ,

For your study, as men;

For your hope, as Christians;

For your preaching, as ministers.

For your study, as men. Here the reasoning faculties may exert themselves with everlasting improvement, and

everlasting delight. Here we contemplate the wonders, the unparalleled wonders of a God made man; dying as a pattern of patience, as a martyr for truth, as an all-perfect sacrifice for sin. Here the Lord Jehovah hath fully granted, what his servant Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 18. so earnestly requested; he hath made all his glory to pass before the astonished eyes of angels and of men. Here justice has set her most awful terrors in array; even while goodness appears with inexpressible loveliness, and the most attractive beauty. Here truth, more unshaken than a rock, takes her immovable stand; and mercy, tenderer than the mother's tear, yearns with bowels of everlasting pity. In a word, the cross of Christ is a conspicuous theatre, on which all the divine perfections unite, and harmonize, and shine forth with transcendent lustre.

As christians, we have in the cross of Christ, the richest provision for our own spiritual wants. This is a foundation of the sublimest hope, and a fountain of the most exuberant joy: this affords matter for the deepest humility, and yields fuel for the most flaming love. Faith in our crucified Jesus, is an ever-active principle of the most cheerful and exact obedience; is an ample and inexhaustible magazine, from which we may fetch arms to conquer, absolutely conquer, the allurements of the world, the solicitations of the flesh, and the temptations of the devil. By this a way is opened for us into the holy of holies: and what may we not venture to ask, what may we not expect to receive, who have the blood of the everlasting covenant to plead, in all our approaches to the throne of grace? Having therefore such an high-priest; having, in his cross, unsearchable riches; who shall make our glorying void? what shall hinder us from rejoicing, and saying, "Blessed be God for these opening beauties of spring! Blessed be God for the expected fruits of autumn! Blessed be God for ten thousand thousand gifts of his indulgent providence! but, above all, blessed be God for the cross of Christ?"

As ministers of the gospel, we are not left to set before our hearers a system of refined heathenism: or to entertain them with cold, spiritless lectures of virtue. No; we have the infinitely tender love, the immensely free grace, of the bleeding, dying Immanuel, to display—to improve—to enforce. And is there a topic in the whole compass of oratory, is there an argument amidst all the stores of reason, so ad-



mirably calculated to touch the finest movements of the soul? to strike all the inmost springs of action, with the most persuasive, the most commanding energy? Would we alarm the supine, or intimidate the presumptuous? we may call them to behold God's own Son weltering in blood, God's own Son transfixed with the arrows of justice: we may bid them consider, if judgment begins with the immaculate Mediator, where shall the irreclaimable sinner appear? how will he escape the stroke? how bear the weight of God's everlasting vengeance? Would we comfort the distressed? we may point them to an atonement, whose merits are infinite, and able to save to the very uttermost, Heb. vii. 25. We may lead them to a righteousness, whose efficacy is unbounded, and sufficient to justify the ungodly. And what balm can be so sovereign for a wounded conscience? Are we to support the weak, and animate the doubting? Here we may shew them promises, free promises,\* exceeding great and precious promises, ratified by the oath of Jehovah, and sealed by the blood of his Son. And what cordials can be so restorative to the drooping christian?

In short, the doctrine of the cross is suited to answer all the great ends of our ministry, and promote all the truly valuable interests of our people. By this the Holy Spirit delights to work: and this, *O Satan, shall be thy plague*; this, *O sin, shall be thy destruction*, Hos. xiii. 14. However, therefore, the cross might be to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; God forbid that we should glory in any thing else: Let this be the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and ending,† of all our public ministrations. Let us leave

\* To man the bleeding cross has promis'd all:  
The bleeding cross has sworn eternal grace:  
Who gave his life, what grace will he deny?

NIGHT-THOUGHTS, No. IV.

† The author who could write the spiritual and weighty lines which follow, must doubtless have had this conviction deep on his heart.

—Thou my all!  
My theme! my inspiration! and my crown!  
My strength in age! my rise in low estate!  
My soul's ambition, pleasure, wealth!—my world!  
My light in darkness! and my life in death!  
My boast through time! bliss through eternity!  
My sacrifice! my God!—What things are these!

NIGHT-THOUGHTS, No. IV.

a savour of this knowledge, which is far better than precious ointment, in every private company ! Let it appear, from all our conversation, that the affections of our heart, and the labours of our life, are devoted, wholly devoted, to our adored Redeemer's cross. Happy the people who are under the care of such ministers ! and blessed the ministers who walk according to this rule !

2. Let me exhort all true believers ; those who are vile in their own eyes, and to whom Christ alone is precious. Remember, brethren, what is written in the prophet : it is a description of your state ; it is a direction for your conduct. *In the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and in him shall they glory, Isa. xiv. 25.*

Let none say, that religion is a gloomy or uncomfortable state ; I call upon you this day to rejoice.\* Let none say religion is a mean or despicable thing ; I call upon you this day to glory ; and have the divine authority for both.† You will dishonour the blessed Jesus, you will disparage his surpassing excellency, if you do not confide in him, and make your boast of him. Christ is King of heaven, Christ is Judge of the world, Christ is God over all. And of such a Saviour shall we not glory ? Yes, verily ; and in all circumstances, and on every occasion.

Amidst your manifold infirmities, glory in Christ. For, though he was crucified in weakness, he hath all power in heaven and earth. And it is written before him, it is one of his immutable decrees, *sin shall not have dominion over you, Rom. vi. 14.* Amidst your various failings, glory in Christ. For his righteousness covers all your imperfections, his righteousness secures you from wrath and condemnation ; and, though deficient in yourselves, you are complete in him, *Col. ii. 10.* Under the pressure of tribulations, lift up your heads, and glory in the cross ; because the Captain of your salvation was made perfect through sufferings. If you suf-

\* 'Tis this makes Christian triumph a command ;  
'Tis this makes joy a duty to the wi e

NIGHT-THOUGHTS, No. IV.

† KAYCHAMAI, the word in our text, denotes the act of rejoicing, as well as of glorying. Thus it is translated, *Rom. v. 11.* And indeed this it always implies.—See *Psalm v. 11.* *Psalm cxlix. 5.* Sept. an.

fer with him, you shall also reign with him. And the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the happiness which Christ has purchased with his agonies, and will quickly bestow on his people. When death approaches, death that cuts off the spirit of princes, and is terrible among the kings of the earth; do you still glory in the cross. Adhering to this banner, you may boldly and triumphantly say, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?\** When that great, tremendous day shall come, which puts an end to time and terrestrial things; when that awful, that majestic voice is heard, which commands all the race of Adam to appear at the bar; then, my dear brethren in Christ, then also shall you glory in the cross. When others, in an agony of terror, call upon rocks to fall on them, and mountains to overwhelm them; this shall be your sedate appeal; rather, this shall be your heroic challenge: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, Rom. viii. 33, 34. Then shall you enter the harbour of eternal rest; not like a shipwrecked mariner cleaving to some broken plank, and hardly escaping the raging waves: but like some stately vessel, with all her sails expanded, and riding before a prosperous gale.†

3. Let me caution the self-righteous: those who more fre-

\* 1 Cor. xv. 55. This is evidently the language of a conqueror, addressed to some formidable, but vanquished enemy. We shall form no improper idea of this significant and beautiful passage, if we picture to ourselves the good apostle, in the attitude of those Hebrew captains, who set their feet on the necks of the five Canaanitish kings, Josh. x. 24. If we suppose him, in such a posture, to utter this animated exclamation, or rather this pious insult, over the two grand, but prostrate adversaries of mankind: "O death where is now thy sting," since Christ has expiated sin, by the sacrifice of himself? "O grave, where is now thy victory," since Christ is both risen himself, and has ascertained to his people a joyful resurrection?

† St. Peter's expression is perhaps too nervous, and too noble to admit of an adequate translation. The above comparison is, I think, a very pertinent illustration of the delicate sentiment, and the delightful doctrine. A ship wafted into the port, under the full influence of wind and tide, seems to afford the finest representation of a large, a rich, an abundant entrance; 2 Pet. i. 11.

quently think of their own piety than of Christ's obedience ; are more apt to cry out with the Pharisee, *I am no extortioner, no adulterer* ; than to confess with the publican, *God be merciful to me a sinner*. What shall I say to these persons ? Let me not be thought censorious, when my only aim is to be faithful. Beware, I beseech you, beware, lest you build for eternity, not on a rock, but on the sand. However you may appear in your own sight, before the adorable majesty of the everlasting God, before the consummate perfection of his holy law, you are less than nothing, you are worse than nothing ; you are ; indeed you are, deficiency and sin. Renounce, therefore, renounce all dependence on self. Trust no longer in a refuge of lies ; lest all your admired attainments, at the day of final retribution, be like straw, and hay, and stubble, in Nebuchadnezzar's burning fiery furnace. Imitate the blessed penman of my text.— Are you blameless in your external carriage ? so was he. Are you exemplary in many points ? so was he. Yet all this righteousness he *accounted but dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord*, Phil. iii. 8. Be this your pattern. Write emptiness upon your own duties, emptiness upon your own works ; and you shall be filled with all the fulness of God your Saviour. Every other cause of glorying will be like the morning cloud, or the early dew, which passeth away, Hos. vi. 4. : but this cause of glorying will *stand fast for evermore, as the moon, and as the faithful witness in heaven*, Psalm lxxxix. 37.

Can I conclude, without adding a word of admonition to the wicked ? those, I mean, who are enemies to the cross of Christ ; who mind earthly things, but neither hunger nor thirst after righteousness. My soul remembers the wormwood and the gall of such a state, and cannot but tenderly pity these unhappy people. Alas ! my friends, what have you to glory in ? The devil and his angels expect, ere long, to glory in your destruction. Those malignant fiends are eyeing you as their prey, and are impatient to begin your torment. Great, inexpressibly great, is your danger : the Lord Almighty open your eyes to discern it ! Nevertheless, your case is not desperate. You may yet be delivered, " as a bird out of the snare of the fowler." Look unto the crucified Jesus. Why does he hang on that bloody tree ? why

are his hands pierced with iron? why is his body racked with pain? why his heart torn with anguish? It is for you sinners, for you. That blood is poured out, to cleanse you from guilt; those wounds are sustained, to heal your consciences; that anguish is endured, to obtain rest for your souls. In that mangled body *dwells all the fulness of the godhead*, Col. ii. 9. Great, beyond imagination great, is the merit of those sufferings. Why then, O! why will you die? why will you perish for ever, who have an all-sufficient propitiation in the cross of Christ? Fly to this sanctuary: fly, before it be too late: fly, without a moment's delay.—'Tis an inviolable sanctuary. None ever perished, that fled by faith to the compassionate, the divinely compassionate Redeemer. His death shall be full satisfaction for your iniquities. A sense of his immensely rich goodness shall win your affections; shall incline (what all the threatenings of damnation could never effect) shall incline you to lothe your sins, and to love his service; shall smooth your path, and expedite your progress, to the regions of immortal honour and joy.

Having now with great plainness of speech, addressed my brethren in the ministry: having exhorted believers, cautioned the self-righteous, and warned the wicked: let me commend the whole to your serious recollection, and to God's gracious benediction. And, "O Lord most holy! O God most mighty! O holy and merciful Saviour! by thine agony and bloody sweat—by thy cross and passion"—let not the word now spoken be in vain in the Lord! Amen, and amen.

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THE  
**TIME OF DANGER,**

THE  
**MEANS OF SAFETY,**

AND THE  
**WAY OF HOLINESS :**

**BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF THREE SERMONS, PREACHED  
ON THE PUBLIC FAST-DAYS IN 1757.**

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## PREFACE.

**SHOULD** any one ask, "Why does this author publish his sermons, when the fast is gone and forgotten?" For this very reason he publishes, that the fast, though gone, may not be forgotten; that we may remember the sins we confessed, and the miseries we deprecated; remember the vows of God, which are still upon us; and the snares of death, which are still around us.

Should it be further asked, "Why does he obtrude himself on the public, when so many eminent writers have already made their appearance? Does he bring with him any distinguished excellency of composition, any superior force of argument, or uncommon delicacy of sentiment?" No such thing. He pretends to nothing refined or extraordinary; he affects neither brilliant thought, nor polished style: equally remote from nice criticism and profound learning, his discourses are studiously plain, and brought down to the level of the meanest capacity.

"What then is his motive?" This is the very truth. In several of the sermons published on this occasion, the one thing needful seems to be overlooked. Christ and his free grace, Christ and his great salvation, are either totally omitted, or but slightly touched. Where these are but slightly touched, the door of hope and the city of refuge are shewn, as it were, through a mist, dimly and indistinctly. We have no more than a transient glimpse of the desirable objects; and only so much light as is sufficient to bewilder, rather than direct. Where they are totally omitted, the door of hope is barred, and the city of refuge withdrawn from our view. In this case, being without Christ, we are without consolation; and may justly complain, with the mourning prophet, *the Comforter, that should relieve our souls, is far off.*

Through the following discourses, a constant regard is paid to the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; to his all-atoning blood, and his everlasting righteousness; which are the grand means, both of comforting our hearts, and sanctifying our nature. Indeed, the principal aim of the whole is, to display the unsearchable riches of Christ, the matchless efficacy of his death, and that perfect freeness with which all his invaluable benefits are bestowed. *To those who believe he is precious; and to those who are convinced*



of sin, these salutary truths will be their own best recommendation. Such readers will excuse a multitude of blemishes, provided they find Jesus who was crucified; Jesus, who is the desire of all nations; Jesus, than whom no other foundation can be laid, either for present holiness, or future happiness.

As these sermons were not preached to gratify a curious taste, neither are they published with any fond prospect of reforming a sinful nation. Sincerely as the author loves his country, and ardently as he desires the salvation of his countrymen, he is not so vainly sanguine in his expectations.— But this he will venture to assert, that, if ever a reformation is produced, it must, under the influences of the eternal Spirit, be produced by the doctrines of free grace, and justification through a Redeemer's righteousness. Till these doctrines are generally inculcated, the most eloquent harangues from the pulpit, or the most correct dissertations from the press, will be no better than a pointless arrow, and a broken bow.

This also he will venture to hope, that the discourses may here and there meet with some poor sinner, who is smitten with a sense of guilt, and alarmed with apprehensions of danger; who desires nothing so much as to find a resting place, where he may be free from the terrors of conscience, and safe in the day of trouble. This freedom and this safety are to be found only, are to be found infallibly, in the blessed Jesus and the blood of sprinkling. If such a reader, by the following pages, is conducted to this divine sanctuary, the writer is satisfied, is rewarded, enjoys the utmost of his wishes.

Then, instead of soliciting the voice of fame, or coveting the wreath of honour; instead of giving himself any concern about the officious critic; he will thankfully adore that almighty hand which *confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers*, Isa. xlv. 26. For, Oh! how insipid is the praise of men, compared with the exalted pleasure of glorifying God, and edifying an immortal soul? How harmless is defamation from a fellow-creature, when our great Creator smiles; and is pleased, by *weak things, and by things that are despised*, 1 Cor. i. 27, 28. to accomplish the purposes of his infinite grace and everlasting love.

## SERMON V.

### THE TIME OF DANGER.



HEB. XI. 28.

*Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born, should touch them.*

IF we consult the history to which these words refer, we shall find the Israelites in a state of great affliction. The Egyptians oppressed them ; very heavily laid the yoke upon them ; and made their *lives bitter with hard bondage*. The misery of his people God pities, and is resolved to redress. Accordingly, he sends Moses, in the quality of his ambassador, to demand their release. The king of Egypt most insolently replies, *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go ? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.* God, to chastise his insolence and obstinacy, inflicts a variety of plagues on him and his subjects : in contempt of all which Pharaoh hardens his heart, persists in his disobedience, and refuses to *let the people go.*—At last, says the Lord, *I will bring one plague more upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt*, Exod. xi. 1. ; which shall infallibly accomplish my purpose. Be their hearts hard as the nether millstone, this shall make them feel : be their resolution stubborn as an iron sinew, this shall make it bend. *About midnight I will go into the midst of Egypt, and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die*, Exod. xi. 4, 5.

But as the Israelites then dwelt in Egypt, how should they be safe amidst the general desolation ? Will it be said, the Israelites, being the people of God, were not exposed to this punishment ; had no reason to fear the infliction of this vengeance ? None, that remembers how all the world is become guilty before God, will affirm this ; none, that con-

siders how rebellious and idolatrous the Israelites were, can suppose this. And every one who has read Ezek. xx. 8.\* must allow that there was no difference in this respect. The one people were criminal as well as the other. All of them most righteously deserved the afflictive stroke. Grace, free and sovereign grace alone, must make the distinction.

Since this was the case, it may reasonably be asked, How shall the Israelites be safe?—The Lord himself directs Moses to a method, which should effectually secure all the families of Israel, while death entered into every habitation of the Egyptians. The method—its execution—and success—are all specified in the text. *By faith Moses kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.* Where we may observe,

I. A very dreadful danger; signified by *the destruction of the first-born.*

II. A method of security from this danger; effected by *keeping the passover, and the blood of sprinkling.*

III. The success of this method; denoted by *the destroyer not so much as touching them.*

The good Lord enable us to open and apply the words thus divided! Then we shall see their suitableness to the present occasion; and, I hope, feel their salutary influence on our souls.

I. A very dreadful danger; signified by *the destruction of the first-born.* The Lord had already put his hand to the sword. It was even now drawn from the scabbard, and had received a commission to go forth; to go forth that very night; to walk through all the land of Egypt; and to be bathed before the morning-light in the blood of the first-born, all the first-born, from the haughty king that sat on the throne, even to the slave that toiled at the mill, and the very sheep that yeaned in the field. Tremendous, as well as inevitable blow! O what an alarm will it create, and what affliction will it spread! make every heart sad, and every house a scene of mourning! *There shall be a great cry*

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\* "But they rebelled against me and would not hearken unto me: they did not, every man, cast away the abominations of his eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish mine anger against them, in the midst of the land of Egypt."

*throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more."* Exod. xi. 6.

And is not the present time a time of imminent danger? are not the judgments of the Almighty now abroad in the world? have not earthquakes shaken kingdoms, and rent the foundations of nature? have they not spread terror through our own and distant nations; laid wealthy towns and magnificent cities in ruin; and swallowed up or destroyed unknown multitudes of our fellow-creatures?

Is not the sword of slaughter drawn? has not war hung out her bloody flag? are not the flames kindled in Europe and America; on the land, and on the ocean? are they not gathering strength daily; spreading their rage continually; and threatening to over run all?

If we were evidently superior to our enemies in number and power, in vigilance and unanimity; yet the events of military undertakings are very uncertain. "The battle is not always to the strong." Eccles. ix. 11. Success and victory depend upon a hand higher far than the arm of flesh. "Without me," saith the Lord, "they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain." Isa. x. 4.

But are we not at war with one of the most potent, insidious, enterprising kingdoms in the world? Is there not great reason to suppose, that they will soon be joined by their neighbours the Spaniards? And if we have been worsted by one, how shall we contend with their united force?—Considering the situation and behaviour of the ungrateful Austrians, have we not cause to suspect the junction of a third Popish power against our religion and liberty? will not the court of Rome, with all her bigotted adherents, urge and instigate them to be active in this confederacy? will they not at this juncture,—the most favourable for the prosecution

\* I am informed, that when the Pope heard of the alliance lately established between the houses of Bourbon and Austria, Hungary and Bohemia, strengthened by the unexpected accession of Russia, he cried out, with an air of triumph, O admirabile commercium generis humani! "Admirable association and intercourse of mankind!" promising himself, I suppose, from this remarkable turn of affairs, such advantages to the cause and interests of Popery as exceeded even all his hopes.

of their purpose that any age has afforded, or their own sanguine zeal can desire;—will they not exert their utmost ability to crush the Protestant cause, and extirpate the Protestant name?\*

Should the enemy make a descent upon our island, what can we expect, but that our island be turned into a field of blood? They who have always been jealous of our interest and influence, have now added rage to their jealousy. Their resentment, like the burning fiery furnace, is heated seven times hotter than usual. We should certainly find them, as the scripture speaks, *a bitter and hasty nation*, Hab. i. 6.; and, without the spirit of prophecy, may venture to declare, *Wo be to England*, if God should now deliver it into the hands of the French.

Some, perhaps, may cry, “These fears are all chimerical. There is no ground for such discouraging suggestions. We don’t question but we shall be a match, and more than a match for our adversaries.” To this confident boasting let not my tongue, but let the course of events, let the disposals of Providence reply.—Have we, then, been superior in the day of trial? Alas! have we not lost Minorca? is not Oswego gone? a general slain, and his army cut in pieces? an admiral condemned to be shot to death, and his fleet defeated by an inferior number of the enemy’s ships? Are not ravages and depredations made almost continually upon our colonies in America; and horrible unheard of cruelties committed by the savages, on the persons of our fellow subjects? What have we reaped from the late campaign, but disappointment, loss, and shame?

Are not all these things apparently against us? will they not dispirit our men, and embolden our foes? will they not make our allies backward to come in with their succours, and render the powers that are unengaged afraid to declare themselves on our side?

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\* The French and Austrian ministers, it seems, have long been concerting measures to tear up the reformed religion by the roots, and not to leave a protestant upon the face of the earth. This execrable plot is discovered by the sagacity and activity of the King of Prussia; is averred and proved in the memorials lately published by his Majesty. If that hero and his army should fall before their enemies, what can hinder the execution of this horrid design? It may puzzle the acutest politician to assign any human means sufficient to stand as a barrier.

All these circumstances considered, the present time appears to be a time of uncommon danger: affairs, look wherever we will, wear a lowering aspect. "Our sky is black with clouds, and there is the sound of abundance of rain." 1 Kings xviii. 41. Judgments seem, more than seem, to be hovering all around us. How soon they may fall, God only knows!

"If God indeed were for us," we might trust, and not be afraid; we might look danger in the face, and boldly say, "Who shall be against us?" Rom. viii. 31. But is this the case? are we "a righteous nation, that keepeth the truth?" Isa. xxvi. 2.; is there sufficient reason to believe, that the holy One of Israel is our defence? Are we not, on the contrary, a sinful generation, a people laden with iniquity? is there not abundant reason to fear lest our God should say, in terrible indignation, "They are joined to idols, let them alone," Hos. iv. 17. In order to determine this point, let us examine our ways. Nothing can be more proper for a day of humiliation. Are not we, like the Egyptians, in a state of great danger? if we consider,

1. The sins of our nation.
2. The judgments of God denounced upon such sins.
3. The certain execution of those judgments, unless we fly to the appointed refuge.

1. Consider the sins of our nation. Here I shall mention some, and only some of those abominations, which, wherever they are found, cannot fail to provoke the eyes of God's glory, and render either a person or a people ripe for his vengeance.

The Christian Sabbath is an inestimable privilege to the church of Christ: it is a happy means of building us up in knowledge, of establishing us in faith, and preparing us for our everlasting rest.—Yet, is it not shamefully profaned in city and in country? What multitudes waste it in idleness, or squander it away in unedifying conversation; making it by far the most useless and contemptible day of the week? This they do, even though God strictly charges, saying, "Remember ye the Sabbath-day," not barely to abstain from your ordinary works, but "to keep it holy," Exod. xx. 8.; devoting it entirely to holy purposes, and religious exercises. This they do, even though God solemnly threat-

ens, saying, "If ye will not hearken unto me, to hallow the Sabbath-day, then will I kindle a fire in your gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched." Jer. xvii. 27.

Is not the name of God great, wonderful, and holy? ought it not to be used with the deepest veneration, and magnified above all things? But is it not audaciously dishonoured, and impiously blasphemed? dishonoured by customary and wanton, blasphemed by false and perfidious swearing? Has not the most high God declared, that he will in no wise hold such daring wretches guiltless? Yet how do these daring wretches swarm, like the locusts of society, in our polluted land! O England, how is thy air tainted with this breath of the infernal pit? how do thy streets resound, most horribly resound, with this language of hell! And will not the almighty Lord make thee know,—know by bitter experience, what that meaneth, which is spoken by his prophet? "Because of swearing the land mourneth," Jer. xxiii. 10; mourneth under afflicting visitations, and desolating judgments.

Is not the scripture a singular blessing? Yes; it is celebrated by the Psalmist as the sovereign blessing; that which crowns the other instances of Divine Goodness: "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and ordinances unto Israel." It is also celebrated as a most distinguishing blessing, from which multitudes are excluded; "He hath not dealt so with all nations, neither have the heathen knowledge of his laws," Psalm cxlvii. 19, 20. Should not then the scripture be precious to our souls; more precious than fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the droppings of the honey-comb? Should we not exercise ourselves in it day and night, Psalm i. 2; reading it by day, meditating on it by night? should we not make it the most delightful subject of our conversation? talk of it to our children, our domestics, our neighbours; when we lie down, and rise up; when we walk by the way, and sit in the house? Deut. vi. 7. But where are the persons who bear such a superlative esteem for the Bible? where is the company that delights to converse on those oracles of truth? where are the parents that diligently instruct their children, and feed them with the milk of the word? Diversion of every kind engages their attention, and the most trifling impertinence employs their tongue: but the

Lord's word is insipid, if not irksome. His word is treated, even by Protestants, as the manna was treated by the Israelites, who had the ingratitude and impudence to say, "Our soul loatheth this light bread," Numb. xxi. 5. A plague from the Lord of hosts was the consequence of their contemptuous treatment of the meat that perisheth. Of how much sorer punishment shall we be thought worthy, who contemn the food which endureth to everlasting life?

God hath reserved the unjust, saith the scripture, unto the day of judgment, to be punished; "chiefly those who walk after the flesh in the lusts of uncleanness," 2 Pet. ii. 10. Is not this iniquity rampant among the inhabitants of England? What lewd pictures are exposed to view! what filthy writings are suffered to see the light! fuel for lust, and incentives to debauchery. What is wit, in our days, but either some lascivious hint, or some licentious abuse of scripture? Are not the wanton entertainments of the stage, and other seminaries of lewdness, countenanced, supported, thronged? Can you acquit our cities and towns of drunkenness, revellings, and abominable excesses? Are not these, and all sorts of filthiness, found in our skirts? If so, hear the word of the Lord, and let it sink deep into every heart; "When I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlot's houses. They were as fed horses in the morning; every one neighed after his neighbour's wife. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord; and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" Jer. v. 7, 8, 9.

Is not religion, vital religion, very much upon the decline? Does it not, even among the serious, wear a sickly dying aspect? What multitudes profess to know God, but in works deny him? and, quite destitute of the power of godliness, content themselves with the mere form? Whereas, if any, in imitation of the first believers and preachers, are fervent in spirit, serving the Lord with alacrity and zeal; these persons, instead of being encouraged, are opposed; instead of being esteemed, are reproached. Of such persons even the malignant spirit could bear witness: "These are the servants of the most high God, who shew unto us the way of salvation," Acts xvi. 17. But among us, who call ourselves Christians, who pique ourselves upon being the purest church in Christendom; among us, such persons are deemed the vi-



sionaries of the age, the disturbers of society, and the men that would "turn the world upside down," Acts xvii. 6. The ministers who are most faithful, and the people who are most exemplary, are a derision and a bye word among their neighbours. Thus, in Israel, "they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets." But it was to the confusion of those scoffers, and the ruin of their country. "For the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary; and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age," 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, 17.

Are we not abandoned to a spirit of carnal confidence? When do we discover any reliance on the Almighty, or ascribe any of our success to his gracious interposition? It is not God, but our sword, that shall help us. Or, if any unseen power is acknowledged, it is not the Lord of hosts, but good fortune. One would almost imagine, that we were ashamed of a heavenly ally; and thought it a disgrace to own ourselves dependent on Omnipotence. Is not such a tamper a national infatuation, and the harbinger of national judgments? Zedekiah and the men of Judah forgot, or neglected the rock of their salvation, and made Pharaoh's army their confidence. But see what was the issue, or hear it from the mouth of him who fulfilleth the word of his servants: "Though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remained but wounded men among them, yet should they rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire." Jer. xxxvii. 10.

Should you say, this is a false charge: have we not this very day, publicly acknowledged, that "without the divine aid, the wisest counsels of frail men, and the multitude of an host, and all the instruments of war, are but weak and vain?" Have we not likewise expressly declared, that, "not confiding in the splendour of any thing that is great, or the stability of any thing that is strong here below, we do most humbly flee to the Lord for succour, and put our trust under the shadow of his wings?"\* I would to God we believed

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\* The form of prayer appointed for the fast.

that acknowledgment, and acted conformably to this declaration. We should then be very diligent to propagate religion among our soldiers and sailors: we should seek for such officers and commanders as are men fearing God; we should be as desirous to establish our troops in godliness, as to train them up in military discipline. But, is it thus with our army? is it thus with our navy? Visit a man of war: You will think yourself, not in one of the bulwarks of our island, but in a little hell. Observe the gentlemen of the sword.— Concerning the generality of them you will have reason to ask, are these Christians? are they not incarnate devils? \* And can we expect, that the infinitely pure God will go forth with such hosts? will he not rather become *their enemy, and fight against them?* Isa. lxiii. 10.

What ignorance prevails, especially among the lower ranks of people! The grossest ignorance of themselves, and of God our Saviour; the grossest ignorance of grace and salvation by a Redeemer's righteousness; the grossest ignorance of the very first principles of our holy religion. To do evil they are wise; but to do good, to believe in Jesus Christ, to love and glorify him who bought sinners with his blood; to do all, to do any of this, they have no knowledge. And is it a small matter to be thus children of darkness? is not the soul alienated from the life of God through ignorance? Eph. iv. 18. does not this displease the most high God, and provoke the holy One of Israel? Let his own word determine: "It is a people of no understanding; therefore, he that made them, will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them, will shew them no favour." Isa. xxvii. 1d. Are these impotent menaces made only to be contemned? then we may dismiss our fears. But, if they are the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever; then we have reason to cry, "What will become of England?"

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\* Does this sound harsh? or will any other part of the charge advanced in these discourses prove offensive? I am sorry there should be any occasion for such language. But I dare not retract it; I must not soften it; no, nor apologize for it. Thus much, however, I will very readily acknowledge, borrowing the words of Job; "If it be not so now," let experience "make me a liar, and" in this case "make my speech nothing worth," Job xxiv. 25. Desirous as I am of speaking truth, here I shall rejoice to be convicted of falsehood.

In a word, religion, both as to knowledge and practice, was never at so low an ebb, since the reformation took place; nor luxury, and immorality of every kind, at such an enormous height. — Where now are our rulers? are they zealous for God, and valiant for the truth; have they courage to stem the torrent, or to oppose the overflowings of ungodliness? Where are the grandees and magistrates? warm with generous indignation, do they snatch the spear; and, like the gallant Phineas, smite through the loins of iniquity? Alas! have not our great men *altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds?* Jer. v. 5. are they not, generally speaking, the ringleaders in transgression: as eminent for their contempt of God, as for the affluence of their circumstances? *Yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in the several trespasses.* Ezra ix. 2. But will that dignity, which they have abused; will that authority, which was lent them for better purposes; will those distinctions be a security to them, or their country, in the day of visitation? Hear what the righteous Lord says, who is higher than the highest, and able to execute all his decrees: “It is the sword of the great men that are slain, which entereth into their privy chambers. I have set the point of the sword against all their gates, that their hearts may faint, and their ruins be multiplied.” Ezek. xxi. 14, 15. Gates, be they ever so strongly fortified, or ever so faithfully guarded, are no fence against the point of Jehovah’s sword. And, if sin is suffered to enter, judgments will assuredly follow; judgments will follow even the most powerful and wealthy sinners; will pursue them like an eager bloodhound; will haunt them like a dismal ghost; will force a way into their palaces, nay, into their closest retirements; and never remit the chase, till fainting of heart ends in multiplied ruin; in the ruin of themselves, their families, their country.

Amidst all these crying evils, are we not presumptuously secure? Is there not a deplorable spirit of stupidity, which blinds our eyes, and renders us insensible? Scarce any one lays these miseries and dangers to heart. Who mourneth for the abominations of the land? who stirreth up himself to call upon God, if so be he may yet be entreated, and have mercy upon Zion? Are we not too much like the intoxicated sinners of the old world? *They ate, they drank; they bought, they sold; they planted, they builded.* They

gave themselves wholly up to sensual gratifications, and inferior cares; disregarding all the admonitions of Noah, and all the tokens of impending vengeance; *till the divine long-suffering ceased; the universal flood came, and, with irresistible violence, swept them all away, Luke xvii. 27.* Are we not in the condition of those supine, senseless people, spoken of by the prophet Zephaniah? "It shall come to pass in that day, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled upon their lees; that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil." And may we not justly expect their awful doom? "Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation. Their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them, in the day of the Lord's wrath: but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy,"\* Zeph. i. 12. &c.

As a farther aggravation of our crimes, have we not been incorrigible, amidst the most compulsive and the most winning motives to amendment? We have been visited with a contagious distemper among our cattle; which, we were apprehensive, might have introduced a plague among the human race. From this fear we have been delivered: but are we delivered from our evil works, and have we renounced all ungodliness? Rebellion broke out in our island; threatening to overthrow our protestant government, and deprive us of our reformed religion; threatening to deprive us of our liberty and its privileges, of our peace and its comforts. This storm also was soon blown over, and tranquillity restored to our land. But did we return every one to the Lord our God, who dealt so graciously with us? Earthquakes have shattered other kingdoms, have destroyed other cities; while they only admonished, not injured, us and ours. Has the goodness, this distinguishing goodness of God, led us to repentance? Were we not lately preserved

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\* Tremendous threat'ning! black as night it stands,  
Fierce as ten thousand fires, terrible as hell,  
And shakes a dreadful dart;—MILTON.

Even the dart of divine indignation over a guilty land. Yet who is awakened from a state of indolence? who is induced to watch and pray? who falls down at the feet of Jehovah, though they see his wrath kindling, and hear his terrors denounced?

from the most calamitous of all temporal losses? from losing the precious fruits of the earth. When the corn was ripe and ready for the sickle, who can forget the lowering sky, and the descending rains, which held back the husbandman's hand, and forbade the gathering? A few more days of such unseasonable weather had inevitably spoiled the produce of the ground, and destroyed the staff of life: But divine providence, at the very hour of need restrained the immoderate showers; bade the sun shine forth with peculiar brightness; and gave us the expected weeks of the harvest; thus rescuing us from famine, perhaps from pestilence, probably from mutiny, certainly from a train of evils, the particulars of which we cannot so much as imagine. But, is there not too much ground for the complaint, so pathetically urged, and so frequently repeated, by the prophet: *Though I have done all this for you, yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.* Amos iv. 6. 8—11.

Behold, now, the state of our nation. Our sins abound, and are grown up to heaven; sins of every, even the most horrid kind; sins among all ranks, from the highest to the lowest. In our sins we persist, though wooed, as it were, with the choicest mercies; though made to smart under various judgments; though threatened with far more afflictive visitations. And will the great, the mighty, the immortal God, always bear with such a people? will he receive the most horrible indignities, and still, still refrain himself? Surely he will awake, as one out of sleep! surely he will say, with a determined indignation, *Ah! I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies!* Isa. i. 24: Has he not shewed us evident tokens of his displeasure? is he not filling all his dispensations with marks of anger? And what, O what may be the end of these beginnings! how doleful, how destructive! unless sovereign grace interpose; bringing us, by faith in the Son of God, to unfeigned repentance and newness of life. Some notion we may form concerning the end of these things by unfolding the second point.

2. The judgments of God denounced on such sins. Where such iniquities prevail, we might naturally conclude, that the divine indignation is awakened, and the divine vengeance lingereth not. Is there a God? does he behold the children of men? is his nature infinitely pure and holy? Surely

then he cannot, he will not suffer the most outrageous violations of his sublime perfections to pass unpunished. Thus we might argue from the nature of God; this we might conjecture from the aspect of things. But we have a more sure word of prophecy; in this word, *the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*, Rom. i. 18. And see! in what flaming colours, by what frightful images this wrath is represented, these judgments are described.

They are likened to a lion rending his prey. The Lord hath been *unto Ephraim as a moth, and unto the house of Judah as a worm*. He hath dispensed milder corrections; afflicting them in measure, and withholding inferior comforts. His judgments were like a moth fretting the garment, or like a worm corroding the wood. In both which cases the consumption creeps, as it were; the wasting operates silently, and proceeds slowly. Thus the chastising Jehovah acted; giving the people space for recollection, and looking for repentance; but no repentance was produced: they continued irreclaimable, adding sin to sin. Then says the Lord, *I will be unto Ephraim as a lion*; which, all fierce and ravenous, rushes upon a lonely traveller. I will now come forth, as an incensed and irresistible adversary, and be *as a roaring-lion to the house of Judah, I, even I*, who am omnipotent, will tear, will destroy them with a mighty hand; and go away, satiated with slaughter and vengeance. I will take away both prince and people; I will take away their very place and nation; and none shall have power to effect, or courage to attempt a rescue, Hos. v. 12, 14. If God do thus to perverse and incorrigible Judah, why should we imagine that he will deal otherwise with perverse and incorrigible England?

They are described by a flood. "Now therefore behold the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks. And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over; he shall reach even to the neck, and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O IMMANUEL," Isa. viii. 7, 8. The king of Assyria and his army, determined to invade Judah, are signified by the waters of the river. These the Lord bringeth up; over-

ruling the purposes of ambitious princes, and making even their wicked designs subservient to his holy will. They are, like the waters of an immense flood, strong and many; their multitude innumerable, and their force unconquerable. For they shall come with all their glory; with their choicest troops, their ablest commanders, and their whole warlike artillery. He shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks; from all parts of his vast dominion, his troops shall be assembled; each province shall be drained of its bravest inhabitants: and all unite to render this expedition one of the most formidable that ever was undertaken. He shall pass through Judah; not only make inroads upon the frontiers, but push his way through the country, and penetrate the very heart of the kingdom. He shall overflow; spread terror and desolation on every side, and in every quarter. He shall go over villages, towns, cities, tribes; and bear down all before him. He shall reach even to the neck; his ravages shall extend even to the royal city, to the very gates of the metropolis; threatening destruction to the palace of the king, and the walls of the temple. *The stretching out of his wings*, the several detachments and parties of his victorious army, *shall fill the breadth* of the land with havoc, slaughter, and ruin; *even of thy land, O Immanuel.* Their relation to thee shall procure no favour, shall afford no protection. They have dishonoured that goodly name wherewith they were called. Therefore, that goodly name shall no longer stand in the breach, but pour itself with the torrent, and render it irresistible. Such an inundation of judgments, so terrible, so destructive, have not we deserved, may not we expect?

These judgments are compared to fire, and to the fiercest of fires, that which glows in a furnace. "The house of Israel is to me become dross, all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, because you are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather brass, and iron, and tin, and lead into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you, in mine anger and my fury; and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst

thereof," Ezek. xxii. 18,—21. Astonishing words! And they are doubled! they are redoubled! in order to alarm the insensible sinners: as the sword, by being brandished in many a dreadful circle, over the criminal's head, strikes terror into his apprehensions, before it does the work of vengeance on his heart. This generation is become brass, impudent in their wickedness. They have a whore's forehead; they cannot blush at their iniquities, but glory in their shame. They are tin, a degenerate race, children that are corrupters. They have forsaken the good old way, and swerved from the example of their fathers. With regard to hardness of heart, they are as iron; impenitent amidst all their guilt; obstinately tenacious of their vices; and not to be wrought upon by any addresses, not to be reclaimed by any expedients. In another respect, they are as lead; stupid and sottish; pliable to evil, but for any good purpose unmeet, to every good work reprobate. Because they are so exceedingly sinful, they shall be overtaken by God's anger, and surrounded by his fury; as metals cast into the midst of a furnace, are surrounded with the raging heat. The flame of his wrath shall be blown, as with a vehement wind, to its utmost height. In this furnace they shall be left, to this wrath they shall be abandoned; till, by a complication of afflictions, resembling the complication of their vices, they are overcome, subdued, and even melted; so melted, as to be either purged from the dross of their iniquities, or else blended together in one promiscuous ruin.

These judgments are described by the terrible representation of an end. An end of affluence and prosperity, of which we have gloried: an end of power and strength, in which we have trusted: an end of all national blessings, which we have not improved to God's honour, but turned into licentiousness. "Thus saith the Lord God, an end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land. The sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within: he that is in the field, shall die with the sword; and he that is in the city, pestilence and famine shall devour him," Ezek. vii. 2, 15. For this we have been ripening, by an unintermitted course of ungodliness and iniquity. And what can be expected by an impenitent people, hating to be reformed? What, but that judgments which have long been suspended, should at last be inflicted? "An end is come:—



it is come upon the land." It is a national visitation ; not confined to a part, but extending to the whole kingdom. Upon the four corners of the land. No place shall be exempt ; nothing secure : neither that which seems to be most secret, nor that which lies most remote. The vengeance is universal and inevitable. The executioners of this vengeance take their stand, within and without, at home and abroad ; so that to fly from one is only to fall into the hands of another. " He that is in the field shall find no way to escape, but shall die with the sword. He that is in the city shall obtain no protection, but famine and pestilence shall devour him." Every city shall be a charnel-house, and every field a field of blood. In city and country, desolation shall be made, death shall be multiplied, miseries shall abound.

These are some of the images by which the judgments and the wrath of God are represented in the scriptures. But, when all images are used, when fancy itself is exhausted, we may truly cry out with the psalmist, " Who knoweth the power of thine anger ?" Psal. xc. 11. If God whet his glittering sword, and his hand take hold on judgment, what can withstand it, or who can sustain it ? If his wrath be kindled, yea but a little, " it shall consume the earth with her increase ; it shall set on fire the foundations of the mountains, and burn to the lowest hell," Deut. xxxii. 22.

When " the lion has roared," says the prophet, " who will not fear ?" When the most high God has spoken ; spoken such terrible things in righteousness ; who will not lay them to heart ? O ! how deep is that sleep ; how deadly is that lethargy, which the voice of him who shakes the heavens does neither alarm nor awe !

Lest you should begin to say within yourselves, These threatenings are applicable only to the Jews ! I proceed to shew,

3. The certain execution of these or some such judgments on us, unless we fly to the appointed refuge.

God is an infinite speaker. In his word, he addresses himself to all generations of men, and to every individual of the human kind, where his holy revelation is made. It is therefore a certain rule, that when any people, enlightened by the glorious gospel, become, like Jerusalem, universally and incorrigibly corrupt ; they do, in Jerusalem's doom, read their own.

God is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever. He remembereth his threatenings, as well as his promises, to a thousand generations. Whatsoever, of either kind happened to our forefathers, "happened to them as ensamples to us: And whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for our learning." Observe, it was written, not for our amusement, but "for our learning and admonition;" 1 Cor. x. 11. that we may, as in a mirror, see our own picture; and, as from an oracle, learn our own destiny.

Is it not in a manner necessary, for the manifestation of God's inflexible justice, and his unalterable hatred of sin, that judgments should take their course; when iniquity rears its head, and refuses to be controlled? At such a juncture, does not every one of the divine attributes cry aloud, "O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth; thou God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself." And how can the justice of God, with regard to a wicked nation, be shewn, but by executing his vengeance upon them, in temporal calamities?

Consider, Sirs, the very essence of nations and political communities is temporal, purely temporal. They have no duration, no existence, but in this world. Hereafter, sinners will be judged and punished singly, and in a personal capacity only. How then shall he, who is ruler among the nations, maintain the dignity of his government over the kingdoms of the earth, but by inflicting national punishments, for national provocations; and for final impenitence, total destruction?

Besides, has not the Lord always acted in this manner?—Go back to the generations of old. Contemplate Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them; well watered every where, even as the garden of the Lord. Yet "this fruitful land is made barren, those populous cities are turned into ashes, for the wickedness of them that dwelt therein," Psalm cvii. 34. for their pride and idleness; for their voluptuous and wanton indulgences. "For which thing's sake the wrath of God" not only has come, in former ages, and in distant nations; but in every age cometh, and in every nation will come, "upon the children of disobedience," Col. iii. 6.

Pass over to Babylon, the grandest city that the sun ever beheld; which set calamity at defiance, saying in her heart, "I shall be a lady for ever," Isa. xlvii. 7. How is she fal

len? "swept with the besom of destruction," Isa. xiv. 23.—Not so much as a trace or footstep of her ancient glory left! And shall we be safe, when those very iniquities prevail among us, which razed the foundations of the Babylonian metropolis, and overthrew the magnificence of the Babylonian monarchy?

Take a view of Constantinople, once the most flourishing christian city in the world; where the first christian emperor filled the throne, and Chrysostom, that great christian orator, the pulpit. Then it was gloriously enlightened with the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Grace and truth dwelt in it; and the beauties of holiness adorned it. But now the candlestick is removed. It is now given up to infidelity and barbarity; is now full of darkness, and cruel habitations.

Come hither then, ye careless ones, and see what desolations sin has made in the earth. On account of sin Sodom was consumed, as in a moment; Babylon is totally destroyed; \* Constantinople has lost her glory. And will the Lord,

\* Will any, raised in their own conceit above the vulgar level, neglect these admonitions with a smile of disdain? Because they can assign the second causes of some such evils, as have been described, will they therefore quiet their spirits, amidst the alarming prospect of judgments from heaven?—They have heard (I make no doubt) that a midnight-debauch in Babylon, and a popular sedition in Jerusalem, left the gates of the former open to Cyrus, and the walls of the latter without defence to Vespasian. Perhaps they will suppose, that the overthrow of Sodom was occasioned by the shock of an earthquake; and that the fire from heaven is produced by sulphureous exhalations.

Be the premises ever so certain, is there any thing rational in the conclusion? Is not what we term the course of nature, the incessant administration of providence? are not many of its ordinary appearances very evident indications of a righteous and holy government, unalterably determined to punish sin? The poverty and ignominy of the lazy vagabond; the diseases of the debauchee, and the distresses of the spendthrift; are these less manifest signs of divine displeasure, because they are the immediate effects of an evil conduct? are they not as certainly the judicial, the penal, as they are the natural consequences of vice?

Let those therefore, who fear no judgments, compare causes and events. If selfishness, avarice, and venality; if indolence, luxury, and prodigality; if youth without principles, and tradesmen without honesty, and nobles without honour; if these are allowed to be either provoking immoralities or fatal symptoms;

the Lord God, who is unchangeably just and holy ; will he spare that in one people which he has so severely corrected in another ? “ He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he punish” us, when we do according to all their abominations ?

Have we a licence to sin with impunity ? Are our sins less heinous than those of other people ? Quite the reverse. Considering the many blessings which we enjoy as a nation ; the many deliverances we have enjoyed as a protestant nation ; the numberless advantages for religious knowledge and religious practice, which we both have enjoyed, and do enjoy above all the nations on earth ; considering these circumstances, our wickedness is highly aggravated ; it is become exceeding sinful : it overpasses the deeds, Jer. v. 28. of the most abandoned heathens. What then can prevent our ruin ?

“ Will you reply, ‘ We fast and humble ourselves before the Lord ?’ I ask, do we fast from sin ? Are our fast-days the beginning of a gospel reformation ? When we abstain from our daily bread, do we turn by faith to Jesus Christ ; that “ eating his flesh and drinking his blood, we may live through him ?” John vi. 57. live in holiness here, and live in glory hereafter, by applying his immaculate righteousness to our souls. If this is the case, we may entertain reviving hopes. The scripture speaks good words, and comfortable words, to such people ; be their condition ever so vile, or their guilt ever so great. But, alas ! are we not just the same persons the day after our fast as we were before ? as vain in our conversation, and as forgetful of God ? as fond of folly, and as negligent of divine grace ; as mad upon our idols, of carnal gratification, and worldly gain ? If so, our fasts are not an acceptable, no, nor a reasonable service ; but a mere mockery of the omniscient Majesty. May he not justly use that upbraiding expostulation, “ Will ye steal, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and walk after other gods,” serving not the Lord Jehovah, but divers lusts and pleasures ; and then with

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I fear the ruin of England cannot be far off. God Almighty grant we ministers may not accelerate the fall of our country, by neglecting to warn every man, and exhort every man, to the great evangelical duty of BELIEVING ; in order to promote national reformation, and escape national destruction.

hypocritical devotion, "stand before me in this house, which is called by my name!" Jer. vii. 9, 10.

Perhaps you are ready to allege, "Our alms will deliver us. The Son of Sirach exhorts us, to *shut up alms in our store-houses*; and assures us, that they shall fight for us against our enemies, better than a mighty shield and strong spear," Ecclus. xxix. 12, 13. And when was there a greater flow of beneficence observable in our own, or in any land? What sums have been given to the poor during this severe season of cold and scarcity! what hospitals of various sorts, and other charitable foundations, have been set on foot, and are supported through the kingdom!" Let us beware, brethren, lest those very things, which we look upon as our recommendation, should prove an offence. If our alms proceed not from faith in Jesus Christ, and an unfeigned zeal for the glory of God; if they are not accompanied with a spirit of love to his name, and with a course of obedience to his commands; hear what the Lord himself says concerning such works; see what a figure they make in his sight; and then judge, whether they are likely to be a security to our land. "I hate, I despise your feast-days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt-offerings, and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols." Hymns of praise, you see, are no other than a noise in the Lord's ear; the most costly services of religion are no better than a smoke in his nostrils; unless *judgment*, and the love of God, *run down as a river*; unless *righteousness*, and the faith of Christ, *abound as a mighty stream*, Amos v. 21, 22, 23, 24.

Do you still conceit yourselves, that, because there are many righteous persons remaining, they will stand in the gap; they will turn away the anger of the Lord, and be as the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen of Israel, to our endangered state? Hear what a charge the supreme Jehovah gave to his prophet, when the provocations of Israel were risen to a very high pitch: "Pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me; for I will not hear thee," Jer. vii. 16. Amazing and awful prohibition! Yet it is repeated again and

again, Jer. xi. 14. and xiv. 11 God's professing people may, by their excessive wickedness, become so insufferably loathsome, that were the greatest saints to make supplication in their behalf, they should not prevail. Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, men mighty in prayer, and zealous for the welfare of their neighbours; though these three men (who had each, by his single intercession, procured blessings from heaven) were uniting their petitions in the midst of this profligate generation; "as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate," Ezek. xiv. 16.

*The land shall be desolate.* Doleful sound! dismal decree! And has it not long ago been carried into execution? Was not Jerusalem ploughed as a field, and trodden down by the Gentiles? Are not the inhabitants rooted out of their dwellings, and scattered to all the ends of the earth; while their country is given up for a prey and for a possession to strangers, to infidels, to Turks?

Perhaps you will say, "The Jews crucified the Lord of glory, and rejected his gospel: therefore wrath came upon them to the uttermost." And are we innocent in this respect? Are not we verily, are not we greatly guilty concerning this thing? Is Christ received into the hearts of men, with deep adoration of his person, as Immanuel, God with us? Do they glory and delight themselves in his complete redemption, as finished by the great God and our Saviour? Do they confide in him alone for their justification, as an infinite Surety, and as Jehovah our righteousness? Do they depend on him alone for their sanctification, as Jesus, who saves his people from their sins, and sanctifies them through his blood? Do they count all things but dung, for the excellency of Christ, and his incomprehensible merit? Alas! is not his gospel, though the light of the world, disregarded and despised? Is not his name, though a name above every name, derided and blasphemed? Are not the influences of his eternal Spirit, though the very life of our souls, exploded and ridiculed? They who would exalt the Saviour, would make every sheaf bow down to the Redeemer's, representing him as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, in the salvation of sinners; those preachers, those writers, those believers, are treated as *the foolish people that dwell in Sikkem*, Eccclus. I. 26.

What the Jews did through ignorance, we, who call ourselves Christians, Englishmen, Protestants; we do knowingly, wilfully, and of malicious wickedness. And, if we thus trample upon the blood which alone can screen us; if we thus crucify afresh that Jesus who is our only hope; what can we look for but vengeance and fiery indignation? If we ourselves, with our own hands, demolish the only barrier, what can ensue, but an inundation of wrath, tribulation and anguish?

Consider these things, brethren. The Lord enable you to discern the signs of the times! Then you will acknowledge, that we have reason to be alarmed, to tremble, to be horribly afraid. Are not these iniquities the Achans, that will assuredly bring distress and trouble, if not destruction, upon our country? Are not these iniquities the Jonahs, that will awaken the divine displeasure, and deliver up our vessel to the tempest, if not to shipwreck?

Is any one disposed to say within himself, "Though others may be guilty of these flagrant iniquities, yet am not I?" Remember, my friend, the prophet Isaiah. He was, at least, as free from these flagrant iniquities as yourself. Yet he laments, and with painful apprehensions, the guilt of his countrymen, as well as his own, Isa. vi. 5. Remember king Josiah. Though a holy man and a just, he rent his clothes, and trembled at God's word denouncing vengeance against an irreligious people, 2 Kings xxii. 12, 13.

Consider also, whether you have not been an accessory, even where you was not the principal. Though you have not joined with the more profligate sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful; yet, have you not connived at their impiety? Do their affronts offered to the King of heaven rouse you into a becoming zeal to vindicate his injured honour? Or, *because iniquity has abounded*, is not your love, and *the love of many waxed cold*? Matth. xxiv. 12. Have not the disciples, even the disciples of Jesus, been cowards and traitors; while others have been professed enemies and rebels?

Besides, have not you, have not I, have not all contributed, in many, many instances, to swell the score of national provocations? Is not every sin a disobedience of God's most holy command? Is not every sin a defiance of his uncontrollable authority? Is not every sin an imitation of the

devil? Does it not create a kind of hell in the heart? Must it not therefore be inconceivably odious to the *holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth*? If so, how guilty are the very best among us? Is not this accursed thing, Josh. vi. 18. found in all our tents? Has not every one added to the load, that dreadful load, which is likely to sink the nation in ruin? Should not every one, therefore, smite upon his breast, and say, with the penitent, *What have I done?* And cry with the publican, *God be merciful to me a sinner!*

Will you still flatter yourself? "All these judgments may be delayed; they may not come in my time." I answer, if there be any truth in God's word; if any conjecture is to be made from the appearance of things; these judgments are near; they are at the door. They are like the axe in the executioner's hand, which has been poised, has received its last elevation, and is now falling on the criminal's neck. Yet, if these should be withheld for a season, will not sickness come upon you? are not many disasters lying in ambush to seize you? is not death sharpening his arrow; perhaps fitting it to the string; or even aiming at your life? Is not the day, the dreadful day approaching, when the shout of the archangel and the trump of God will be heard; when the dead shall arise, and heaven and earth flee away? will not the Lord, the Lord God omnipotent quickly come, "with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed; and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him?" Jude 14, 15.

Take then, my dear hearers, take the advice of the greatest of preachers, and the wisest of men: *The prudent foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself*, Prov. xxii. 3. Behold, the rains are descending, and the flood is coming; hasten, like Noah, hasten to your ark. See! the skies are kindling all around, and the shafts of vengeance are ready to fly. Make haste, Oh! make haste and delay not the time, to get into a hiding place. Let me sound in your ears the angel's admonition; and may the Lord of angels, may the Friend of sinners, convey it to your hearts! *Escape for your lives, lest ye be consumed*: lest the judgments of God, and the wrath of God, more to be feared than a deluge of waters, more to be feared than a torrent of flames, surround you sud-



denly,—seize you unavoidably,—and overwhelm you in ruin, temporal and eternal.

O that I might prevail! O that God would make you sensible of your peril! O that man, woman, and child, would ask, “How shall I fly from the wrath to come? where shall I be safe in the day of visitation? Shew me the ark! shew me the refuge!” I should then, with great satisfaction, proceed to answer this inquiry; and point out Christ to your souls, as the only hiding-place, as the sure hiding-place, where you may certainly find safety. But this must be the business, the pleasing business of my next discourse.

Let me beseech you, in the mean time, to lay these alarming truths to heart: let them impress your consciences; let them penetrate your souls. And O thou gracious, thou Almighty Lord God, do thou command them to sink deep into all our minds: that we may, with Ezra thy priest, sit down *ashamed and astonished*, Ezra ix. 3. under a sense of our manifold iniquities: That we may, with thy servant Job, *abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes*, Job xlii. 6. That we may, in the words, and with the compunction of thy prophet, every one cry out, “Wo is me, for I am undone: because I am a man of unclean lips; and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips,” Isa. vi. 5.

## SERMON VI.

### THE MEANS OF SAFETY.



HEB. xi. 28.

*Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.*

WE have been considering the danger of our nation, occasioned—by the sin of its inhabitants,—by the judgments of God, denounced against such sinners,—by the certain execution of his righteous threatenings, unless we fly to the appointed refuge. When such is the state of the nation, it is high time for the watchmen on her walls to lift up their voice; not indeed to spread vain terrors, but to give notice of the approaching evil; to warn the unwary; to call in the stragglers; and urge every one to retire into a place of safety.

Having, in the preceding discourse, attempted to discharge this office; I shall now, brethren, as in the presence of the all-seeing God ask,—Have we been attentive to these things? are we alarmed with a sense of our guilt and our peril? have we, with the prophet Isaiah, lamented our own, and the sins of our people? If so, we shall highly prize, we shall ardently desire, the same consolation, and the same relief, which the God of infinitely free goodness vouchsafed to his servant. “Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken from off the altar, and he laid it upon my mouth,” Isa. vi. 7: an action which represents the very thing signified in the text by the sprinkling of blood.

The altar typified, Christ; who is both the sacrifice that makes the atonement, and the altar that sanctifies the gift. The live-coal seems to betoken the word of grace, and the word of life; which brings the glad tidings of the gospel, and testifies of the bleeding Jesus. Laying this upon the

mouth, very significantly denotes the application of Christ and his great atonement. When this is done, under the influence of the Spirit, and by means of faith, then "iniquity is taken away, and sin purged;" taken away from the sight of God, and purged from the sinner's conscience. Guilt is abolished; fear ceases. But this leads us to our second particular,

II. The method of security from danger, effected by keeping the passover, and sprinkling the blood.

Moses was apprised of a dreadful vengeance to be inflicted on Egypt; the most dreadful that ever was known since the beginning of their nation; so dreadful that it would make every ear tingle, and every heart bleed. The destroying angel was to pass through all the territories of Pharaoh, and smite every first-born both of man and beast; so that, before the morning, there should be heaps of slain in the cities, the villages, the fields; not a house exempt, not a family spared, not a herd, nor a flock, free from the fatal calamity.

Moses feared the blow. He feared, as the text intimates, the least touch of the divine executioner's sword; knowing that it would crush him and his people, as a moth is crushed by the falling millstone. He is therefore, greatly solicitous to provide for their welfare. But what expedient shall he use? Shall he give them orders to close their windows, and bar their doors; to erect fortifications, and stand upon their defence? Alas! before an invisible hand, armed with the vengeance of heaven, all such precautions would have been as a spark before the whirlwind. Shall we assemble the warriors, or detach parties of soldiers to patrol the streets, and guard the houses? Vanity of vanities! the sword of the avenging angel would pierce through legions and legions of such guards, as lightning penetrates the yielding air. Shall the whole congregation bend their knees, with solemn confession of their sins, and sincere resolutions of future amendment? This, though absolutely necessary to be done, was extremely improper to be relied on. It would have been relying on a broken reed, and despising the ordinance of the Holy One.

The Lord himself appoints a method of preservation. Moses is directed to slay a lamb. Each family in Israel is to do the same. Having received the blood into a bason, they

are to sprinkle it, not on the threshold, but on the lintel and side-posts of their doors. This shall be a sign to the destroying angel. Looking upon this sign, he will pass over the house; will strike no blow, and execute no vengeance, wherever he sees the blood sprinkled. All this, in pursuance of the divine direction, being performed; with faith and tranquillity they wait the event.

You will say, perhaps, What is all this to us? I answer, It is a pattern for our imitation. Are we then to do the very same thing? We are to do what their practice typified. The shadow was theirs, the substance is ours. The blood of the lamb typified the blood of Christ, who is the Lamb of God, slain for the sins of the world. By the blood of Christ is frequently signified in scripture, the whole\* merit of his life and death, of his actions and sufferings, of his trials and graces: which satisfied God's justice, and magnified God's law; which made propitiation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. Well does the apostle call it precious blood. Unspeakably precious are its effects. It appeaseth the wrath of God revealed from heaven, and makes peace between the offended Creator, and the offending creature. Sprinkled on the conscience, it takes away all guilt, and secures from all vengeance. This therefore, my brethren, this blood is our security. This is to our souls, what the blood of the paschal lamb was to the Israelitish families. *The name of the Lord*, the grace and goodness of God, manifested in the death and obedience of Christ, *is a strong tower*: not only *the righteous person*, but the distressed

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\* "Being justified by his blood," Rom. v. 9. That is, being pardoned, being made righteous, and heirs of all spiritual blessings.—"Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood," Rev. vi. 9. That is, thou hast delivered us from all sin and all wrath; thou hast reconciled us to the Almighty Majesty, and introduced us into his blissful presence.—These blessings, ascribed to our Lord's blood, are confessedly the fruit, not barely of his sufferings, but of his whole humiliation, obedience and death. Therefore, in a very valuable dictionary of the most valuable words and phrases, we have this explication of the blood of the Lamb; "The sacrifice of Christ's death, together with his perfect righteousness and holiness imputed." See Wilson's Christian Dictionary.

creature, and the endangered sinner, *runneth unto it, and is safe*, Prov. xviii. 10.

Since this is a point of the utmost importance, it cannot be too clearly displayed, or too strongly established. For this purpose, the scripture gives us several most amiable and instructive views of Christ, as our refuge and safety. He is called a hiding-place, Isa. xxxii. 2. To a hiding-place people retreat, and are secure from their enemies, even from those cruel enemies that seek their destruction. Thus the prophets, whom Obadiah hid, by fifty, in a cave, were secure from Ahab's tyranny, and Jezebel's persecution. So the soul that flies to Christ, that takes sanctuary under the blood of sprinkling, is secure from the most formidable of all enemies; is secure from all the wrath due to sin, and from every accusation which Satan can bring. To such a person shall be fulfilled what is spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "When the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, there shall be none; and the sins of Judah they shall not be found," Jer. i. 20.

Christ is styled a "covert from the tempest." "A man," says Isaiah, that is, the God-man Christ Jesus, "shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest," Isa. xxxii. 2. When the thunders roar, and the lightnings flash; when the clouds pour down water, and a horrid storm comes on; all that are in the open air retire under the branches of a thick tree, or fly to some other commodious shelter. What storm can be so dreadful as the righteous vengeance of God, poured out upon a sinful nation? What storm can be so dreadful as the eternal vengeance of God, poured out upon a sinful soul? To both these we are exposed, to both these we are justly liable. But Christ's blood and righteousness are a covert. Hither we may fly, and be screened; hither we may fly and be safe; safe as was Noah when he entered the ark; and God's own hand closed the door, and God's own eye guided its motions. For "there is no condemnation" of any kind, or from any quarter, "to them that are in Christ Jesus," Rom. viii. 1.

Christ is compared to a strong hold. "Turn ye to the strong-hold," says the prophet Zechariah, Zech. ix. 12. When soldiers fly from a victorious army, being admitted into an impregnable castle, they are beyond the reach of danger. They give their fears to the wind, and repose them-

selves in tranquillity. When sinners fly by faith to the dying Jesus, they also, from thenceforth, are in "a tower of salvation," 2 Sam. xxii. 51. They may say, each one for himself, "Soul, take thine ease. All thy guilt is laid upon thy Lord, and punished in thy surety. The flaming sword of justice is returned to the sheath, having received full satisfaction from the sufferings of Christ. The curse of a violated law, is no more, having been executed to the utmost upon the person of my Redeemer. Nay, its curse is turned into a blessing. 'For Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us Gentiles,' Gal. iii. 13, 14: even the blessing of perfect reconciliation, and everlasting friendship with God most high."

This leads me to mention another beautiful comparison, which represents Christ not only as the cause of safety, but as the source of consolation. He shall be 'as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land,' Isaiah xxxii. 2. In a dry place, burnt up for want of moisture, nothing is so desirable, nothing so refreshing as water. To the poor sinful soul, of whose condition the parched ground is a fit resemblance, Christ shall be, not barely as the morning dew, not barely as the transient shower, but as a river; yea, as rivers of water, that flow in copious and never-failing streams through the thirsty soil; making even the sandy desert green with herbage, and gay with flowers.—In a sultry clime, where the sun pours insufferable heat, and all things languish under the glaring rays, nothing is so cheering to the labourer, nothing so welcome to the traveller, as a cool and gloomy shade. A poor soul, assaulted by the fiery darts of Satan, and distressed with the remembrance of former iniquities, is this sultry clime or weary land. But Christ and his atonement are not barely as the boughs of an oak, which extend their coolness to a small distance; not barely as the canopy of an alcove, through which much of the glowing influence penetrates; but like the shadow of a rock, a great rock; which projects the friendly shade over many a league; which has repelled and excluded the sun, through all preceding ages; and gives you, as it were, "the cold of snow amidst the heat of harvest," Prov. xxv. 13.

Here then, brethren, is our security amidst all peril. The blood, the righteousness, the infinitely glorious person, of

Christ ; these are our hiding-place—these are our covert—these are our strong hold. And (blessed be God!) the doors stand wide open ; they are never shut, night nor day. The access is free for any, free for all, free for the greatest sinners. We are not only allowed, but we are invited ; nay, we are commanded, to approach ; to enter ; to enjoy the protection ; or, as the words of the text express it, to sprinkle the blood on our souls.

Sprinkle the blood on our souls ! You will probably say, “ What does this signify ? What was done by Moses, when he sprinkled the visible blood we easily apprehend ; but how can we sprinkle the blood of Christ, which we never saw ; the blood of Christ, whom the heavens have received ? ” This is one of those mysteries which the natural man understandeth not ; he can form no notion of it ; it is foolishness to his apprehension. Therefore, may the eternal Spirit both teach us to understand the doctrine, and enable us to practice the duty !

To sprinkle the blood of Christ, is truly to believe in Christ, in his infinite atonement and everlasting righteousness : it is to receive these blessings as God’s free gift to men, to sinners, to ourselves in particular : and having received, to make continual use of them in every time of trial, for every occasion of need.

Perhaps this doctrine may become clearer, if we illustrate it by an example. A remarkable example we have in the practice of David. After the commission of his grievous crimes, he did in a very eminent manner sprinkle the blood. For he said unto the Lord, “ Thou shalt purge me with hyssop,” (the instrument of sprinkling the typical blood) “ and I shall be clean ; thou shalt wash me ” in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, “ and I shall be whiter than snow,” Psalm li. 7. This fountain he looked upon as opened for his sins ; and fully sufficient to cleanse him from all his filthiness ; so that he should be as free from spot, before the righteous Judge, as the snow on Salmon was free from stain. Had he said within himself, “ My crimes are too great for this blood to expiate ; ” or, “ This blood cannot be shed for so vile an offender as I am ; ” he would then have put the atonement far from him, together with all its expiating virtue. This would have been not to apply, but to throw away the blood ; not to sprinkle it upon the soul, but to pour it upon the ground.

## OF SAFETY.

Come then, brethren ; come, fellow-sinners ; let us also, in this day of fear and danger, look unto Christ, as dying that we may live ; as made sin ; that we may be made the righteousness of God in him ; as made a curse, that we may inherit eternal blessedness. Let us look unto Jesus as taking our nature ; and standing in our stead. Behold him apprehended as a thief ; ignominiously bound, and marked with the lashes of the scourge. Behold him crowned with thorns ; his hair clotted, his face discoloured, his breast and shoulders all bedewed with his own most innocent blood. Behold him nailed to the cross ; hanging in the most racking posture, till all his bones are out of joint ; hanging amidst malefactors, forsaken of God, of angels and men. Behold him bowing his head in death, and stabbed to the heart with the executioner's spear. Thus behold him, and say, " Verily, this sufferer was the Son of God, and the Lord of glory. Verily, these sufferings were the punishment due to my sins. In all this extreme anguish he bore my griefs, and carried my sorrows. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, because I had done amiss and dealt wickedly. He was cut off out of the land of the living, that he might make his soul an offering for my sins, and obtain eternal redemption for me."

Thus behold the blessed Jesus ; thus, sinners, behold the Lord your righteousness ; with this look of application, with this appropriating faith. Be verily persuaded that you shall find mercy before a holy God ; not because you have any worthiness, but because Christ has incomparable merit ; that you shall never come into condemnation, not because you have fasted and prayed, but because Christ is your great propitiation. Be persuaded, that God has given his Son for you ; that God gives his Son to you ; and together with him eternal life. Be persuaded of all this, upon the best of foundations, the infallible word of God ; who has declared that Christ died for the ungodly, Rom. v. 6. and by his obedience sinners are made righteous, Rom. v. 19. that Christ was wounded on the cross, and intercedes in heaven for transgressors, Isa. liii. 12. that he received spiritual gifts, and divine blessings, even for the rebellious, Psalm lxxviii. 18. The Lord God omnipotent, the author and finisher of faith, enable you thus to believe ! on the ground of his own most sure word, thus to believe ! Then you keep the christian passover ; then you sprinkle the blood of Christ ; then you may



boldly say, 'Under his shadow we shall be safe.'—Which reminds us of the third particular, namely,

III. The success of this method, denoted by the destroyer not so much as touching them. 'Lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.'—What a beautiful antithesis! The Egyptian first-born were wounded, were mortally wounded, were absolutely destroyed; the Israelites were not hurt, nor endangered, no, nor so much as touched. So sure and complete a defence was this blood of sprinkling! Nothing else could have yielded any protection; this afforded perfect security. When this was sprinkled on their door-posts, 'they had no cause to be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day; for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day,' Psalm xci. 5, 6.

And is not the hiding-place, the covert, the strong-hold, provided for us in the blood and righteousness of Christ, an equal security? Do they not yield absolute, perfect, consummate safety? Nothing else could administer the least hope to the chiefest apostle; this opens an inviolable sanctuary even for the greatest of sinners. None ever perished who laid their held upon Christ. He *saves*—he saves to the *uttermost*;—he saves not a few only, but *all*—*all that come unto God through him*, Heb. vii. 25. Is our danger great? our security is greater. Is our danger exceeding great?—our security is incomparably greater. In short, our refuge and security are the greatest that can be wished, that can be imagined, that God himself could provide. Cheering, charming, ravishing truth!—Suffer me to enlarge upon it, brethren. Let your attention hang on the glad tidings. May your hearts imbibe the precious doctrine.

Had 'more than forty men bound themselves with an oath, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed,' Acts xxiii. 21. some one in this congregation; the danger would be great, and the case startling. Nevertheless the endangered person would think him sufficiently safe, if he could steal away, and hide himself in one of the deepest caves of America, with a vast tract of unknown land, and all the waters of the vaster ocean between himself and the ruffians. Much safer will your souls be under the hiding, cleansing, atoning efficacy of this blood of sprinkling; by which unrighteousnesses are forgiven, sins are

covered, and iniquities done away, as though they had never been.

Were you overtaken by a violent and impetuous storm: if you sought shelter under a covert that was firmer than boards of cedar, harder than slabs of marble, thicker than the roofs of all the houses in Europe; you would reckon yourselves secure from torrents of rain, or from volleys of hail. Much more secure will ye be from everlasting wrath: secure, even when 'the Lord shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest,' Psalm xi. 6. provided you are found under the covert of Christ's magnificent and meritorious righteousness; by virtue of which, 'all that believe are justified'—I say not from millions, or from thousands of millions, but—"from all" offensive, provoking, criminal "things," Acts xiii. 39.

Should you be pursued by a conquering foe, determined to cut you in pieces: if you turned into a castle whose walls were stronger than brass, stronger than adamant, stronger than all the rocks in the world; you might laugh at the attempts of your enemy; you are guarded from the power and peril of the sword. So, and abundantly more, are you guarded from every spiritual enemy, and from every spiritual evil, when you fly to the strong-hold of Christ's death and atonement: The souls that abide in Christ, 'They shall dwell on high;' beyond the rage of the old serpent, and the great dragon: 'their place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks,' Isa. xxxiii. 16. against which all the assaults of earth and hell shall never be able to prevail. They may say, with the triumphant apostle, 'How much more shall we, who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, be delivered from ruin, and 'reign in life by Christ Jesus,' Rom. v. 17.

And will you not prize such a strong-hold? Shall not such a covert be dear to your guilty souls? Will you not set an exceeding great value upon such an hiding place? especially when the storm is gathering, and threatening all around; when days of desolation and perplexity are coming upon the world, and judgments, inflicted by men, may transmit us to the everlasting judgment of God. How did Israel bless and adore their most merciful Jehovah, for granting them such an effectual means of preservation, as the blood of the paschal lamb! and shall not we bless and

adore the same most gracious Jehovah, for granting us a means of preservation altogether as effectual, and incomparably more wonderful ?

If you should say, ' How does it appear, that the blood of Christ is such a security ? so great, so wonderful, so matchless !'—Because it is the blood of him who is ' Jehovah's fellow,' Zech. xiii. 7. of him who ' is God over all, blessed for ever,' Rom. ix. 5. of him, ' in whom dwells all the fulness of the god-head bodily,' Col. ii. 9. Permit me, brethren, to clear up and establish this doctrine ; as it is a doctrine of the last importance ; on which the very strength of our salvation is built ; and from which the fulness of our consolation flows.

There are in Christ, in his one undivided person, two distinct natures. One nature is eternal, infinite, almighty ; which is called by the apostle, *the form of God*, Phil. ii. 6. The other nature had a beginning ; is limited as to extent, and limited as to power. This is termed by the apostle, *the seed of Abraham*, Heb. ii. 16. As God, he is subject to no authority, and infinitely superior to all possibility of suffering. To become capable of obeying, suffering, and dying, he humbled himself, and was found in fashion as a man:—that, by obeying, suffering, and dying in human flesh, he might triumph over sin and Satan, in that very nature which Satan had overcome, and sin had ruined : that, by accomplishing all this in the room and stead of his people, he might bring many sons unto glory ; not without a full satisfaction to the rights of injured justice, and to the demands of a violated law.

Jesus Christ then, in his divine nature, is the most high God. The heaven of heavens is the august palace, and royal residence, of this blessed and only Potentate. Thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him. The church militant rely on him ; the church triumphant adore him ; while all the hosts of angels pay homage to him. Jesus Christ, in his divine nature, is the majestic and adorable I AM ; self-existent and independent. All worlds and all beings are derived wholly from him, and depend continually upon him : he ' made the worlds, and upholdeth all things,' Heb. i. 2, 3. View the beauty, the magnificence, the harmony, observable in heaven, on earth, through the universe. All is intended,

like the miracle wrought at Cana of Galilee, to 'manifest his glory,' John ii. 11 to tell every one who has eyes to see, and a heart to understand, how great our Saviour is, how sublime his majesty, and how marvellous his perfection. All things, says the Spirit of inspiration, were created by him, and for him, Col. i. 16. Judge then, whether the obedience and atonement of such a Redeemer are not sufficient to secure, perfectly to secure any sinner, every sinner, all sinners, that fly by faith under his wings. As perfectly sufficient they are for this blessed purpose, as the unmeasurable circuit of the skies is roomy enough for a lark to fly in, or as the immense orb of the sun is beamy enough for a labourer to work by.

Behold now the dignity and excellency of this blood, which is your covert, your hiding-place, your strong-hold. It has all the power and efficacy that every divine perfection can give it. It is the blood and righteousness of him who is eternal, incomprehensible, and exalted above all blessing and praise. Surely then nothing can bear any proportion to it. Guilt, all guilt, though ever so execrable and horrid, compared with the grandeur and riches of this invaluable blood,\* is as a glow-worm before the sun. All man-

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\* St. Chrysostom's explanation of a verse lately quoted, is so important in itself, and so apposite to our purpose, exhibits such a magnificent and delightful display of "the salvation which is in Christ Jesus," that I promise myself, the reader will allow me to present him with a translation. "How much more shall they who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, reign in life by one Christ Jesus!" The apostle says not grace, but abundance of grace. For we receive, not barely what may suffice to obtain our pardon, but incomparably more. We are delivered from all punishment, and from every evil. We are justified, we are sanctified, made the children of God, and the brethren of his only begotten Son. We are constituted heirs, joint heirs with the Prince of heaven. Yes, we become the members of his body; most intimately and indissolubly united to that divine head.

• "All these privileges St. Paul styles the abundance of grace: intimating that the antidote is not only qualified to counteract and expel the poison, but is sovereign also to establish health, to create beauty, to impart honour, and from the most malignant of all evils, to produce the most distinguished blessings; any one of which, separately considered, would have been sufficient to

ner of sins and blasphemies are blotted out by such an expiation, as the shades of night are abolished by the light of day. Every sinner washed in this blood must be whiter than the unsullied wool, whither than, the virgin snows.— Every sinner clothed in this righteousness, must be unblameable and unreprouable, even before the eye of Omniscience itself.

For this, therefore, bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my brethren; and let every thing that hath a being praise his unutterable grace. For 'behold! God is our salvation.' God himself is made flesh, and become our sacrifice, our sin-offering, our justifying righteousness; 'therefore will we trust, and not be afraid,' Isa. xii. 2; trust in this infinitely sufficient Saviour; and not be afraid of death or hell, of any

overcome and disarm death; but under their combined influence, it is absolutely destroyed, it vanishes entirely away, and leaves not so much as a trace of mischief, or a shadow of terror.

"Let us suppose some poor debtor owing a considerable sum, and, for want of payment, cast into prison. A generous friend, pitying his condition, discharges the whole debt, and releases him from confinement; and not this only, but bestows upon him splendid apparel, with thousands of silver and gold; introduces him to court, and recommends him to the royal favour; procures his advancement to the highest honours, and puts him in possession of the grandest preferments. Where now is the disgrace of his imprisonment? and where are the distresses of his insolvent state?

"Such is the case with regard to us sinners, and our most gracious Redeemer. He has paid inconceivably more than we either did or could possibly owe. Being God, the true God, the infinite and eternal God, his payment exceeds our debt, as much as the waters of the great deep exceeds the small drop of a bucket.—Doubt not, therefore, poor sinner, that fliest for refuge to this all glorious Saviour; doubt not but thy sins, though more virulent than all plagues, are done away; and death, though he be the king of terrors, is abolished; this abolished, and those done away, before such grace and merit; even as a spark of fire is extinguished, when plunged into the abyss of the sea."—For, indeed, compared with a divine person, and an infinite righteousness, whatever guilt you have contracted, whatever thing you can name, is, as our devout orator speaks, "no more than a scanty drop compared with the boundless ocean." Vid. Chrysost. in loc.

enemy or any evil. But this leads me to apply the whole :  
which I shall do by way of

Examination,  
Direction,  
Exhortation,  
Consolation.

1. By way of examination. 'Examine your own selves,' says the apostle, 2 Cor. xiii. 5: Have you kept the pass-over? have you sprinkled the blood? Many, perhaps, will be ready to answer, "We have." But beware, my friends, lest ye deceive your own souls. Let me give you a touch-stone, whereby you may try your spirit, and pronounce aright concerning your state.

Have you been convinced of your great sinfulness? of your sinful nature, and your sinful practice? Have you been made sensible, that hell, the deepest hell is your deserved portion? is what you deserve for any transgression,—for every transgression?—how much more for the many thousands—how much more for the many millions,—how much more for the numberless multitude of your provocations? If you have never been convinced of these most alarming, but certain truths; if you have never been touched with a sense of your extreme guilt, and undone state; I fear you are settled upon your lees, you are in the dead sleep of sin. You are not so much as awakened; much less have you applied Christ.

Again, Have you been made to see, that nothing but Christ, and his precious blood, nothing but Christ and his divine righteousness, can be your security from vengeance? Have you been convinced, that thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil, could never expiate the least of your iniquities? that no tears, no confessions, no amendment, nothing but the sacrifice of the body of Christ, can make your peace with God? If you have not been taught the absolute insufficiency of every remedy, save only the meritorious sufferings of Jesus Christ; you have not seen him, neither known him; much less is his blood sprinkled upon your conscience.

Once more, Have you a supreme, a matchless esteem for Christ? is Christ and his great salvation the thing that you long for? is he to your souls the pearl of great price? do

you count all things but loss, that you may win Christ, and be found in him? If this is not the state of your soul, I dare not flatter you with vain hopes; I must not buoy you up with ungrounded imaginations. You are not, as yet, in your hiding-place; neither have you fled to your stronghold. All the curses of the divine law stand charged and pointed full against you. You have no security from being hurt by the first death, nor from being irrecoverably ruined by the second death. If judgments should come upon a sinful and backsliding people, you have no defence; there is no wall of fire around you. You must therefore expect to fall among those that fall; and, falling by the sword, may immediately drop into hell.

Can you hear this, and be unconcerned? can you listen to this warning, more awful than the voice of ten thousand thunders, and not start from your insensibility? are you not looking around, and ready to cry out, "What then shall I do to be safe in the day of evil?" O! that this inquiry came from the very bottom of your hearts. I should then proceed, with great cheerfulness, to

2. A word of direction.—Fly to Christ, alarmed sinners. Come under the covert of his blood. Appropriate the blessed Jesus; look upon him and his merit as your own. Thus sprinkle his blood:—sprinkle it upon your lintel and door-posts; upon all you are, upon all you have, and all you do; upon your consciences, that they may be purged; upon your souls, that they may be sanctified; upon your works, that they may be accepted. Say, every one for himself, "I am a poor, guilty, helpless creature; but in Jesus Christ, who is full of grace and truth, *I have righteousness and strength,*" Isa. xlv. 24. I am a poor, polluted, loathsome creature; but Jesus Christ, who is the image of the invisible God, and the brightness of his Father's glory, has *loved me, and washed me from my filthiness in his own blood,* 2 Rev. i. 5. I am by nature, a perverse depraved creature; and, by evil practice, a lost, damnable sinner; but Jesus Christ, who made the worlds; Jesus Christ, whom heaven and earth adore; even Jesus Christ himself came from the mansions of bliss, on purpose to seek me, to save me, Matth. xviii. 11; to give himself for me. And how can I perish, who have such a ransom? how can I be undone, who have such a repairer of my breaches? how can I come unto condemnation, who

have the blood, not of ten thousand sacrifices ; the merit, not of ten thousand angels, but the blood and merit of Jehovah himself for my propitiation ?”

Should you say, “ Have I a warrant for such a trust ?” You have the best of warrants, our Lord’s express permission ; ‘ Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely,’ Rev. xxii. 17. It is not said, this or that person only, but whosoever ; including you and me ; excluding no individual, man or woman. It is not said, whosoever is worthy, but whosoever is willing. ‘ Wilt thou be made whole ?” was our Lord’s question to the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. Wilt thou, all terms and conditions apart, inherit grace and glory ? is his most benevolent address to sinful men in all ages. ‘ Let him take the water of life ;’ let him receive ME and my righteousness ; let him look upon all that I have done and suffered as done and suffered for his redemption. This will administer peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost : this will produce love of God, and alacrity of obedience ; in which things the true life of the soul consists. All these blessings are to be received freely, without money, and without price : that is, without any good works, any good qualities, or any preparatory requisites whatever, to be received, as the infinitely-rich gift of divine grace, vouchsafed even to the lost—the guilty—the undone.

You have our Lord’s most generous invitation ; ‘ Come unto ME.’ And whom does he call ? The righteous ? No. The excellent ? Quite the reverse. He calls sinners ; miserable sinners ; even the most miserable of sinners ; those who are ‘ weary and heavy laden ;’ overwhelmed with iniquities ; bowed down to the very brink of hell, and ready to think, “ there is no hope for them.” Yet them he encourages ; them he invites ; to them he declares, ‘ I will give you rest ;’ Matth. xi. 28. rest in the enjoyment of peace with God ; and peace in your own consciences. Observe and admire the riches of your Redeemer’s grace. He says not, Ye are vile wretches ; polluted by sin, and enslaved to the devil ; therefore keep at a distance ; but, therefore come. Come, and be cleansed by my blood ; come, and be made free by my Spirit. He says not, Furnish yourselves with this, or that, or the other recommending accomplishment, but only come : come just as you are ; poor, undone, guilty



creatures. Yea, come to me for pardon and recovery ; to ME, who have given my life, myself, my all, for your ransom.

Should you still question, whether these inestimable blessings are free for you? Remember, brethren, they are free for sinners. Is this your character? Then they are as free for your acceptance, as for any person's in the world. 'To us eternal life is given;' 1 John v. 11. not us who had deserved it by our goodness, but us who had forfeited it by our sins. 'To you is preached the forgiveness of sins;' Acts xiii. 38 not you whose transgressions were inconsiderable, but you whose iniquities were more in number than the hairs of your head. Even to you, who are the lost and perishing sinners of Adam's family, 'is the word of this salvation sent,' Acts xiii. 26. And, by a commission from God, we publish it; that, as sinners, you may receive it; that, receiving it, you may commence believers; and 'believing, may have life through his name,' John xx. 31.

Some, perhaps, will be inclined to debate; "Is this so extraordinary a matter? will this exercise of believing do such great things for us, or put us in possession of such singular blessings?" Moses might have formed the same scruple with regard to the sprinkling of blood. Will this seemingly insignificant circumstance be such an extraordinary safeguard to us? Will this preserve us from the impending blow, more effectually than the labours of the engineer, or the shield and spear of the warrior? But Moses consulted not with flesh and blood; Moses rejected all such carnal reasonings. By faith he and his people kept the passover, and were made partakers of the temporal salvation. By faith may you and I receive Christ! So shall we be partakers of pardon and eternal salvation.

By believing the promise of God, and by trusting in the person of Christ, we are united to the Lord Jesus; Eph. iii. 17. so as to have a real interest in his blood and righteousness. Being united to Christ, our sins are done away by virtue of his infinitely-precious atonement; and eternal life becomes ours, on account of his everlasting righteousness. Whoever thus believes, believes merely as a sinner, not upon the supposition of any goodness in himself, but upon the sole warrant of God's promise, in the infallible word of the gospel. Such a person shall not be ashamed of his be-

lief; shall never be disappointed of his hope; 'according to his faith shall it be unto him,' Matth. ix. 29.

Come then, fellow sinners; believe the record of heaven. Set to your seal, that God is true. Honour his word, which cannot lie; honour his grace, which is absolutely free; honour his dear Son, who has obtained eternal redemption for such unworthy creatures as you and I. What shall hinder you? But this leads me to,

3. A word of exhortation. I say then, what shall hinder you? what shall withhold you a single moment from believing? 'since all things are ready,' Matth. xxii. 4. in Christ Jesus. The great propitiation is made by him; the perfect obedience is performed by him; all the conditions of the new covenant are fulfilled by him. Come then, and partake of the heavenly blessings; as you partake of a marriage-feast, when the entertainment is all prepared, and the bridegroom bids you welcome.

Fain would I prevail in this most important address. Lord, make bare thy arm; incline their hearts: 'make them willing in the day of thy power,' Psal. cx. 3. My dear friends, if you turn away from such invitations, you are ruined to eternity: misery awaits you here, and damnation hereafter. Suffer me then to be importunate. Refuse not him that calleth you by my mouth; that bids you trust and not be afraid; that offereth himself, with all his fulness, to you. Why are you backward? why slow of heart to believe? why do you stand at a distance, from the all-gracious Jesus?

Is it because you are guilty wretches? Then he publishes the act of indemnity to you: 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out your transgressions, for mine own sake,' Isa. xliii. 25. Is it because you are polluted creatures; loathsome in your own eyes, and much more loathsome in the eye of infinite purity? Then hear the word of the Holy One: 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. From all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you,' Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Is it because your sins are more numerous, and more heinous than the sins of others? Be they ever so heinous, or ever so aggravated, thus saith the God of immensely rich grace in Christ; 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool,' Isa. i. 18.

Are you still objecting, "I am weak; I have no strength; I cannot believe?" Look then to a promising God, that he may help your unbelief; that he may fulfil in you all the good pleasure of his will, and the work of faith with power. For he who is truth itself hath said, 'Your God will come and save you. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped: the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing,' Isa. xxxv. 4, 5, 6. Has the Lord given you a desire to believe in his dear Son? Doubt not but he will also give you the power. Does God the Lord bring to the birth, and not give strength to bring forth? That be far from him! the suspicion be far from us! He has, in unspeakable mercy, appointed his blessed Spirit for this purpose. The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, attendeth continually on this very thing; to testify of Christ, and to reveal Christ in our sinful souls; enabling us to discern the all-sufficiency of Christ, to discern our right to make use of Christ, and to receive Christ as our own—*our own God and Saviour.*

Be it then your daily endeavour, your continual business, to believe; firmly, confidently, assuredly to believe in Jesus Christ, as the great and glorious Redeemer, in whom you have pardon, you have righteousness, and eternal life. Thus exercise yourselves unto godliness, and 'God will help you: God will strengthen you; yea, God will uphold you with the right hand of his righteousness.' Thus exercise yourselves unto godliness, depending on the divine faithfulness, proceeding on the divine warrant, in obedience to the divine command, which expressly says, 'Believe in the Lord, your God, so shall ye be established: believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper; 2 Chron. xx. 30. believe in his dear Son, so shall ye be saved," Acts xvi. 31.

Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Now thou art commanded, this do,' Gen. xlv. 19. Let me also say to my hearers, Now ye are allowed, invited, commanded to believe in the Son of God, this do. 'Tis your grand concern; the one thing needful. Without this nothing will profit you. Therefore I repeat my exhortation; therefore I am so urgent; therefore I cannot dismiss the subject, without beseeching the Father of mercies to command a blessing upon the word; that you may indeed 'believe unto righteousness,' Rom. x. 10. unto life, unto salvation. Thus will you glo-

rify the ineffable goodness of God, and the inestimable merit of Christ: thus will you find a sure, a full, an incomparably-rich provision made for your safety: and thus will you most effectually comply with that tender and gracious invitation of the Lord your God; 'Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For behold! the Lord cometh out of his place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.' Isa. xxvi. 20, 21.

And what will ye do, when the Lord cometh forth to punish, if you are not received into the hiding-place? What will ye do, ye men of sober and decent conversation; who have nothing but an outward regularity, and some customary conformity to religious worship? These though in their place valuable, yet are no security. They are only the outworks, not your fortification, nor your citadel. When the righteous Judge 'shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that obey not the gospel:' 2 Thess. i 7, 8. these without the blood of sprinkling, will be but as a withered leaf amidst the inextinguishable burning.

What will ye do, ye men of wealth and large possessions? Will riches profit you in the day of wrath? Prov. xi. 4. will riches protect you in the day of the Lord's controversy? Alas! they will mark you out for a prey, and serve only to lure the vultures. If riches have been your idol; hoarded up in your coffers, or lavished out upon yourselves; they will, when the day of reckoning comes, be like the garment of pitch and brimstone, put upon the criminal condemned to the flames.

What will ye do, ye mighty men of valour? If the Lord turn his hand upon you, your heart shall fail, and your knees be feeble; your arm shall lose its strength, and your sword shall lose its edge. Your fleets and armies 'shall be as tow,' and the commanders of them 'as a spark; and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them,' Isa. i. 31. If you are not sheltered and secured by this blood, what will we do, when the shout of the archangel is made, and the trump of God is heard? Undaunted as you now seem, you will then in an agony of despair, 'call upon rocks to fall upon you, and mountains to cover you,' Rev. vi. 16.

What will ye do, ye voluptuous men, and ye careless women? ye that eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall? ye that drink wine in bowls, and anoint yourselves with the chief ointments? Ah! what will ye do, when 'the whole land,' for the universal degeneracy of its inhabitants, for their contempt of Christ, and neglect of grace, 'shall become brimstone, and salt, and burning; insomuch, that it shall not be sown, nor bear, nor any grass grow thereon?' Deut. xix. 23. Much more may I ask, what will ye do, when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, when the whole earth, and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up?

What will ye do, people of all ranks and conditions, when 'mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour?' Ezek. vii. 26; when your houses shall be laid in heaps, and your streets be made a place of graves? when your cities, that were full of inhabitants, shall be solitary; and not a voice heard amidst them, but sighs of the disconsolate, and groans of the dying? when your children shall be slaughtered in one place, your parents in another; and the 'slain shall lie behind the slayer, as the sheaves behind the reaper, in the time of harvest?' Jer. ix. 22. But, above all, what will ye do, when the great white throne is erected; when the earth and the heavens flee away from the face of him that sitteth thereon; and the dead, both small and great, stand before God to be judged? without the blood of sprinkling, where can you be safe? how will you appear? what will you do?—Whereas, if Christ and his blood are yours, all is yours. You have nothing to fear in time or eternity, "O! well is it with you, and happy shall you be."—But this reminds me of adding a word,

4. By way of consolation.—Possibly you may be ready to inquire, "What consolation will this administer, amidst the presages, or under the approach of national calamities?" Very great. 'Fear not,' says the Lord, 'for I have redeemed thee,' Isa. xliii. 1. Redemption by Christ is a preservative from all terror, and an antidote against every evil. This causes the serene breast, and the lightsome heart. Hence comes calmness of conscience, 'quietness and assurance for ever.' Therefore, says the prophet, 'This man shall be our peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land.' The

blood and righteousness of our incarnate God shall be the sovereign support of our souls, even when the enemy invades our territories, and preys upon the vitals of our country; yea, when he 'treads upon our palaces,' Micah v. 5; not only demolishes our dwelling-houses, but lays our royal edifices in the dust, and makes us feel all the grievousness of war.

Further, when this blood is sprinkled, sin is done away, and God is appeased. His promises are your portion, and his arm is your defence. For the comfort of such people it is written: 'He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. In famine he shall redeem thee from death; and in war from the power of the sword. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue; neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh,' Job v. 19, 20, 21. In the hands of this reconciled and faithful Creator, this unwearied and almighty Deliverer, how safely may you deposit yourselves and your families, your possessions and your all!

Be not then discouraged, ye followers of Christ, though troublous times should come. All creatures, and all events are under the control of your heavenly Father. If he has any further occasion for your service, or sees it conducive to your good, he will preserve you amidst the greatest dangers. He can draw a curtain of concealment over you, as he did over David in the cave, 1 Sam. xxiv. 3. He can plant an invisible guard around you, as he did around Elisha in Dothan, 2 Kings vi. 17. He can turn the hearts of your adversaries, and make even the enemy and the avenger to be at peace with you; as he did in the case of Jacob and his enraged brother Esau. Or, if you fall in the common calamity, 'your latter end shall be peace;' your inheritance is unalienable, and 'your joy, no man taketh from you.' Your best things, your eternal interests, are secure, inviolably secure, being 'hid with Christ in God,' Col. iii. 3.

Happy, unspeakably blessed and happy the people, on whom this blood is sprinkled! If vindictive visitations come upon the land, this may screen and protect their persons; like the mark, which the man clothed with linen set on the forehead of God's chosen ones, Ezek. xi. 6; or, like the line of scarlet thread, which Rahab the harlot bound to the window of her house, Josh. ii. 18, 19. However, by this blood of reconciliation, all afflictions shall be disarmed, and every

evil unstung. Nay, 'all things,' not in prosperity only, but in adversity likewise, 'shall work together for good.\*' Death, even death, is vanquished for them, and become their gain. And the last judgment is no longer the object of their dread, but their unspeakable privilege. Being justified by this blood, they may even 'glory in tribulation, and rejoice in hope,' in sure and stedfast 'hope of the glory of God,' Rom. v. 1, 2, 3.

Will ye not then, brethren, ardently join with me? while I lift my voice to God in the heavens, and say, "Awake, awake, O arm of the Lord; let this be a day of thy power, and a day of our redemption. Behold, O God our Saviour, and look upon thy various congregations. See what a gathering of the people there is in thy courts; let there be as great a gathering of souls to thy blessed self. Fulfil the prophecy, almighty Shiloh! Let sinners, won by the discovery of thy grace, fly unto thee as a cloud; and take shelter in thy wounds, as the doves in their windows! that they may rest in the day of trouble; and, when time shall be no more, may enter into that everlasting rest, which remaineth for the people of God." Amen.

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\* Rom. viii. 28. This seems to be the meaning of the Holy Ghost, in the passages lately quoted from Job. "In Six," in manifold and various "troubles, God shall deliver thee." Or, if he suffer thee to be involved "in seven, there shall no evil," no penal evil, "touch thee." His gracious presence shall be more than deliverance. Thou shalt not feel anguish, but enjoy comfort; thou shalt not suffer harm, but receive benefit. Though the flames of tribulation kindle all around, they shall not consume thee; but (like the fire which surrounded the three Hebrew confessors) shall only loose thy bonds, and set thee free; set thy affections free from a troublesome world, or set thy soul free from a prison of clay.

## SERMON VII.

### THE WAY OF HOLINESS.



EZEK. xviii. 27.

*When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.*

MANY of my hearers, I observe, are husbandmen; and the season, if I mistake not, is the season of seed-time. I will suppose a person, unskilled in your business, brethren, taking notice of your work. Perhaps he goes home, and says, "What strange inconsiderate creatures have I seen in the field? I saw them, instead of laying up their corn in the garner, throwing it away by handfuls. Nay, they even buried it in the ground, and left it to putrify under the clods. Is this the way to improve their stock, and increase their substance? is this the way to get gain, and provide for their families?"

Should any one make such a reflection on your conduct, you have an answer ready. The same answer, only with an alteration of circumstances, will be equally proper for your preacher. It is true, his usual subjects are, the absolutely-free grace of God, and the immensely-rich merits of Christ; the infinite atonement, and everlasting righteousness of the Redeemer. But because he generally enlarges upon these doctrines, is he therefore throwing away his words? does he neglect the cause, or disregard the interests of holiness? Far from it. He is sowing the seed of vital holiness; without which seed, holiness will never flourish in your hearts, will never bring forth fruit in your lives; any more than your ploughed lands would produce a crop of corn, without receiving the appointed grain. It is 'through the knowledge of our adorable Saviour, as calling us to glory and virtue, that we have all things pertaining unto life and godliness?' 2 Pet.



i. 3 ; unto the enjoyment of life eternal, and the practice of true godliness.

To convince you that this is my aim, I have chosen a text full to the purpose ; and not unsuitable to the occasion of our present assembly. 'When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.'

The words naturally divide themselves into the following particulars :

- I. What the wicked man should turn *from*—*wickedness*.
- II. What he should turn *to*—*to do that which is lawful and right*.
- III. What will be the *effect* of such turning—*he shall save his soul alive*.

May Christ Jesus, the Head of his church, and the wonderful Counsellor, enable us to open these truths ; to add a word of lively application ; and to receive godly edifying from the whole !

I. What the wicked man should turn from—*wickedness*. Here, perhaps, you expect, that I should mention several sorts of wickedness ; should display the detestable nature and destructive consequences of each ; and deter you, by such considerations, from the commission of them all ; deter you from lying and defrauding, from cursing and swearing, from drunkenness and uncleanness, from a spiteful temper and a backbiting tongue. These are horrid evils. On account of these the land mourns. These bring the vengeance of God on a person, and on a people, Col. iii. 6. If I could speak in thunder, I could never inveigh too loudly against these vices. "Ye that go on in such iniquities, ye are scattering brimstone upon your habitations, Job xviii. 15 ; ye are heaping up wrath against the day of wrath, Rom. ii. 5. *How can ye escape the damnation of hell ?*" Matth. xxiii. 33.

But let me forbear invectives. Let me reason with you in the spirit of mildness. I will suppose you possessed of a pleasant garden. In some favourite bed, many weeds spring up, alluring to the eye, but full of deadly poison. Will you order your gardener to crop off the leaves, or to pluck up the roots ? To pluck up the roots, most certainly. Because, if he does the former only, it will avail but little ; it

will be no better than labour lost ; whereas, if he does the latter, he will effectually rid your ground of the pernicious incumbrance. Thus would I act. Wickedness is this pernicious weed. It is full of deadly poison ; it pollutes your souls, and will be the bane of your happiness. I would not therefore be content with using the pruning-knife, and cutting off the shoots ; but I would take the spade, and level my blow at the root.

I would fain have you turn, not partially and superficially, but thoroughly and habitually ; not from some only, but from all wickedness ; and not barely from the practice, but even from the love of it, and any fondness for it. This will never be accomplished, unless you turn.

From a thoughtless }  
 From a prayerless } state.  
 From an insensible }

I. From a thoughtless state.—You are made for eternity ; you are immortal beings. You must dwell either with God in heaven, or with devils in hell ; and that to endless, endless ages. You know not how soon you may be summoned into the invisible and eternal world ; the following night, for aught you can tell ; or before the present hour is expired. Do you seriously consider, to which of these everlasting abodes you are approaching ? for which of these unchangeable conditions you are meet ?

‘ Except a man be born again,’ says our Lord, ‘ he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven,’ John iii 3. This is the fixed determination of the righteous Judge. You all hope for heaven ; and I humbly beseech the Lord that you may not be disappointed of your hope. But do you diligently inquire, whether you have experienced this new birth ? Is there a spiritual change wrought in your souls ? are your affections taken off from vanity, and fixed on the infinitely-amiable God ? is your memory filled with the truths of the gospel ? and are your desires rising to things above ? To expect the blessedness of heaven, and have no concern about this renewal of your nature, is to contemn the counsels of Christ, and to trifle with his unalterable decree.

‘ Without holiness no man shall see the Lord,’ Heb. xiii. 14. This is the standing rule for our present conduct, and indispensably necessary for our future happiness. You may

be civil and decent in your behaviour ; you may attend the place of divine worship, and pass for reputable persons : yet, unless you are holy in your hearts, and holy in your conversation, you cannot enter into God's blissful presence. To be holy, is to *put on Christ*, Rom. xiii. 14. to resemble Christ, in your spirit and carriage, as one man resembles another, when he puts on his dress, or imitates his manners. Do you look to Christ as your pattern ; follow Christ as your guide ; guide ; and, in the general course of your life, walk as Christ walked ? Perhaps you have never so much as aimed at this ; never so much as seriously considered eternity, regeneration, and a conformity to Christ. These things are seldom, if ever, in your thoughts : then be assured you are far from holiness ; you are not turned from your evil way ; no, nor so much as beginning to turn.

Say not, ' This duty of serious consideration is a slight matter. If I had been guilty of injustice or perjury ; if I had committed adultery or murder ; these indeed were heinous crimes : whereas, the omission which you have insisted on, is but a small offence.' Small offence ! Presume not to think so. However such guilt may appear little in your view, or sit easy upon your conscience, it is heinous enough to make heaven and earth amazed. For ' thus saith the Lord ; Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth ! I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib : but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider,' Isa. i. 2, 3. To say the truth, an inconsiderate careless life is an unintermitted course of sin ; it is one continued act of rebellion against God. It opposes his compassionate wish ; ' O that they were wise ! that they understood this ! that they would consider their latter end !' Deut. xxxii. 29. It disobeys his positive command ; ' Thus saith the Lord of hosts,' the supreme Ruler of the world, ' Consider your ways,' Hag. i. 5. 7. It defeats the design of his holy word, and would make the blood of his Son to be of none effect.

2. Turn from a prayerless state. Alas ! how many of those whom we call christians are strangers to prayer ! How many servants rise to their work, and never bend a knee before their Master in heaven ! how many masters set their servants an ungodly example ; enter upon the affairs of the

day, without imploring the God of all grace, either to prosper their business, or to sanctify their souls! How many parents know not what it is to make earnest supplications for the conversion and salvation of their children! and how many children are as ignorant of the nature, the necessity, the advantages of prayer, 'as the wild ass's colt!' Job xi. 12.

Shall I reckon these good people? Are these turned to their God? No; they are despisers of the Most High; they cast contempt upon his majesty. The language of their practice is, 'Depart from us. Omnipotent as thou art, we have no need of thee; no need of thy Spirit, to make intercession in us; no need of thy Son, to make intercession for us.' Most justly, therefore, it is reckoned by Eliphaz, as part of a wicked and abandoned character, 'Thou restrainest prayer before God,' Job xv. 4.—Nay, it is mentioned by the psalmist as the finishing part, that which seals up the soul under the dominion of iniquity, and shuts out all reasonable hope of a reformation: 'They are corrupt; they do abominable works;' and there is no prospect of their doing otherwise, since 'they call not upon the Lord,' Psalm xiv. 4.

Religious, yet neglect prayer! Impossible. Can a man live without food? Can he breathe without air? No more can you withstand temptation, or exercise godliness, unless 'you watch unto prayer,' Eph. vi. 18. The neglect of prayer is not only sinful in itself, but the sure sign of an unsanctified heart, and the wide inlet to every unrighteous practice. 'Shew me a prayerless person,' said one, 'and I will shew you a graceless person.' Turn then, sinners, turn, without delay, to a habit of prayer; of secret, serious, earnest prayer: otherwise, you cannot expect that the wrath of God should be turned away from you. No; when he whets his glittering sword, and his hand takes hold on judgment, you are the persons that cause the indignation; you are the persons who have reason to tremble at the stroke. For thus it is written in that venerable book, which is a transcript of the divine will, and the rule of the divine procedure: 'Pour out thy fury upon the heathen, that know thee not; pour out thy fury upon the families that call not on thy name,' Jer. x. 25.

3. Turn from your insensible state. Be sensible of your guilt, your misery, your ruin. Thoughtless and prayerless

people, you are sinners before the God of heaven ; you are the children of wrath ; you are the objects of his vengeance ; condemned and accursed by his holy word. O ! may the Lord of all power rend the veil from your understandings, and shew you your perilous, your dreadfully perilous condition.

If, while I am speaking, the earth should reel to and fro, and be in strong convulsions under your feet ; if it should open its horrid jaws, and gape frightfully wide to devour you ; not one in the assembly but would be greatly alarmed. How then can you be careless and unconcerned, when hell from beneath is opening her mouth, to swallow you up in endless perdition ? If this building was rocking over your heads, and tottering on every side ; if the beams were bursting, and the walls cleaving ; you would be struck with astonishment and horror. And how is it that you are under no apprehensions, when the indignation of an almighty God is ready to fall upon you ? which, far more insupportable than the fall of loaded roofs, or ponderous millstones, must even grind you to powder. If the French were landed, and an army of desperate papists ravaging the nation ; if you were pursued, or surrounded, by those barbarous enemies of your religion and country ; if their swords, reeking with British blood, were now at your throats ; you would tremble for your lives. And will you not feel some concern for your souls, when the sword of Omnipotence is sharpened to cut you in pieces ? when for aught you know, it may be already unsheathed ; may have received a commission to give the fatal blow ; and, before another hour passes, may actually strike. If the late distemper among the cattle should turn to a plague among men ; if it should sweep away thousands and ten thousands to an untimely grave ; if you should see multitudes of your neighbours sickening, drooping, dying on every side ; certainly you would be terrified. How then can you remain unimpressed, when the curse, Gal. iii. 10. of God is approaching you ? when the curse of God is hovering over you ? when the curse of God is ready to be poured out upon you ? and turn all your delights into weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth ?

Behold then, sinners, inconsiderate and insensible sinners, you are this day impleaded at God's bar ; you are found guilty before the Judge of the world : you are upon the very brink of everlasting destruction. Not the earth, but hell, is

opening her mouth to devour you ; not the stones and timber of your houses, but the vengeance of the Most High, is rushing down upon you. The sword, not of an enraged adversary, but of God's most tremendous displeasure is drawn, perhaps stretched out to destroy you : the pestilence, or what is infinitely more to be dreaded than the pestilence, that walketh in darkness, the curse of God is ready to break forth upon you. And will not these terrors awaken you, alarm you, persuade you? 2 Cor. v. 11. Thou God of the world, and God of our souls, let not thy judgments and thy threatenings go forth in vain!

I hope some of you are inclined to ask, How or to what should we be persuaded? If so, my second particular will suggest the proper answer.

II. What the wicked man should turn to? 'To do that which is lawful and right:' to repent of sin, and love God; to be pure in heart, and holy in all manner of conversation. This is implied in the exhortation of the text; this is the indispensable duty of all men; and to promote this is the continual aim of our ministry.

But you are guilty, ruined, impotent creatures. Guilty, and can you, under a load of trespasses, arise and do your Lord's will? Ruined, and can you, amidst such discouraging circumstances, have any heart to set about the work of reformation? Impotent, and can you, under the most deplorable weakness, perform the most difficult of all services? No; you must first be relieved and enabled, before you can be sufficient for these things. Like the woman bowed down with a spirit of infirmity, or like the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, you must receive restoration and strength from God your Saviour. Turn then to Christ, who says by his prophet, 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help,' Hos. xiii. 9.

If you should inquire, 'What shall I find in Christ?' All that you can want; all that you can wish; incomparably more than I am able to express. For 'it hath pleased the Father, that in Christ should all fulness dwell,' Col. i. 19.

Because you are guilty, and have a burden of iniquity on your souls, he is 'the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world,' John i. 29. a lamb of God's own appointing; a lamb of infinite excellence and dignity; to whom nothing is equal, nothing comparable. This Lamb of God

has shed his blood for sinners ; has suffered death for sinners ; yea, has died in their stead, and endured all that vengeance which they have deserved. In this most wonderful and perfect manner has he obtained their pardon ! pardon, not of some only, but of all sins ; be they ever so numerous, or ever so heinous, it maketh no difference with him. An infinite Saviour taketh away millions, unnumbered millions of the most abominable iniquities, with as much ease as he expiates a single offence, or the smallest fault.— ‘ He blotteth out transgressions,’ aggravated transgressions, innumerable transgressions, ‘ as a cloud,’ Isa. xlv. 22. as easily and as completely as the wind sweeps away a floating cloud from the face of the sky. Delivered from this load of guilt, you will be fitted to walk in the way of God’s commandments, ‘ and not be weary ;’ yea, to ‘ run, and not faint,’ Isa. xl. 31.

Because you are ruined, and have nothing that may recommend you to the most high God, Christ has brought in a righteousness—a complete righteousness—a divine righteousness. Consider the unspotted purity of his nature, and the unsinning obedience of his life ; consider his fervent charity to man, and his patient resignation to God ; consider all his exalted virtues, and all his exemplary actions ;—these, all these, in their utmost perfection, are not only for the imitation, but for the justification also, of such sinners as you and I. ‘ His name is Jehovah,’ which speaks incomprehensible grandeur in him ; ‘ Jehovah our righteousness,’ Jer. xxiii. 6. which speaks unutterable comfort to us. In this righteousness we may be fully accepted, and entitled to life eternal. Of this we may make our boast, and say, ‘ In the Lord have I righteousness,’ Isa. xlv. 24. I, a transgressor, have a real righteousness ; I, a defective creature, have a consummate righteousness ; I, a frail, relapsing christian, have an invariable and everlasting righteousness. O ! what a treasure is this ! what an unspeakable gift is this ! Is there a cordial that can revive our spirits ; is there a motive that can animate us to duty, like justification through Immanuel’s righteousness ? Blessed Lord ! this makes thy yoke easy, and thy burden light.

Because you are weak and disabled, Christ has ‘ the residue’ of the Spirit, Mal. ii. 15. the ‘ fulness’ of the Spirit, Col. i. 19. the ‘ seven Spirits’ of God are before his throne, Rev. i. 4. The Holy Ghost, in all his operations, and with

all his graces, Christ sends to whomsoever he pleases, John xvi. 7. He gave this inestimable blessing to Saul the persecutor and blasphemer: he gave this inestimable blessing to many of his murderers and crucifiers: he still confers the heavenly gift on his enemies; 'yea, on the rebellious also,' Psalm lxxviii. 18. And 'the promise,' the free gracious promise, 'is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God,' by the preaching of his gospel, 'shall call,' Acts ii. 39.

How salutary and beneficial are the effects of this gift! our Lord himself, who best knew, has admirably shewn. 'He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water,' John vii. 38. This spake he of the Spirit, which every one that turns to him, and believes on him, shall receive. Observe some beautiful and copious river; how it exhilarates the country, and fructifies the soil through which it passes; bestows a thousand conveniences, and gives birth to a thousand delights, wherever it takes its winding course. So the Comforter, dwelling in the heart, gives such charming views of Christ, and his unsearchable riches, as gladden the conscience, and make us truly happy. Hence, as from an inexhaustible source, true holiness flows, and every spiritual good. This disposes us to love our neighbour: this teaches us to be meek in spirit: and this will raise our desires far above earthly, sensual, transitory things, even as David's thoughts were raised far above the shepherd's scrip, when he sat exalted on the throne of Israel.

Under the influence of this divine Spirit, you will say, 'Christ has taken away the execrable filth of my sins; and shall I wallow in the mire of iniquity again? Christ has delivered me from the pit of everlasting destruction; and shall I leap into those unquenchable flames, from which, as a brand, I have been snatched? In my adorable Redeemer, I have a perfect righteousness, and am completely justified; and shall I not endeavour to walk worthy of such favours; to shew my gratitude for such beneficence, by bringing forth the fruits of righteousness in all my conversation?'

Yes, brethren; when you are turned to Christ, to receive his atonement, to rely on his righteousness, to be filled with his Spirit; it will be with your soul, as it is with the earth, when it is turned to the sun. The earth, you see, is now barren and unfruitful, because it has been very much with-



drawn from the enlivening beams of the sun. Ere long it will be replaced under the full influence of that fountain of light and heat. Then what a change will take place! how will the flowers appear on the ground! how will the leaves adorn the trees! how will the singing of birds be heard in our land! So shall holiness and a heavenly temper be produced in your souls; so shall obedience, with all the fruits of godliness, flourish in your lives; when this 'Sun of righteousness, manifests himself in your hearts, makes you partakers of his salvation, and thus 'arises upon you with healing under his wings,' Mal. iv. 2.

Should any one doubt, whether this is the way to do that which is lawful and right: I ask, Is it not a pleasing way? such as we should wish for; such as we should prefer above all others; and such as will render our Lord's service perfect freedom? Is it not a rational way; apparently adapted to engage the heart, to strengthen the hand, and thereby to fit the whole man for every good work?

Besides, is it not the way appointed by God? Would we 'earnestly repent, and be heartily sorry for all our misdoings?' The wisdom of God assures us, this sorrow must arise from believing views of Christ; from 'looking unto him whom we have pierced,' Zech. xii. 10. looking unto him as wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. This, if any thing will incline us to be afflicted, and mourn, and weep, for all our abominations. Thus, and thus only, shall we experience that 'godly sorrow, which worketh repentance not to be repented of.'

Would we love God? The oracles of heaven inform us, that we must first see his love; his infinitely free, and infinitely tender love towards us; his love not imputing any sin to our souls, but laying all our iniquities upon his own Son. Then shall 'we love him,' when we perceive and know, that 'he has,' in this most divinely gracious manner, regarded—'loved'—blessed 'us.'

Would we be pure in heart? The Lord 'purifieth the heart by faith,' Acts xv. 9. faith in Christ, as shedding his most precious blood, as giving his most glorious person, for our ransom; and, by his one oblation, 'finishing our transgression; making reconciliation for our iniquity;' yea, 'perfecting us for ever;' insomuch that we may boldly and assuredly say, 'Through this grace of our Lord Jesus

Christ, we shall be saved.' He that hath this faith and this hope, 'purifieth himself, even as he is pure.'

Would we 'renounce all ungodliness?' would we 'live soberly, righteously, and godly?' Tit. ii. 12. By grace we must be enabled; even that grace which brings salvation, a finished and free salvation to sinners. That grace appearing in the heart, and appropriated by faith, is the sure, the effectual means of true sanctification; the sure, the effectual motive to willing obedience. Therefore our Lord says, 'He that eateth me, even he shall live by me,' John vi. 57. 'He that eateth me,' that receiveth my righteousness and redemption; that maketh a daily use of me and my benefits, for the refreshment and health of his soul, as people make a daily use of their necessary food, for the nourishment and support of their bodies: 'even he shall live by me:' he shall live to God in real holiness here, and live with God in everlasting glory hereafter. This method will strengthen and prepare us for discharging all the duties of a christian life, as bread strengthens and prepares the labourer for dispatching the business of his toilsome calling. Whereas, without using this sovereign expedient, we shall be as incapable of exercising ourselves unto godliness, as the hireling, deprived of his usual meals, would be incapable of performing his daily task.

Upon the whole, brethren, we do not urge you to make brick without straw; we do not call upon you to arise and work, without shewing you from whence your ability and vigour are to proceed. Some, perhaps, might exhort you to all holy obedience; but, neglecting these most necessary directions, their exhortations would be comfortless and insignificant; because you might fetch a sigh, and may answer, 'All this we would gladly do, but alas! we are not able.'—Whereas here is grace sufficient for you in Christ. Whatever hinders you, Christ removes; whatever you want, Christ bestows; 'that, being delivered from your enemies, and from the hand of all that hate you;' from the influence of all that embarrasses, and all that discourages you; 'you may serve him without' slavish or disquieting 'fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of your life,' Luke i. 74, 75.

Happy deliverance! thrice happy conduct! but happier still the issue of all! Which reminds me of my last inquiry; namely,

III. What will be the effect of this turning? 'He,' the wicked man thus turned, 'shall save his soul alive.'

He shall save—safety shall be his companion; safety shall be his guard; safety shall escort him through the dangers of life. All the days of his appointed time 'he shall dwell under the defence of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty,' Psalm xci. 1. Most desirable situation! especially when judgments, desolating and destructive judgments, are abroad. While the storm of calamity is gathering, or when the tempest of tribulation is raging, O! what a calm must it create in the heart, to have the eternal God of our refuge! Deut. xxxiii. 27. to say within ourselves, "The hand that is stretched over the sea, and shakes the kingdoms of the earth; the hand that rends the mountains, and scatters the everlasting hills; Hab. iii. 6. that hand is my defence and my shield!"

Save his soul. It is not improbable, but his bodily welfare may be secured. God may set a mark upon his forehead, and command the sword of the destroying angel to pass over his house. But however this may be determined, his soul shall be safe. As to his spiritual welfare, he has a 'writ of protection' under the great seal of heaven. The Lord Jesus is his ever-faithful guardian, and 'none shall pluck him out of the divine Redeemer's hand,' John x. 28. The roaring lion may go about, seeking to devour him: but he has a strong city, which the infernal adversary cannot storm; he has an impregnable bulwark, which the powers of darkness cannot scale: Though he fall, the arm of Christ will raise him; though he be defiled, the blood of Christ will cleanse him; though he die, it will be no loss, but gain. He that has the keys of the grave, will give commandment concerning his mouldering bones; he that lives for evermore, will receive his departing soul. This, perhaps, may be meant by that other emphatical word, alive.

He shall save his soul alive. He shall not barely be safe, but happy. He shall enjoy what truly deserves the name of life. A man may escape from his enemy by flying to a fortified castle; but in the castle there may be drought and famine. He may perish by these disasters, though preserved from the pursuing foe. It shall not be thus with the returning, believing, renewed sinner. He shall be saved with a complete and everlasting salvation. He is a child of God,

and an heir of glory : he shall rejoice in Christ Jesus here, and shall enter into the joy of his Lord hereafter. When the earth is burnt up, he shall see it ; when the heavens pass away, he shall stand with boldness ; when all nature sinks into dissolution, he shall not only survive, but enjoy the ruin. He shall leave a dissolving world to possess a kingdom in heaven ; to wear a crown of righteousness ; and to be for ever with, for ever like, his blessed and glorious Lord.

We have now shewn—what the wicked man should turn from, what he should turn to, what will be the effect of his turning. Give me leave to ask, has the arm of the Lord been revealed ? are you impressed by the awful, or encouraged by the comfortable truths ? If so, perhaps you will be ready to say, “ Will Christ receive me ? will he make me a partaker of these incomparable benefits ? shall such a one, who is so very unworthy, find favour in his sight ?

Yes, such a one may find favour. Any one, every one who comes, he will receive. He sends his ministers to invite you ; he sends his judgments to compel you ; he uses every expedient to gain you. He bids earthquakes tear the foundations of nature, and turn mighty cities into ruinous heaps, that you may be built on that Rock which shall never be shaken. He calls the sword of war out of its scabbard, and commands it to be bathed in blood, that you may fly for safety to the Prince of Peace. While ruin and desolation are pursuing their dreadful work all around, he throws open the doors of his grace and righteousness, and most compassionately cries, “ Come, my people ; come, poor offenders ; enter into these chambers, and find rest,” Isa. xxvi. 20.

Is any of you still inclined to reply, “ Will Christ indeed receive me, who am not only a sinner, but a great sinner, a long-persisting sinner, and now seem to come but at the last hour ; more like one driven by fear, than drawn by love ? ” What thinkest thou ? would the widow of Nain, who went mourning after the corpse of her only son, almost inconsolable with her loss ; would she be unwilling to receive him, when our Lord re-animated the cold clay, and ‘ delivered him ’ alive ‘ to his mother ? ’ Luke vii. 15. Would she need much importunity, and hardly be prevailed on, to embrace her beloved, her lamented child ? Impossible to suppose.

Remember what Christ has done for sinners ; what he has suffered for sinners ; how his bowels yearn over sinners ; and it will appear equally impossible that he should reject any returning profligate.

Reject! No. The good father, aged and venerable as he was, hastened ; yea, ran to meet the prodigal. He fell on his neck, and tenderly kissed the dissolute youth, Luke xv. 20. So, with such readiness, and such compassion, will the everlasting Father receive you to his family, his favour, his love. Nay, more, he will receive you with joy. He is the good Shepherd ; you are the lost sheep ; he is come, in his word, to seek you : when you turn to him, he has found you. Then, says the scripture, the good shepherd goes home with his recovered sheep, ' rejoicing,' Luke xv. 5. O let your minister, and (which is unspeakably more engaging) let the blessed Jesus have joy of you, my brethren : even that Jesus by whom sinners are ' dearly beloved and longed for ;' Philip. iv. 1. who has no greater delight than to save them from their iniquities, and number them among his children.

If you should answer, " This is a matter of the utmost importance. It lies at the very root of all my comfort. Let me hear it confirmed from our Lord's own mouth. *I will hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me,*" Psalm lxxxv. 8.

Hear then his own promise ; the most precious promise that words can form, or fancy conceive ; ' Whosoever cometh to me,' for pardon, for justification, for holiness, ' I will in nowise cast him out,' John vi. 37. ' Whosoever ;' whether he be high or low, learned or illiterate ; whether he be a servant or a master, a prince or a beggar ; no one is excepted, no one shall be refused. ' In no wise :' on no consideration of past transgressions, on no account of present depravity, on no fore-knowledge of future failings. Only let him come, ' only let him come,' and nothing shall debar him from the enjoyment of my benefits ; nothing shall separate him from the endearments of my love.

Hear his kind invitation ; ' Return unto me, for I have redeemed you,' Isa. xlv. 22. Ye that have hitherto been strangers to seriousness, and always alienated from me ; ' turn unto me,' and I will not so much as upbraid you, James i. 5. with your folly. Ye that are now backsliders,

and have for a season ungratefully departed from me: 'turn unto me,' and I will heal your backslidings; my stripes shall make you whole. Ye that have been slaves to vice; have sold yourselves to work wickedness; and are grown old in abominable practices; it is not too late even for you. 'I have redeemed' even such as 'you.' I shake the pillars of nature, and rock the foundations of the world; 'I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering,' Isa. l. 3. Yet, for such as you, 'I gave my back to the smiters, and hid not my face from shame and spitting,' Isa. l. 6. Yes, sinners: sinners of every kind; I bore the curse of the law, and died the death of the cross, on purpose that I might redeem such as you. Most amiable Redeemer! who would not listen to a call so wonderfully endearing? Sinners, how can you withstand a motive so sweetly constraining?

Hear his solemn oath; 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?' Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Was there ever any declaration so charming? or any address so affectionate? See! how the high and lofty One condescends! He commands in heaven, on earth, through hell; yet, more like a supplicant than a sovereign, he vouchsafes to solicit and beseech you. From the habitation of his glory he cries, 'Turn ye,' poor perishing creatures. Again he cries, 'Turn ye' to your God and Saviour; that ye may be delivered from all your transgressions, and iniquity may not be your ruin. To take away all your reluctance, he pleads, he expostulates, 'Why will ye die?' why will ye destroy yourselves, and be undone for ever? That you may have no doubt of a free pardon, and a favourable reception, 'he swears:' swears by himself, by his own life and immortal perfections, that he 'has no pleasure in your death;' but shall rejoice, infinitely rejoice in your recovery and salvation.

Here then you have the promise, the invitation, the oath of the Lord. Can there be greater encouragement? will not this threefold cord draw you? Should you say, 'I cannot turn; I am tied and bound with the chain of my corruptions. O! that Christ'—fear not: he will, he will. He

that sends his minister to give you this exhortation ; he that sends his Spirit to work this desire in your soul ; he that spills his blood to obtain all blessings for you ; he will put forth his strength, and turn you to himself. He stretched his beneficent hand, and saved Peter from sinking in the tempestuous sea. What he did for him, is a pattern and a pledge of what he is ready to do for you. Only continue to seek his face ; let your heart talk of him ; set his unbounded goodness and almighty power before your eyes ; meditate on his infinite propitiation and incomprehensible merits ; consider his everlasting righteousness and never ceasing intercession ; look upon all these as your own. To look upon them as your own, you have a warrant, you have a command. And if Christ has done so great things for you, you may assuredly believe, that, in his due time, in his wise manner, he will ' bring you spiritual health and cure ;' he will carry on what he has begun, and enable you to grow in grace. He will comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good work.

Shall I proceed? I have already been copious, perhaps somewhat tedious. Yet you will bear with me on this distinguished and solemn occasion : yea, you will bear with me a little longer : for I am loath, very loath to dismiss you, without persuading you. Persuading ! alas, I cannot. ' God, and none but God, can persuade Japheth,' Gen. ix. 27. However, as an instrument in his all-powerful hand, let me address you once again.

I observe several persons here, on this day of humiliation, who very rarely attend the public worship. Why, my friends, why do you wrong your own souls? Why do you withdraw yourselves from the preaching of the gospel? Know ye not, ' that Jesus passeth by,' Matt. xx. 30. in the way of his ordinances? Here you may, like Bartimeus of old, approach the Son of David ; here you may obtain faith and holiness. Faith cometh by hearing, and holiness by the word of God. And are not these blessings worth your attendance? can you live happily without them? can you die comfortably without them? or can you, without them, be prepared to meet your God, when he cometh to judge the world?—Why should you forsake the assembling yourselves together? Do you hear terrifying or distressing doctrines in this place? is not this the house of praise, as well as of

prayer? does not the joyful sound echo under these roofs? is not Christ set forth crucified before your eyes? crucified for such offenders as you? crucified, that such offenders as you may be pardoned, may be accepted, may be glorified? and will you despise such a divinely compassionate Saviour? will you refuse such astonishingly-rich mercies? O! that hereafter you may 'be glad when they say unto you, Let us go into the courts of the Lord,' Psalm cxxii. 1.

Should my wishes prove vain, I have at least delivered my message. If you perish through obstinacy and unbelief, I am clear from your blood. I call heaven and earth to witness, you have been warned, you have been instructed, you have been exhorted. You cannot say, you perish for lack of knowledge; for life and salvation have been set before you, have been brought to your very door, and you are importuned to lay hold of them. You will therefore be without excuse, and have no cloak for your guilt.

But why should I leave you with such melancholy apprehensions? Let me hope better things of you: let me hope that you will not disregard these admonitions, however you may have disregarded too many exhortations of this kind. This is a remarkable day: O! that it may be memorable on account of your turning to God. Let this be its distinction through all your future life; let this be its distinction through all the ages of eternity: that you may say,—when death summons you into the invisible state; when the trump of God calls you to the great tribunal; when you mingle with saints and angels in the kingdom of heaven.—“Blessed be God for that solemn day, and its sacred exercises! That was the day of my better birth. Then I began to consider; then I began to pray; then I began to see my undone condition, and my extreme need of a Saviour: then too I saw Jesus, giving himself a sacrifice for my sins, and redeeming me to God with his blood.”—Happy! thrice happy! inexpressibly-happy day! If thus, if thus improved!

You have, I presume, abstained from your usual food, as you have been joining in confession, supplication, and prayer. This is well done: but this is only half; rather it is, by infinite degrees, the smallest part of your duty. It is not said, When the wicked man abstaineth from his usual food; but 'when he turneth from his wickedness,' as the consequence of his believing in Christ. It is not said, When the wicked



man joins in public confession to God; but when 'he doth that which is lawful and right,' as a fruit of his fellowship with Christ: then he shall save—he shall save his soul—he shall save his soul alive. O that all, from the king on the throne, to the labourer in the barn; from the highest nobleman to the meanest tradesman; that all might now be inclined, now be enabled to turn unto the Saviour of the world. In him, millions, unnumbered millions of wretched sinners, have found recovery and liberty; recovery from the death, and liberty from the bondage of sin. 'And' (blessed be his unbounded grace) 'yet there is room.'

Then the national fast would be a national blessing. Whereas, without this all-important turning to the adorable Saviour, what will the formalities of our devotion signify? They will be a mere lip-labour, a religious trifling: nay, they will be a solemn mockery of the Almighty, and provoke his abhorrence. Does not Jehovah himself speak to the same purpose? "Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?" Isa. lviii. 5; to discontinue your ordinary business, and refrain from a meal's meat? to make a little doleful lamentation, and put up a few petitions extorted by fear? 'Will you call this a fast?' saith the high and holy One, with an air of sovereign contempt; 'this an acceptable day to the Lord?' No, verily; it is the most odious hypocrisy; like crying, Hail, master, with the tongue, while treachery and enmity fill the heart: unless you turn to Christ, that you may be washed, that you may be justified, that you may be sanctified; that, having remission of sins through his blood, and peace of conscience through his grace, you may feel the bands of wickedness loosed, and may become the willing servants of righteousness.

What is the grand sin of our nation? Ignorance and neglect of Christ. What is the cause of all our other sins? Ignorance and neglect of Christ. Why are the judgments of the Almighty hanging over our heads? For ignorance and neglect of Christ. Never, therefore, shall we answer the end of our sacred assembly, nor the design of God's alarming visitations, till we begin to know Christ, to receive Christ, to make use of Christ by faith. When this is done, we may reasonably hope,—that our prayers will go up with

acceptance, and not return again, till a blessing be sent;—that, as individuals, ‘our light shall break forth like the morning, and our health shall spring forth speedily;’—that, as a community, ‘the favour of God shall go before us, and the glory of the Lord shall be our rearward,’ Isa. lviii. 8.

Then may we look around on our most enraged enemies, and say with the psalmist, ‘Though an host of men should encamp against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid,’ Psalm xxvii. 3. Then may we look backward to the late desolating earthquake, and say with the believers of old, ‘God is our refuge and strength; therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea,’ Psalm xli. 1, 2. Then may we look forward to an incomparably more dreadful scene, even to the righteous Judge, and the great tribunal, and say with the triumphant apostle, ‘Who shall lay any thing to our charge? It is God that justifieth; who shall condemn us? It is Christ that died,’ Rom. viii. 33, 34.

Let me entreat you therefore, brethren, for the sake of your own immortal souls, and for the welfare of our endangered nation; let me charge you, by all that is desirable in time, and awful in eternity, not to neglect these counsels. Being so solemnly reprov'd, if you ‘harden your neck,’ your destruction cometh suddenly and ‘that without remedy,’ Prov. xxix. 1. Having these warnings from the divine word, and warnings from the divine providence, ‘if ye still do wickedly;’ it is not man, it is not an angel, it is God Himself who declares, ‘Ye shall be consumed—even ye—your country—and your king,’ 1 Sam. xii. 25.



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THE  
KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION

PRECIOUS IN THE HOUR OF DEATH:

PROVED IN

A S E R M O N

Preached, Jan. 14, 1759,

UPON THE DEATH OF THE

REV. MR. JAMES HERVEY.

=====  
BY W. ROMAINE, M. A.

LECTURER OF ST. DUNSTAN'S IN THE WEST, LONDON.

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Righteousness delivereth from death. Prov. x. 2.

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# SERMON

ON

## MR. HERVEY'S DEATH.



LUKE ii. 29, 30.

*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*

**ACCORDING** to the ancient prophecies, in the fulness of time, God sent forth his Son. He came to his own, when there was a general expectation of his birth. Many just and devout persons in Jerusalem were then looking out for the Redeemer's coming in the flesh; and among them, good old Simeon, and Anna a prophetess, are particularly mentioned. St. Luke says, *there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and the same man was just, a justified person, and devout, fearing to offend God, as the Greek word signifies, waiting for the consolation of Israel; he was waiting for the incarnation of the divine Comforter, by whose birth all the promises of comfort were to be ratified and fulfilled, and the Israel of God was to receive everlasting consolation. The Lord was pleased to vouchsafe a particular revelation of his will in this matter to Simeon: For the Holy Spirit was upon him, and it was revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ incarnate. And he came by the direction of the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the holy child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God that he had lived to this happy hour, when he could take up the prophet's words, and say, 'Lo this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord; we*

have waited for him ; we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.\* Simeon waited to see God incarnate ; and having seen him, he wanted to live no longer. He desired his dismissal. All the ends of living were answered ; and therefore he put up this sweet prayer :—‘ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word ; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.’

With these same words, one of our dear brethren, now with the Lord, finished his course. They were the dying words of the Rev. Mr. James Hervey. He had long desired to depart, and to be with Christ, which he knew was far better than to abide in the flesh ; but he waited patiently for the Lord’s time ; and, when it was come, he thus expressed the thankfulness of his heart, ‘ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy’ most holy and comfortable ‘ word : for mine eyes have seen thy’ precious ‘ salvation.’\* The Lord heard him, and gave him a gentle dismissal. He died, as he had lived, in a perfectly even and calm composure of mind. Death shewed that he came to him as a friendly messenger to call him to glory ; for he cheerfully obeyed the summons. There was no fear, no struggle, not a sigh or groan ; but he departed in peace, and in full assurance of faith. Oh that you and I, my brethren, may so live by the faith of the Son of God ; that when we come to die, we may be able to use this same prayer, and may receive of the Lord a like gracious answer.

These sweet dying words of our dear brother have made a great impression upon several of his acquaintance : for they have been led to consider them more closely than perhaps they ever did before, and several have meditated upon them with great comfort. In order that others might do the same, and that his happy death might be the means of stirring up many to seek to die the death of the righteous, and that their latter end might be like his, I have determined to speak upon the words this day. May the same Spirit by which Simeon spake them, be in all your hearts ! may he teach you their true and full meaning, and in God’s due time, may he give you the comfortable experience of them ! Under his guidance let us consider,

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\* Several particulars in this Sermon respecting Mr. Hervey are more fully related in the account of his life, in Vol. I.

*First*, That when Simeon had seen the salvation of God, he was prepared to depart :

*Secondly*, He therefore desired it, and prayed for it ; and,

*Thirdly*, He expected he should depart in peace according to God's word which was fulfilled to him. And under each of these particulars, I shall speak of the experience of our deceased brother.

*First*, Simeon had it revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ ; and when Jesus was brought into the temple, he was directed to go and receive him for the promised Messiah, and, taking him up in his arms, he blessed God, and said, ' Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word : for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' It is evident he spoke these words in their primary sense, of his seeing Jesus with the eyes of his body ; but this could have been no great cause of joy to him, unless he had before seen Christ some other way ; for multitudes saw him with their bodily eyes, while he was upon earth, who were no better for the sight ; and multitudes will hereafter see him in his glorified body, but it will be to their everlasting confusion.— There is another kind of sight to which our church referred you this afternoon, when each of you took up these words, and said, ' For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' If you knew what you said, and spoke the truth as you had experienced it, you meant that you had seen the salvation of God with the eye of faith ; according to what is said of Moses, ' That by faith he saw him who is invisible,' Heb. xi. 27.— He saw him by the eyes of his soul, who was invisible to the eyes of his body ; for the soul has its eyes as well as the body ; but sin darkened them ; it put them into the state in which the eyes of the body are when they have no light : then they can see nothing. So the soul is said, in scripture, to be in darkness and blindness, until the eyes of the understanding be enlightened. They cannot see any spiritual objects, until the Sun of Righteousness shine upon them ; nor, when he does shine, can they see any loveliness in those objects, until they be able to act faith upon them ; for the eye of faith not only beholds the object, but also distinguishes its own interest in it. Faith keeps all the senses of the soul in act and exercise upon the proper object, which each apprehends ; here the eye of faith is fixed upon salva-



tion, not only viewing it as a blessing belonging to others, but also appropriating it to itself. ' Mine eyes have seen thy salvation : ' here Simeon, speaking of our Saviour, calls him salvation, because all salvation is in and from him. He is the author, and he is the finisher of it. The great plan of it was laid by the co-equal and co-eternal Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity, before the foundation of the world ; it was carried into execution by our divine Saviour in the fulness of time ; and he is an eternal salvation, an eternal deliverance from all evil, and an eternal possession of all good. Upon the entrance of sin into the world, this great salvation of our God was revealed, and by faith believers under the Old Testament dispensation enjoyed the benefits of it. At the appointed time Jehovah took a body of flesh, and our divine Immanuel stood up to save his people from their sins. He undertook to satisfy all the demands of law and justice. The law he satisfied, by paying it a perfect unsinning obedience ; which being a divine, as well as a human obedience, did therefore magnify the law, and make it more honourable, than if all the creatures in heaven and earth had never offended against it. Justice he satisfied, by enduring the threatened punishment ; and after his sufferings and death, justice had no more demands upon him ; for he came out of the prison of the grave with a full discharge. This satisfaction, made to law and justice by the obedience and sufferings of the Lord Jesus, is what the scripture calls the righteousness of God, because it is a divine, and infinitely perfect righteousness ; a divine righteousness wrought out by Jehovah himself, and as infinitely perfect a righteousness as Jehovah could make it. In this all-glorious righteousness of the God man, Christ-Jesus, consists the sinner's salvation : for he is accepted and justified by it ; the fruits of this righteousness are his sanctification, and the robe of this righteousness is his glorification. So that salvation in time and in eternity, depends upon the righteousness of the incarnate God. This is the fundamental doctrine of the christian religion, for which our dear brother was a noble champion.— He saw, he experienced the importance of it, and therefore, in his conversation, and in his preaching, it was his favourite topic. How sweetly, how profitably have I heard him dwell upon it ! and how excellently has he defended it in his writings ? Read his *Theron* and *Aspasio* ; and when you are thoroughly convinced that Christ is the end of the law for

righteousness to every one who believeth, and can say with faith, 'In the Lord have I righteousness and salvation;' then your mind will be settled in peace and comfort, and you will be delivered from those dangerous errors which are now propagated concerning the righteousness of the Lord Jesus. Thank God for the masterly defence of it in these dialogues.\* In them, Mr. Hervey, being dead, yet speaketh the praises of his adorable Redeemer, and clearly proves, that we have our salvation through his righteousness. Immanuel the Saviour is the justifier, as he says himself, Isa. xlv. 21, 22. 'There is no God else beside me, a God that gives righteousness, and a Saviour there is none beside me. Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.' How could they be saved by looking unto Christ? Certainly, not by a look of their bodily eyes. Simeon's joy did not arise from having Christ in his arms, and looking upon him; but from being able to look upon him by an act of faith. He knew him to be his Saviour. Thence arose his joy, and from thence must yours arise. It is the look of faith which saves; the eye of faith kept in exercise upon its proper object, even upon Jesus, the author and finisher of faith. It is this act of faith which our Lord requires: 'Look unto me,' with this pro-

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\* About a week before Mr. Hervey was taken ill, I mentioned to him a report that was spread about concerning Mr. Sandeman's Letters on Theron and Aspasio to this effect; That he (Mr. Hervey) had written a letter to Mrs. Cooke, and therein had said, that Mr. Sandeman was in the right, and had convinced him of his error; or words to that purpose. To which he answered, That he had written a letter to Mrs. Cooke, and therein he had acknowledged, that many of Mr. Sandeman's remarks were judicious, and that he had corrected some of his expressions and inaccuracies. But he said, that he was very far from having changed his opinion as to the substance and matter of the argument: for therein he thought Mr. Sandeman was entirely wrong. Whereupon I desired he would insert an advertisement in some of the London papers, signed by himself, to set this mistake right, lest it might hinder the sale and reading of his books, and thereby prevent much good. To which he agreed, and added that he would let that paragraph stand in his Answer to Mr. Wesley, relating to Mr. Sandeman, only softening the expression a little; but all this was prevented by his illness and death. The truth of this I am ready to attest.

ABRAHAM MADDOCK,

Curate of Weston-Favel.

mise annexed, 'and be ye saved.' There is salvation in the look of faith; for it sees and receives Jesus, as he is offered in scripture, for a free, full, and complete Saviour. And whoever keeps the eye of faith in constant exercise, is prepared, with good old Simeon, to depart in peace: because, by having an interest and property in the salvation of our God, he is thereby delivered from every thing that can make death dreadful, and is in possession of every thing that can make death desirable.

What is it that makes death dreadful? Is it not guilt in the conscience, accusing the sinner for the breach of the holy law, and alarming him with fear of the threatened punishment, which the justice and holiness, and truth of God are concerned to see inflicted, in time and eternity? Thus we read, 'The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.' Death has power to sting, so long as the broken law gives sin a right to accuse and condemn: all unpardoned sinners therefore are afraid of death. From this state of fear and bondage our Lord came to save his people; 'He came to deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage;' and he does deliver them, when their sins are forgiven, and his righteousness is imputed to them: for then the broken law cannot condemn, nor justice punish, there being no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Upon which death loses its sting; and when the pardoned sinner looks upon it, he sees nothing terrible in its appearance, but can boldly, and without presumption, say, 'Yea, when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou my God art with me.'

And he is not only prepared to die, because he is delivered from every thing that could make death dreadful, but also, because he is in the possession of every thing that can make death desirable. He knows he has an interest in Christ, and Christ is the possessor of heaven and earth. He has all things in his hands, and has promised to make them all work together for the good of his redeemed people; so that whoever has Christ, has all things. 'All things,' says the apostle, 'are yours, whether life or death, or things present or things to come, all are yours.' And the reason follows, 'And ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.' As all that Christ has is yours, and all that God has is Christ's, conse-

quently all is yours. And death by name is yours: no longer a curse and a punishment, but turned into a real blessing; for it is the gate and entrance, through which you pass into endless life and never-fading glory.

Thus he is prepared to depart, who has seen with the eye of faith the salvation of God. The doctrine is clear from scripture; but how is it, my brethren, in your experience? Are you prepared to depart? And on what do ye build your preparation? on the Lord Jesus, or on what? Search and see; for nothing can comfort you in the hour of death, but having received him into your hearts by faith and love. You must see his salvation, and be able to keep the eye of faith intent upon it, before you can be prepared to depart; but when this is your happy case, then, in whatever shape death comes, you will be able to say with our dear brother, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation;' He might well say, 'Mine eyes have seen thy salvation;' for all that came near him were convinced that he had seen it. The effects shewed it. He had put off the old man, and had put on the new; and was under the influence of divine love to his adorable Saviour. The love of Jesus ruled in his heart; and was therefore constantly uppermost in his mouth. He loved to be telling of his salvation all the day long. And he did not talk like a professor, full of mere head knowledge; but what he spake had a warmth, and life, and power in it, which shewed that it came from his heart. He was perfectly inflamed with the love of his divine Lord and Master: and if you sat any time in his company, you could not help catching some of the holy flame. So that if strangers to his person may doubt of his experience of a Saviour's love, we who have conversed with him cannot. We are sure, from what we saw and heard, that he had seen the salvation of God, and therefore was prepared to depart. He knew in whom he had believed, and was certain the power and the love of the dear Immanuel were in his interests; so that neither death, nor he that had the power of death, could hurt him.

A friend of mine was much with him on the 15th of December, and the discourse turned upon what Christ had done for his soul. Mr. Hervey spake strongly and earnestly of the assurance of his faith, and of the great love of God in

Christ to him. He declared, that the fear of death was taken from him; and it afterwards appeared, that death had no sting to hurt, nor the grave any power to get victory over him: for when death came, it found his mind in perfect peace. He had no uneasy apprehensions of dying, but had hopes full of glory and immortality. Doubtless then he had seen the salvation of God. The knowledge of salvation had been precious to him in life, and therefore he experienced the preciousness of it in death: for then he could give thanks to God for giving him the victory through Jesus Christ his Lord. Happy are they to whom God has given the knowledge of their salvation; they believe on good grounds, that their Saviour has brought them into a state of salvation; and therefore they are prepared to meet death, yea, they can desire and pray for it, as Simeon did; which is the *second* particular I was to consider.

Simeon knowing that he was prepared, therefore desired to depart. And this is the believer's case. He longs for death, not out of an impatient discontented temper, but out of a real holy affection. When worldly men are oppressed with troubles on all sides, and see no way to escape, they are apt to desire death, that it may bring their misery to an end, and put them out of their pain. And there are some most miserable and abject cowards, who murder themselves, to get rid of the troubles of life. These men court death as a less evil; but the believer desires it as a real blessing. He knows that his death will be to the glory of his Saviour; for it grieves him to the heart, that he should ever do any thing displeasing to such a kind Benefactor. After receiving so many tokens of Christ's love, oh! it is indeed afflicting to give him the least offence. I appeal to yourselves. You that have the love of Jesus in your hearts, are not you sorry that you love him so little? Have not you reason daily to mourn for your ingratitude to him; and what will such thoughts suggest, but a desire to be where the very occasion of offence will be removed? it was on this account that Mr. Hervey desired death; for the last morning of his life, when his brother came in to inquire after his welfare, he said, 'I have been thinking of my great ingratitude to my God.' And these thoughts made him wish to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

And he desired it as Simeon did, and all believers do, upon another motive, namely, because the Lord will get himself honour, by the honour which he will give to his people in his kingdom. 'He will be glorified,' says the apostle, 'in his saints;' he will get himself glory, by the great glory which he will bestow upon them. And as the believer has, in all things, an eye to God's glory, so has he especially in his desires to be dissolved and to be with Christ. He knows that God is glorified in him, and by him at present; but then it is imperfectly, and that grieves him. Self, or the creature, will be trying to share the heart with God, and thereby to rob him of his glory. A bare thought of this, when only rising in the mind, hurts the believer. He would have every thought brought into subjection to Christ; and that makes him desire to be where temptation and sin shall be no more, and where he shall glorify God, and God shall be glorified in him for ever and ever. With this view, Mr. Hervey desired to depart. His great love to his Saviour's glory made him wish for death. He longed to be dissolved, that he might be freed from the frailties and infirmities of this mortal life, under which he laboured, and could not always, nor in a perfect degree, promote the glory of his redeeming God: therefore he desired to be with them who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, and are ever receiving glory from him, and ever giving glory to him. And the Lord granted his desire; he literally answered his prayer; for he departed in peace, according to the word of God, as I purposed to shew under my *third* head.

What it is to be at peace with God, and to depart with a sense of this peace upon our minds, I cannot better express, than in the excellent words of the present archbishop of Canterbury, in his *Nine Sermons*, p. 132. "*The peace of God is that sense of being in friendship with him, that feeling of comfort and joy flowing from him, which passeth all understanding, exceeds the conceptions of those who have not experienced it, and will exceed hereafter the present conceptions of those who have.* And the believer, even when he is departing this life, has a sense of his being in friendship with God, and has a feeling of comfort and joy flowing from him. This is promised in scripture, and this is fulfilled to them who, being justified by faith, have peace with God: being reconciled to the Father through the Son of his love, they live, and they die in peace.

I suppose some weak in the faith are thinking thus within themselves: "Well, is it so, that true believers die in peace and joy? I am sure I could not at present; for I am dreadfully afraid of death; and what would not I give to be delivered from these fears? For they make my life miserable." My brethren, why are you in bondage to them? God offers you deliverance. There are many general promises in his word, that, let what will happen to believers, the peace of God shall rule in their hearts. Thus, Isa. xxvi. 3. 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is staid upon thee.' And as it is a perfect, so it is a continual peace. 'The Lord of peace himself,' says the apostle, 2 Thess. iii. 16. 'give you peace always by all means:' for, after he has once given this peace, he makes all means, even the most unlikely, tend to the promoting of it; therefore, death can by no means weaken, and much less destroy, this peace of God. These general promises he fulfilled to the patriarchs:—for St. Paul says, Heb. xi. 13. 'That they all died in faith:'—they acted faith in their death, and consequently had a sweet sense of the peace of God in their hearts when they died. David shews us the reason of their dying in faith, Psal. xlviii. 14. 'This God is our God for ever and ever; he shall be our guide even unto death.' They knew that their God would be with them to guide and keep them, when the body returned to dust, and the spirit returned to God who gave it: and therefore David spoke for himself, what each of them also could say,—'When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, because thou my God art then with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me even then.' Psal. xxiii. 3. With this faith, they looked upon death as disarmed of its sting and power to hurt; and therefore they laid down their heads, and fell asleep in the arms of death, with as much composure as any weary traveller ever longed for rest. They 'fell asleep.' The scripture speaks of their death under this beautiful image, to teach us, that death was as sweet to them as ever sleep was to a hard-labouring man. <sup>the</sup> ~~The~~ faithful fell asleep quietly and composedly. And how should it be otherwise? they had no evil to fear; for they were at peace with God. And what could death do to hurt that peace? It does indeed dissolve all other bonds, but it strengthens this. It is the happy instrument of fastening the bond of peace with a tie which never never can be dissolved.

And, when the faithful look upon death in this light, what is there in it but joy and peace, even a joy unspeakable, and a peace that surpasseth all understanding.

Perhaps some of you think this is not always the case; because there are very good men who have had strong conflicts and struggles before death. Nay, my brethren, think not so wickedly of God. Is it according to his word that the faithful shall depart in peace, and do they not? What! can the word of God be broken? No; it shall stand fast for ever and ever. And in the case which you state, it does not follow that this peace is weakened or destroyed, because it is tempted; by no means. The sense of this peace may remain when it is most furiously attacked; for it is the peace of God. God gave it, and God keeps it; and he may suffer the devil to tempt, but not to destroy it. The more it is tempted, the more honour redounds to God for preserving it in the fiery trial. It was more to God's glory to preserve his children in the fiery furnace, than to have kept them out of it. Doubtless he that has the power of death will make his last efforts, and try to shake the faith of a dying believer. The devil will then set upon him with all his fury. But though he be a roaring lion, yet he is chained; and the almighty Saviour so overrules his malice and rage, that he makes them work together for his glory and his people's good; as he did remarkably in the last efforts which the enemy made against our dear brother. He saw him in great weakness of body, and then made a furious onset against his faith; but the dear Immanuel was with him, and would not give him over into the enemy's hands. His faith was tried, and it came like gold out of the fire. He knew that it would be tried, and had therefore prepared himself for the fiery trial. Speaking of it to a faithful minister of Christ, who was often with him in his last sickness, he said,—“How many precious texts are there, big with the rich truths of Christ, which we do not comprehend, which we know nothing of; and of those which we do know, how few do we remember. *Bonus textuarius est bonus theologus*; and that is the armour. The word of God is the sword; these texts are the weapons, which I must use when that subtle spirit, that arch adversary of mankind, comes to tempt and sift me in my last conflict. Surely I had need be well provided with these weapons, I had need have my quiver full of them, to answer Satan with texts out



of the word of God when he assaults me." Satan did assault him, but found him prepared and armed. Mr. Hervey said to his friends the day that he died, "Oh, you know not how great a conflict I have." And, after he had sat for some time with his eyes constantly lift up towards heaven, and his hands clasped together in a praying form, he said, "Now this great conflict is over." Jesus made him conqueror over all the powers of darkness; having endeavoured to rob him of his peace; but in vain, they left him in the Saviour's arms, never more to be tempted; and he watched over him with the tenderest love, until he took him home. And when he went, he indeed departed in peace. His body seemed to be ready as well as his soul. When death came, he had not one struggle with it. There was not a single groan or sigh, or any thing that could shew the least unwillingness to depart. He had such a gentle dismissal as he had prayed for in Simeon's words. He departed in peace, and fell asleep.

I have now finished what I had to offer upon the three particulars mentioned in my text; and it appears, that when a sinner is convinced of his want of a Saviour, and is convinced that Jesus is such a Saviour as he wants, able and willing to save to the uttermost; and when he is made to see his interest in the perfect complete righteousness of this adorable Saviour, and is assured of it from the word and Spirit of God, and from the fruits of righteousness produced in his life and conversation, then he is prepared to die; then he may desire it with submission to God's will; and whenever death comes, he may expect to depart in peace, according to the word of God. These great truths I have illustrated from scripture and from experience; more especially from the experience of our dear brother, now with the Lord, of whom I have spoken nothing more than what the words of my text naturally led me to say. If I were to attempt to draw the character of this excellent man, I would consider him in the several relations in which he stood to God and man, and would exhort you to follow him, so far as he followed Christ. But the compass of this discourse will not suffer me to enlarge. I can only just observe some particular instances, from whence it will evidently appear, that he had seen the salvation of God. He had a clear view of it by the eye of faith, and was able to act faith upon it; for his was a faith working by love. "We love God," says the beloved apostle,

“because he first loved us ;” because we know by faith that he first loved us : so that our love is the reflex act of his love to us. And Mr. Hervey had great experience of God’s love to him, and therefore his heart was full of love to God ; and out of the abundance of his heart his mouth spake. There was such a sweetness of heart-love upon his tongue, that he used to speak of the love of the adorable Redeemer, like one who had seen him face to face in the fulness of his glory. He would, with all the power of language, and dignity of sentiment, speak for a long time together, in praise of the ever blessed Saviour. But you might plainly see, though every body else was pleased, yet he was not satisfied with what he had said. He thought he had not said enough, and what he had said fell far below his Lord’s merit. But still he would try again, and indeed was never weary. You could not hear him speak, for any time, upon this his favourite subject, without being convinced that he felt what he said ; and if you had any love of God, when you went into his company, his conversation would inflame it. He had an excellency, which I never saw, to so great a degree, in any other person. He never let an opportunity slip of speaking of the love of Christ. He would take occasion from the most common incident, and yet it would not appear forced : for he had a wonderful talent at spiritualizing and improving whatever happened about him ; by which means he hindered the conversation from turning upon trifling matters, and, at the same time, kept it up with spirit and usefulness. Having set the Lord always before him, he saw the love of God in every thing ; and therefore it is not to be wondered at, that all objects and events should give him occasion to speak of it. In his last sickness, it continued still to be his favourite theme ; for whenever my friend, who was much with him, came into the room, he would begin to talk of the love of Christ, and of the great things which Christ had done for him, until his breath failed him ; and as soon as he had recovered himself a little, he would proceed upon the same sweet subject : so that he might have truly applied to himself the words of the prophet,—‘ My mouth shall be telling of thy righteousness and of thy salvation all the day long ; for I know no end thereof.’

This heart-love to God, appeared evidently in every part of his character. As a minister, his faith wrought by love to the souls of men in all the offices of his function. While his

health permitted him, he watched like a faithful shepherd over his flock. He used to visit them from house to house, and to speak freely to them of the state of their souls; and when the weakness of his body obliged him to drop these religious visits, he would often grieve that he could not be more useful, and would speak with great concern and uneasiness of his not being able to preach oftener, and to do more for Christ. In the pulpit he was fervent and earnest with his people, and would often exert himself beyond his strength: for he preached the great doctrines of salvation, as one who had experienced the power of them. It was manifest to all who heard him, that he felt what he spake. And when we speak what we know, and testify what we have seen, then God blesses this experimental preaching. He puts a divine power and energy into it, and renders it effectual to awaken sinners, to comfort them that mourn for sin, and to edify and build up the faithful. Mr. Hervey had many happy proofs of the usefulness of his preaching for each of these purposes; and therefore he did not think it enough to preach once a-week on the Lord's day, but he set up a weekly lecture at Weston Favcl, which was very well attended, and was blessed to many of his neighbours, who will be his glory and crown of rejoicing in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming.

He did not forget that he was a minister in his own house; for he called his family together twice a day to serve God. It was his custom in the evening, after the servants had read the Psalms, and the second lesson, to explain some part of what had been read. In this exercise he would sometimes dwell for half an hour; and when he met with a sweet passage upon the love of Christ, I have heard him speak for three quarters of an hour, and then he concluded with prayer.

In the morning when the family were met together, he used to ask the servants,—“Well! where was our text last night?” And after they had repeated it, he made them give an account of what had been said upon it; and then he would repeat and enforce his last night's discourse, concluding with prayer.

In the afternoon, when he was called down to tea, he used to bring his Hebrew Bible, or Greek Testament with him, and would either speak upon one verse, or upon several ver-

ses, as occasion offered. This was generally an improving season. The glory of God is very seldom promoted at the tea-table; but it was at Mr. Hervey's. Drinking tea with him was like being at an ordinance; for it was sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

As a member of society, his faith wrought abundantly by love to his neighbour: for he was full of good works. His charities to the poor were very large; and, that he might be liberal to them, he was very frugal in his own expenses.— He chose rather to clothe the poor, than to give them money. He used to get some judicious person to buy linen, coarse cloth, stockings, shoes, &c. for them at the best hand, alleging, that the poor could not buy so good a commodity at the little shops, and with driblets of money. "I am God's steward," says he, "for his poor, and I must husband the little pittance I have to bestow upon them, and make it go as far as possible." But where money would be particularly serviceable to a family long afflicted with sickness, or to a prudent housekeeper who had met with great losses in trade, he would give five, ten, or fifteen guineas at a time, taking care it should not be known from whence the money came.

He gave away a great number of good books, with suitable instructions for their use, and especially Bibles. In the blank leaf, he frequently wrote something striking, or else stuck in a printed paper, relating to the promises of God in and through Jesus Christ.

Mr. Hervey's income was but small, and it may be wondered how he managed it so well as to have such sums to spare for charitable uses; but what money was left, after the family expenses were paid, and all the profits arising from the sale of his books, which was a very considerable sum, he gave away in charity. He made of it a bank for the poor. "And this," says he, "I have devoted to God. I will on no account apply it to any worldly uses. I write not for profit or for fame, but to serve the cause of God; and, as he has blessed my attempt, I think myself bound to relieve the distresses of my fellow-creatures, with the profit that comes from this quarter." And he is still relieving them.— He was not willing that his charities should die with him; for he ordered all the profit arising from the future sale of his books, to be constantly applied to charitable uses. Thus, having believed in God, he was careful to maintain good

works, knowing that these things are good and profitable unto men.

In his private life, he was under the influence of the same faith, working by love to the will and commandments of God. His holy walking was very exemplary. What he said, in words, concerning his interest in the Redeemer's righteousness, he proved by his actions: for he was very sensible of the importance of this scripture, 'He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk as he walked.' (1 John ii. 6.) Mr. Hervey walked very close after Christ; and found that the belief of Christ's righteousness being imputed to him for his justification, was so far from being a licentious doctrine, that it inspired him with the noblest motives to a grateful obedience. His holy life was an excellent recommendation of his principles; for I never saw one who came up so near to the scripture-character of a Christian.— God had enriched him with great gifts, and with great graces, and had made him humble; for he was humbled by the power of grace. He had been a very vain proud young man; but the grace of God emptied him of pride and self, and clothed him with humility. Having put on Christ, he had put on with him the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit; which appeared in his great patience and resignation to the will of God. He had some very sharp trials of his faith and patience, both from God and from men; and he learned obedience by the things which he suffered. It was very remarkable, that, in his long illness he was never known to fret or be uneasy; nor did the persons about him ever hear one angry, or one hasty word come out of his mouth.

The same principles of faith working by love was manifest in his studies, which he directed to the glory of God.— He was once a great reader of the Greek and Roman authors, and his writings shew that he had a good taste for classical learning; but for some years past he chiefly applied himself to the study of the sacred scriptures. God had blessed him with a fine understanding, and a great memory, which he exercised in reading the Bible in the original languages. He was very well skilled in the Hebrew, and was an excellent critic in the Greek, and was a scribe instructed into the kingdom of heaven, who, like unto a man that is an house-holder, bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old. He had a great veneration for this treasure of the

Old and New Testaments. He used to talk of them in the highest terms, next to that adorable person of whom they treat. They were sweeter to him than honey and the honey comb ; and so they will be to every one who reads them, as he did, with faith. Whoever can act faith upon the exceeding great and precious promises contained in the sacred volume, will find so much sweetness in it, that he will have but little relish left for other books.

As to his writings, I leave them to speak for themselves. They stand in no need of my praises. They are in the hands of the public, and every reader will form his own judgment. Oh ! that the Spirit of the living God may direct it, that whoever reads his writings, may learn to have no confidence in the flesh, but to make mention of Jehovah's righteousness, even of his only.

The time would fail me, if I was to enlarge upon all the particulars of his life and death. That was not my design. I only intended briefly to relate some things, from whence a tolerable judgment might be formed of Mr. Hervey's character. But I cannot finish without taking notice of the last scene of his life, which was very triumphant and glorious.— The last and great trial of his faith was more precious than that of gold which perisheth. Its preciousness never appeared more than in the hour of his death ; for then he evidently saw by faith, and apprehended the salvation of God, and could rejoice in a clear view of his own interest in it.— When Dr. Stonehouse saw him for the last time, namely on Christmas-day, about two hours before he expired, Mr. Hervey pressed home upon him his everlasting concerns, in the most affectionate manner ; telling him that here is no abiding place, and begging of him to attend, amidst the multiplicity of his business, to the one thing needful.

The doctor, seeing the great difficulty and pain with which he spoke (for he was almost suffocated with phlegm and frequent vomitings) and finding by his pulse that the pangs of death were then coming on, desired that he would spare himself. "No," says he, "Doctor, no. You tell me I have but few moments to live ; oh ! let me spend them in adoring our great Redeemer. Though my flesh and my heart fail me, yet God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." He then expatiated in the most striking manner upon these words of St. Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

“ All things are yours, life and death, for ye are Christ’s.”  
 “ Here,” says he, “ is the treasure of a Christian. Death is reckoned amongst this inventory ; and a noble treasure it is. How thankful am I for death, as it is the passage through which I pass to the Lord and giver of eternal life, and as it frees me from all this misery you now see me endure, and which I am willing to endure, as long as God thinks fit ! for I know he will, by and by, in his own good time, dismiss me from the body. These light afflictions are but for a moment, and then comes an eternal weight of glory. Oh welcome, welcome death !—Thou mayest well be reckoned among the treasures of the Christian.—To live is Christ, but to die is gain.”

After which, as the doctor was taking his final leave of him, Mr. Hervey expressed great gratitude for his visits, though it had been long out of the power of medicine to cure him —He then paused a little, and with great serenity and sweetness in his countenance, though the pangs of death were then on him, repeated these triumphant words—

“ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy most holy and comfortable word : for mine eyes have seen thy precious salvation. Here, Doctor, is my cordial. What are all the cordials to the dying, compared to the salvation of Christ ? This, this supports me.” He found this supporting him in his last moments, and declared it, by saying, twice or thrice, Precious salvation ! and then leaning his head against the side of the easy chair in which he sat, he shut his eyes, and fell asleep.—Oh precious salvation ! how precious must it be to the dying man, who, interested in it, can thank God for death, and reckon it among his riches ; who supported by faith in the salvation of God, can account it his gain to die : and can gladly say, Oh welcome, welcome death ! May this faith support you, my brethren, when all other supports fail, and make salvation as precious to you as it was to Mr. Hervey ! and of this you may be assured, that what the Lord did for him, he is able also to do for you. He was indeed, a glorious instance of the power of grace ; for by the grace of God he was what he was. And grace is free ; as free for you as it was for him ; able also to make you live and die as much to the glory of God as he did. He was truly a burning and shining light ; but the Lord’s hand is not shortened. It can make your

might shine also before men, and enable you to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour, as much as Mr. Hervey did.— And the great use to be made of his example is, to stir you up to glorify God for the gifts and graces bestowed upon him, and to desire the same may be bestowed upon you. With this view I shall apply it,

*First,* To those persons who have never seen the salvation of God, and consequently are not prepared to depart in peace; and these are all careless sinners, who live secure in the wilful commission of sin. Mr. Hervey knew, that whenever the Lord should call him out of this life, he should be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; and, clothed in this righteousness, he was certain that he should appear at the bar of justice without spot of sin, unto eternal salvation. But this is not your experience. Nay, you have never been awakened to desire it. You have never been humbled under a sense of your lost condition, nor broken down under a conviction of your helplessness: so that you have never seen your want of a Saviour, and consequently, have never seen the salvation of our God. If you entertain any hopes of departing in peace, while you are in this state, you are of all men the most deceived; for when death comes, it will find you in your sins unpardoned, without any faith in the Redeemer's righteousness to make death desirable, but with every thing that can make it terrible. The holy, just and good law of the most high God will accuse, conscience will plead guilty, justice will condemn and punish, and the wrath of God will abide upon you for ever and ever. How is it possible you should depart in peace, unless you die insensible? and that would be dreadful indeed. If sin should so far infatuate you that you never awake out of its delusive slumbers, until you are called to receive the wages of sin, Oh! think what sort of a peace you speak to yourselves! since it leaves you in the greatest danger, and at the same time, insensible of it. To depart in such a false peace, would be your everlasting destruction. Oh! sirs, consider then what a delusion you are under! The wrath of an offended God abideth on you, the curses of his broken law hang over your guilty heads, and you are liable to the vengeance of his almighty justice; and yet you think yourselves safe. You



are saying, peace, peace, while all the powers in heaven and earth are at war with you, and in a moment you may be cut off, and delivered over to the tormentors; and then you will have a sad and eternal experience of that awful threatening, 'There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.'

Men and brethren, what do you say to these things? Are they true, or are they not? If they be true, why are you not influenced by them? And if you think them not true, why do you make any profession of the Christian religion? why do you come to the house of God to attend upon his ordinances? Your appearance here ranks you among professors; and, if you keep up the form, without the power of godliness, I have for you in the *second* place, a word of reproof.

There have arisen, in the latter days, mockers, who pretend to ridicule the seeing of the salvation of God, and the being thereby prepared to depart in peace. Possibly there may be some such amongst us to-day, who laugh at all vital and experimental religion. If there be, I would ask them, whether the scripture has not promised deliverance from the fear of death? Is it not written (Heb. xi. 15.) 'That Christ came to deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage?' Observe, they were in bondage to the fear of death, but Christ came to deliver them. And did he not attain the end for which he came? Most certainly he did. 'I have finished,' says he to his Father, 'the work which thou gavest me to do.' Now, it was part of the work to deliver his people from the fear of death; and as the work was finished, consequently they are delivered. And they say they are. They attest it, and they have given the most convincing proofs of their having conquered all fear of death; they have been afflicted, tormented, stoned, sawn asunder, put on the rack; and yet they would not accept deliverance, because they were sure of obtaining a better resurrection. And of these there have not been two or three only, but a noble and numerous army, yea a great multitude, whom no man could number; and, glory be to God, it is an increasing multitude: there are some who daily depart in peace, and there are hundreds, thousands now alive, who are waiting for their departure with hopes full of immortality. And why should you think they will be disappointed of their hope? Will Christ break his word? Can his promise

fail? No; his word and his promise shall be established, when heaven and earth shall be no more; and until the place of them shall not be found, the Lord will always have such witnesses of the truth of the doctrine in my text, as Mr. Hervey, who will depart this life in the triumph of faith.

Against these plain facts what can you object? They are founded upon the clear promises of scripture, which are literally fulfilled at this very day; and you can have no pretence to reject their authority, unless you run into downright scepticism, and deny the authority of the holy scriptures.— If any of you have arrived at this pitch of ridicule, I shall not reason with you at present. Let the day decide the point. If death does not, judgment will. You will be forced to be tried by that book which you reject, and by that judge whom you have insulted and vilified. O that you may be convinced of your error before it be too late! May God open your eyes to see your guilt and your danger, that you may sue for mercy along with them who are seeking the experience of the doctrine in my text; to whom I have in the *third* place, a word of comfort.

I suppose there are many persons here, who find the sting of death in their guilty consciences, and who therefore desire to be delivered from the fear and from the power of death.— My brethren, there is a glorious Deliverer, who has in his own person, conquered death, and him that had the power of death; and he is able to make you conquerors. His power is almighty; for he is the Lord God omnipotent; and he is an all-loving Saviour, who is more ready to give, than you are to ask his promised help. Since he has shewn you your want of it, ask and you shall have, seek and you shall find.

You do seek, you say, but it is with many doubts and fears. Of what do you doubt? Of Christ's power, or of Christ's love? He can deliver you. All things are possible to him, because all power in heaven and earth is in his hands. And he is a God of love; he has shewed mercy to the greatest of sinners, and has shed his love abroad in their hearts. He has given them faith to see their interest in him, and then they were happy, living or dying; for whether they lived, they lived unto the Lord; or whether they died, they died unto the Lord; so that living or dying, they were the Lord's.

True, say you, I believe this was the happy case of Mr. Hervey, and of many others; but I am full of doubts and

fears, because I am such an unworthy creature, that I do not deserve any mercy. Nor did they: God did not treat them upon the footing of desert; what he gave them was mere bounty, flowing from the riches of his unmerited love. That is the way in which he bestows his great salvation. All the blessings of it are free, as free for one sinner as for another. None are excluded, because they are great sinners; Paul found mercy: and none are rejected, because of their own unworthiness; Mary Magdalen was pardoned; and why may not you? For all the gifts of God flow from his free grace, and are bestowed upon unworthy sinners; and if you are one of them, you are a proper object to receive the blessings of free grace; and the sense of your unworthiness should make you more earnest in asking, but it is no bar to your receiving all the blessings of salvation; for Jesus Christ assures us in his word, 'that he came to seek and to save that which was lost; such lost sinners as you are.

Thus you see what encouragement you have to believe in God. You have his word and his promise to rely upon; you have the testimony of God's people, declaring that they were once as you are, afraid of death, but now Christ has taken away the fear of it. They have seen the salvation of God, and know by faith, that all the blessings of it are freely given them in Christ Jesus; therefore, they are ready, they desire to depart. May the tender mercies of our God bring every one of you into this happy state! And to those who are already in it, I make my *fourth* remark.

My christian friends and brethren, you have seen the salvation of God, and are delivered from the fear of death; what return will you make unto the Lord for all the benefits which he hath done unto you? Certainly you will not forget the great things which he has already given you, and the greater things for which you are waiting; and let these considerations constrain you to love his divine Benefactor, and to serve him without fear, in an holy obedience, all the days of your lives. Give evidence of the sincerity of your love, as your Lord requires; 'if ye love me, keep my commandments:—Keep near to me in my ways, and walk close with me in my ordinances, and you will not only thereby give proof of your love, but it will also grow exceedingly; and as it grows, your desire to depart will grow with it; for, when the love of Christ rules in the heart, you will be ready, yea,

you will desire to depart, and to be with him. This was the happy experience of our deceased brother; and let his example stir you up to great care and watchfulness in your holy walking heaven-wards; that your faith may be always working by love as his did. Consider the graces of his life, and seek the same. Stop not short, but try to get beyond him. Consider his death. Remember with what perfect assurance he spake of his interest in Christ, and what strong proofs he gave of it; and then pray that your faith may stand as unshaken as his was in that great time of trial. And, above all, forget not what supported him in his last moments; it was the clear view he had of his interest in the great salvation of God: "This, this," says he, "supports me,"—now at the approach of death. Oh, how precious did salvation then appear to him, when he found death coming disarmed, and without a sting! and it grew still more precious, when, with his last breath, he declared, that death had no power to hurt the peace of God, which ruled in his heart; for even then he found salvation precious. You need not fear, my brethren, but this will be your happy experience. God has given you the knowledge of salvation, by the remission of your sins; and as your faith grows exceedingly, salvation will grow exceedingly precious. The greater experience you hereby get of the love of Christ, the more will you be supported under the trials of life, and the better prepared for the trials of death. You will find, that the sweet sense of Christ's love in the heart, will enable you to rejoice in suffering, and then you need not fear but it will enable you to rejoice in the sufferings of death. For who, or what shall separate believers from the love of Christ? Shall the troubles of life, or the pains of death? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No; in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. More than conquerors! Oh glorious warfare, in which believers not only conquer their enemies, but also reap innumerable and endless blessings to themselves. Even death is to them a real blessing; they expect it, they find it so, and they are more than conquerors over it, through him that loved them.

In the *last* place, I must put you all in remembrance, that neither the words of my text, nor what has been said upon them, will be of any benefit without a blessing from God.

We cannot see his salvation with the eye of faith, nor experience the power of it, without the help of his grace. It is from him, who has done all for us, that all must be done in us; and if some good impressions have been made this day upon any of your hearts, they will soon wear away, unless he preserve and strengthen them. If you desire, at present, to live Mr. Hervey's life, and to die his death, this desire will be ineffectual, unless it be carried into act by the mighty working of God's Spirit: he is all in all. For which reason we always begin and always end the hearing of the word with prayer; being assured, that if Paul should plant, and Apollos should water, yet it would be to no purpose, unless God should give the increase. Oh that it may be abundant this day to his glory, and to the good of your souls. To that end let us pray.—

O almighty and most merciful God, we humbly beseech thee to look down with mercy upon this congregation, and to bless the words which we have heard this day with our outward ears. Make them the means of opening the blind eyes which have never seen their want of thy salvation. Lord, enlighten them, and help them to seek, until they find pardon and peace in thee. Be gracious to those who are now waiting upon thee, believing, that after they have seen thy salvation, they shall be able to depart in peace. O Lord God, manifest it unto them, and add this day to the number of those who have seen and experienced it. We desire to glorify thee for every living Christian who knows in whom he has believed, and is ready and prepared to depart in peace. We give all the praise to the riches of thy free grace. And we also bless thy holy name for all thy servants departed this in thy faith and love: beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, as they followed Christ; that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom. Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate; to whom, with thee, and the Holy Spirit, three co-equal persons in one Jehovah, be honour, and glory, and blessing, and praise, for ever and ever. Amen.

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**T R A C T S**

**ON**

**SEVERAL INTERESTING SUBJECTS.**

**BY**

***JAMES HERVEY, A. M.***

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**REMARKS**

**ON**

**LORD BOLINGBROKE'S LETTERS.**

**ON THE**

**STUDY AND USE OF HISTORY;**

**SO FAR AS THEY RELATE TO THE**

***HISTORY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT,***

**AND ESPECIALLY TO THE CASE OF**

**NOAH, DENOUNCING A CURSE UPON CANAAN:**

**IN A**

**LETTER TO A LADY OF QUALITY.**



**Merces profundo, pulchrior evenit. Hor.**

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## PREFACE.

*THE* reader will see, from the date of the following letter, that it was written a considerable time ago. From which circumstance he will probably conclude, that it was not intended for publication. A conjecture which is perfectly just. The publication is owing to the right honourable personage, whose name, though it would grace and recommend his papers, the author is not allowed to mention. Her ladyship's commands, which would admit of no excuse, drew the remarks from his pen; and her desire, which, with him, will always have the force of a command, has brought them to the press. It will give him the highest pleasure, if, while he is paying the debt of obedience and gratitude to a noble friend, he may support the dignity of the divine word; may raise its esteem, and promote its study among men: because then he may reasonably hope to promote the best interests of his fellow-creatures; and subserve that grand designation of the Almighty Majesty, expressed by the psalmist,—“Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name,” *Psalm cxxxviii. 2.*

# REMARKS

ON

**BOLINGBROKE'S LETTER,**

IN A

**LETTER TO A LADY OF QUALITY.**



MADAM,

AS you was pleased to ask my opinion concerning lord Bolingbroke's remarks on the scriptural history, I have procured the book; have perused what relates to the subject; and submit to your judgment the thoughts which occurred: assuring your ladyship, that, though many might discuss the point much more clearly and satisfactorily than the person you favoured with your commands; yet no one can think it a greater honour to receive them, or a greater pleasure to execute them.

“The Old Testament,” it is alleged, “is no sufficient foundation for chronology from the beginning of time.”\*— To enter upon the niceties of chronology, would, perhaps, be too difficult a research; at least, it would require from your ladyship a more painful attention, than I should chuse to occasion by any of my letters. And I very frankly own, that I am by no means master of the argument, nor equal to the task. Others, I don't doubt, whose inclination has disposed, and whose genius has fitted them for this particular study, will undertake to decide the question, and give the honour where the honour is due. This, however, from a very scanty survey of the case, I can easily discern; that the

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\* See Lord Bolingbroke's Letters on the Study and Use of History, vol. i. p. 98.

chronologer will no where find such memorable events for fixing his æras, nor such early and substantial aids for computing his time, as from the Mosaic monuments, and the sacred annals.

From the beginning of the world to the flood, we have an orderly gradation of time, marked out by the lives of ten eminent patriarchs. From the flood, we may proceed to that glorious promise of a Redeemer, made to Abraham; 'In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.' From this promise to the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. From thence, to the building of Solomon's temple; which was an illustrious type of that divine Person, Gen. xxii. 18. John ii. 21. 'in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' From the building of this magnificent structure, to the demolition of it by the Babylonian monarch. From thence, to the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus the Persian. And from the reign of Cyrus, to that grand, that most important of all transactions, the death of Messiah the Prince; when he 'finished the transgression, and made an end of sins, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness,' Dan. ix. 24.

The intermediate space, between each of these very distinguished periods, may, I believe, be ascertained, to a considerable degree of exactness, from the sacred volumes. If so, this will constitute a more comprehensive and perfect system of chronology, that can be derived from the Olympiads of the Grecians, or the Hegira of the Mahometans; from the Persian, the Roman, or any other epocha.

But the history of the Old Testament is much more necessary to be known, and much more easy to be understood. Yet this, my lord suggests, is not a complete history of the first ages. Page 83. We allow the suggestion. It neither is, nor has materials for, a complete universal history. It pretends to nothing more, than to relate the affairs of one particular family; in which the church of God was to subsist, and from which the Saviour of men was to spring. Nevertheless, so many collateral interests are touched upon, so many branches of this main stream are occasionally pursued, as present us with a collection of the most ancient, the most curious, and most instructive facts.

Here we are brought acquainted with the creation of the

world, and the formation of man. The origin of evil both natural and moral, is discovered in the fall of our first parents; and the displeasure of God against sin, is manifested by the waters of a general deluge. Here we see the preservation of our species in the ark, and re-peopling of the earth by Noah; the invention of polite arts, and the rise of useful manufactures, Gen. iv. 20—22; the establishment of nations, and the founders of their principal kingdoms!\* Not to add, that these records are the royal archives, in which the charter of our sovereignty† over the creatures is preserved, and the original draught of the covenant of grace‡ deposited. Here, then, may we not challenge any or all the books written in every language under heaven? What memoirs go so far back into antiquity? What memoirs are so interesting to all mankind? Had they been transmitted to us by any Grecian or Roman author, how would they have been admired and valued! how lavishly, and indeed how justly praised!

Another excellency of these writings (and peculiar to these alone) is, that they not only reach backward, as far as the very birth of things, but proceed forwards, even into the remotest futurity. They foretold the ruin of Babylon,§ the noblest, the best fortified, and most commodiously situated metropolis in the universe; who said, and no one would have suspected it to be a vain boast. ‘I shall be a lady for ever.’|| Yet the scriptures pronounced her utter destruction,¶ and specified the person who should bring about this great catastrophe. They pointed out the place of his abode:\*\*—they described him by several distinguishing circumstances:††—

\* Gen. chap. x. Which, though but little adverted to, is the noblest piece of geographical antiquity extant in the world. It shews us how the whole earth, from the three sons of Noah, was overspread, inhabited, and denominated. It discovers the true source of the several nations; about which profane authors either say nothing at all, or else say what is chimerical, precarious, false.

† Gen. i. 28.

‡ Gen. iii. 15.

§ Isa. xiii. 19. &c. xvi. 23, 24.

|| Isa. xlvii. 7.

¶ Isa. xiii. 19, 20, &c. xvi. 23, 24.

\*\* Isa. xlvi. 11.

†† That he should besiege and take the most impregnable of cities, Isa. xlv. 1, 2;—That he should enrich himself with

they particularized the genius of his warlike enterprises ;\*— they mentioned his very name, Isa. xlv. 28. xlv. 1.—all this, some hundreds of years before the event took place, or the conqueror was born.

They foretold the rejection and calamities of the disobedient Jews, who are the chief subject of their history ; (and this surely could not be with a view to aggrandize their nation, or to answer any sinister design :) that they should be subdued by their enemies, lose the favour of their God, and the possession of their native land ; yet not be settled, as a colony, in some particular tract of the victor's dominions, but be scattered abroad, under the whole heavens, Deut. xxviii. 64. Amos ix. 2. This was threatened by their Jehovah,—this is recorded in their books,—and this is, even now, so remarkably fulfilled, as to be a fact of the utmost notoriety. Go into the most polite or most barbarous countries, the nearest or most distant parts of the world ; you will, every where, find living evidences of this scriptural prediction.

The scriptures speak in the most explicit and peremptory terms, with regard to the restoration of the Jews.† This

immense spoils, Isa. xlv. 3 ;—that he should not be a tyrant, but a shepherd to the captive Jews ; should release them from their captivity, and both permit and promote the rebuilding of their temple, Isa. xlv. 28.

\* He is called a ravenous bird, Isa. xlv. 11. denoting his speed, activity, and great expedition. Which were more like the flight of a swift winged bird than the march of an army, with all its incumbrances. This is acknowledged by Tigranes, in his fine expostulatory discourse with Cyrus. “ You far exceed the king of Armenia in the swiftness of your motions, that, before he could get together the few forces quartered in his neighbourhood, you are come from a distant country, and have surrounded him with a large army.” Xenoph. *Cyropæd.* lib. III. Thus Alexander, whose marches and whose victories were almost incredibly swift, is beautifully and exactly characterised by the proper Daniel. ‘ As I was considering, behold ! an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground.’ Chap. viii. 5. No orator ; with all the power of language, could more beautifully have described the rapidity of the Macedonian conquests ; nor could any historian, though writing after the accomplishment of the events, have described them more exactly.

† Ezek. xi. 17. Amos ix. 14, 15. Zech. xiv. 10, 11. I have not ventured to determine, whether this restoration of the Jews

restoration could not be effected, at least could not be observed, if they had been blended and incorporated with the inhabitants of other climes. Therefore to be a presumptive proof of its accomplishment; and to render it, when accomplished, the most observable of all revolutions; they have subsisted a distinct people, amidst all the regions whither they have been driven. A most singular and astonishing circumstance! How soon were the Danes, the Saxons, and the Normans, mingled with the Britons! and how entirely are they all melted down, and lost among the natives of our isle! But the Jews, like a drop of oil on the water, have continued a separate community; and though dispersed into all nations, are not, through the long course of seventeen hundred years, embodied with any. This is such a peculiarity in the dispensations of Providence as I can never sufficiently admire; and is, I think, an undeniable voucher to the authenticity of the scriptures; held forth, as it were by the hand of Omnipotence, in the sight of all the world.

Such events the ancient scriptures foretell, and such facts they relate; facts of incomparable grandeur, and events of the greatest importance. All which are delivered in such a majestic simplicity of style, as nothing can equal but their precise veracity.—Yet these books Lord Bolingbroke disparages; and, at the same time, extols the writings of Tacitus.—“The remains of Tacitus,” he tells us, “are precious remains.”\* Those of the holy scripture are dark and imperfect accounts.† In Tacitus “history preserves her integrity and her lustre.”‡ In the holy scripture, instead of

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is to be understood of a return to their own country, or of their conversion to the faith of Christ, though I think, the latter is the meaning of the Holy Spirit; will be no less wonderful than the former; and seems to be supported by such passages as the following.—“They shall look on Me, whom they have pierced, and mourn.” The gift of repentance, not the circumstance of place, is the material point, Zech. xiii. 10 —“When it shall turn,” not the tribes of Israel to Jerusalem, but the heart of the “Israelities to the Lord,” 2 Cor. iii. 16.—Then “all Israel shall be saved,” Rom. xi. 26 shall be made partakers of the gospel, of its sacred privileges, and its great salvation. In which they will enjoy all, more than all the blessings, which Canaan could afford. Of which that goodly land, in its utmost fertility, affluence, and glory, was but a type.

\* Page 164.

† Page 108.

‡ Page 161.

history, you have “an heap of fables; which can pretend to nothing but some inscrutable truths, and therefore useless to mankind.”\* Every line of Tacitus has weight,† and cannot be mentioned without admiration. Whereas, the sacred history is put upon a level with the extravagancies of Amadis of Gaul,‡ and “can never gain sufficient credit from any reasonable man.§

‘Who is this uncircumcised Philistine,’ (said David) that he should defy the armies of the living God?|| 1 Sam. xvii. 26. And who is this Tacitus, would I ask, this darling author, that he should be raised to the skies, while the divine historians are trodden to the dust?—If your ladyship is unacquainted with his character, let me give it in the words of a most elegant and masterly critic. “Having considered the principal qualities of Tacitus as a writer and an historian, I cannot help thinking there is a false sublime and affectation in his descriptions; a scurrility and satirical vein, with too epigrammatical a conciseness in his wit; an acuteness, but too speculative, and a policy, over refined in his observations; a malignant and ill-natured turn in his characters; a philosophy too abstracted and elevated in his reasonings, and a vanity in his learning. In short, that he is in antiquity a pedant; in the philosophy of nature a sceptic; in morals loose; in descriptions gaudy and pompous; in politics subdolous, refined and knavish.”

Yet this is the writer that must be placed in such great su-

\* Page 121..

† Page 161.

‡ Page 121.

§ Page 118.—If, in the pages I have referred to, and the sentences I have quoted, my lord does not aim at the scriptural records, I should very willingly, nay, most gladly acknowledge myself mistaken. To me, after a repeated and attentive perusal of the passages, he appears to mean those, and those principally. He means, according to his own profession, such ancient history as he had been describing (see page 118.); and I am very sure, the principal subject of the preceding sheets was the sacred.—But why should not his lordship speak his sentiments plainly? Is it for want of ingenuity? or owing to diffidence in the cause?

|| The Treatise, which furnishes me with this extract, is written by Mr. Hunter; is entitled, Observations on Tacitus; and, if my reader has not perused them, I dare venture to assure him, that he has one of the highest entertainments in polite literature yet to come. See page 184.

periority to Moses, Joshua, and Samuel; this the history (rise criticism, and resent the indignity!) that is spoken of with applause and rapture, even while the sacred annals are treated with disrespect and obloquy.

I might recount the glorious privileges exhibited in this blessed book; the inestimable promises made to the righteous; the tenderly-compassionate invitations addressed to sinners; the refined and exalted displays of morality; with many other noble particulars;—which it is the prerogative of scripture to contain,—the wisdom of mankind to believe,—and the only felicity of our nature to be interested in them, and influenced by them.

But my Lord is ready to agree on these topics. He expresses, in some places at least, no dislike of the doctrinal and prophetic parts. Nay, he has contrived an expedient to rescue them from the dishonour which he would bring upon the historical. He allows the former to be written under the inspiration of the holy and unerring Spirit. The latter, he affirms, are “purely human, and therefore fallible.” Page 96. Proceeding upon this supposition, he scruples not to represent them, as the devices of craft, or the blunders of ignorance.†

I must beg leave to observe, that such a distinction is without the least ground of reality to support it; and would, if admitted, be an effectual method to subvert the whole of revelation. For, if it could be proved, that the authors of this history were so weak as to fall into palpable errors, where a common degree of sagacity would have secured them from mistaking; or if they were so treacherous as to palm upon the world a multiplicity of forgeries; so impious as to ascribe their falsehoods to the God of truth; this would at once ruin their character as men, and destroy their credit as writers.—At this rate, who could depend upon their testimony in any point whatever?

Besides many of the doctrinal parts of scripture refer to, and are derived from, the historical. If the latter were a parcel of impositions and mistakes, what degree of veracity

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\* That this is no aggravated imputation, every attentive reader of his lordship's letters will easily perceive; and I believe it will appear too plainly from the passages to be produced in the sequel of this epistle.



or dignity could the former claim? If the foundation is a bubble, how can the superstructure stand?—Whether his Lordship, by such a specious pretence of serving the interests of true religion, intended secretly to undermine it, I will not presume to say. But this I may venture to declare, that his scheme is very shrewdly calculated to compass such an end. Grant what his Lordship asks; and what all the enemies of Christianity wish, will undoubtedly follow.

Farther, Madam,—such a distinction is contrary to the express declaration of the new testament; which positively asserts, that ‘ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God,’ 2 Tim. iii. 16. Our blessed Lord, who was very well qualified to discern truth, and equally zealous to maintain it, makes no such difference. He says in general, ‘Search the scriptures;’ John v. 39—the whole collection of sacred writings.—‘Whatsoever things,’ adds St. Paul, not some particular passages only, but ‘Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning;’ Rom. xv. 4. and must therefore have been under such a divine superintendency, as secured them from all possibility of error. Otherwise, they might be written, not for our learning, but for our deception.—So that St. Paul’s direction is as contrary to Lord Bolingbroke’s distinction, as the east is opposite to the west. We may as soon bring these two points of the hemisphere together, as reconcile his Lordship’s refinements with the apostle’s religion.

I believe, it will be equally difficult to render his Lordship consistent with himself. His concession overthrows his distinction. Admitting the doctrinal parts of the scripture to be true, the veracity of the historical is, by necessary consequence, and beyond all contradiction, established. They are indissolubly connected: they mutually bear on, and mutually sustain each other; and must stand or fall together. They are like an arch most exactly finished; not a stone of which can be taken away, without disconcerting the whole structure: and like an arch firmly founded, as well as correctly finished, the more they are pressed, the stronger they will appear.

My Lord says indeed, that “Christ came not to consecrate all the written traditions of the Jews.” Page 94. He says it, but where or how does he prove it?—By written traditions of the Jews, I suppose we are to understand all the

Hebrew scriptures. The drift of the discourse leads us to this sense. Now, it is apparent, that our Saviour has actually consecrated, has set the seal of authenticity and infallibility to the law of Moses, to the psalms, and to the prophets. Luke xxiv. 44. By appealing to them as decisive, and by allowing them to be predictive, he has acknowledged them to be divinely inspired, and to be unquestionably true. And a very little acquaintance with Jewish antiquities will inform us, that, in these three partitions, the whole body of the Hebrew scriptures is comprehended. What then becomes of his Lordship's assertion? or to whose discredit does it tend? that of the Jewish scriptures, or that of his own knowledge?

I must desire your ladyship to take notice of the expression in this passage. It is somewhat singular, and deserves a particular regard. Written traditions is the phrase. Every one knows that we explode, and very justly, those superstitious whimsies of the Jews which pass under the denomination of traditions. Yet my Lord thinks proper to call the histories of the old testament by this disreputable name; only he admits one difference, that whereas the former were transmitted by strength of memory, the latter are committed to writing. But is this an honest representation? is this free from all malignant disguise.

Let us put the matter to the following trial. The word legend, when applied to any modern story, raises the same contemptible and absurd idea as the word tradition excites, when applied to any Jewish notion. Would my Lord, or would his friends, think, that due honor or common justice was done to his Sketch of the history and state of Europe, if it should be styled in our public papers, Lord Bolingbroke's written legends? The impropriety and malevolence of such a title would be undeniable and odious: Who then, can vindicate the propriety of his Lordship's language, or clear it from being a most injurious misrepresentation of the sacred records? which, however, some of the facts might come down in a traditionary channel to the writers, by passing through their hands, receive the stamp of undoubted certainty, and are no longer traditions, but oracles.

I wish this had been the only instance of artifice and imposition used in the letters under examination. Why are so many idle tales and scandalous stories raked together and

exposed to view? \* Why, but to put a cheat upon the inattentive reader, and depreciate † the dignity of the divine word? depreciate it much in the same manner as its most illustrious object and author was formerly dishonored, not only by the false accusations with which he was charged, but also by the infamous company with whom he was numbered. Did my Lord imagine that these tales were really believed even by the warmest advocates for holy writ? No: he must know in his conscience, that they never were received by the generality of divines, neither are mentioned by authors of discernment, unless it be to confute and reject them. However, be they credited or not, it was apprehended they might serve a purpose. But whether it be the purpose of integrity, impartiality, and truth, I leave to the determination of others.

Still it is urged, That these scriptures are 'full of additions, interpolations, and transpositions.' Page 95. 96. That they are full of additions, is more easily asserted than evinced. I can find but one instance specified by his Lordship, which is the account 'of the death and sepulture of Moses, with a sort of funeral panegyric,' Page 102. recorded in the last chapter of Deuteronomy. Here it is taken for granted that we are reduced to a terrible dilemma—either to own that this paragraph was written by Moses himself; and then we may expect to hear of impossibility and absurdity—or else,

\* See page 85. 86. 88.—102.—108. 109.

† I would by no means indulge a petulant or censorious humour. Yet I cannot forbear thinking that the scriptures are too often depreciated in his lordship's performance, sometimes by sneer, sometimes by cavil, and sometimes even by languid approbation, or a counterfeit sort of praise; such as,—'If the foundations of Christianity have been laid in truth,' page 123. Passages which seem favourable to the doctrine of the 'Trinity,' p 98. Though I should be loath to reject any testimony in favour of Christianity, still more loath to give up so eminent a name as Lord Bolingbroke to the Deistical party, yet I cannot prevail upon myself to acknowledge that we are much, if at all obliged to him for these poor, jejune, cold compliments. Such a testimony, and such compliments, are just as serviceable to the momentous cause, as a broken tooth is serviceable to the eater, or a foot out of joint to the walker. Prov. xxv. 19. They are, in truth, mere *DORA ADORA*—or, as Mr. Pope more strongly expresses the sentiment,

They damn with faint praise.

that it is all suppositions ; and then the scriptures must have passed through tampering fingers, and suffered adulteration. But suppose this small appendix was made by Joshua, a man whose mind was illuminated, and his hand guided by the Spirit of the Most High, does such an addition deserve to be branded with an ignominious, or even brought into disesteem by a suspicious character? Or what if some other prophet, whose name is unknown, superadded this valuable anecdote? Is the concealment of the penman's name sufficient to impeach the genuineness, or invalidate the authority of the passage? especially since it has been approved by other inspired writers, and received the imprimatur of the Holy Ghost? I know not who is the printer of his lordship's two volumes ; yet, though ignorant of this circumstance, for other very satisfactory reasons I have no doubt but they are the genuine productions of his pen.

My lord would have done well to consider, whether it was a probable or a practicable thing to interpolate a set of books which were studied with so much accuracy, and kept with so much vigilance ; the number of whose verses, especially in the Pentateuch, was computed, and the arrangement of the very letters known : Whether, after the coming of Christ, the jealous eye which the Jews and Christians had on each other was not an insurmountable bar against any innovations or material alterations. As for transpositions, they are used by the most approved historians. When used with judgment, they redound to the reputation of the writer, and increase the pleasure of the reader. And would his lordship make that a disparagement of the sacred narrative, which is a recommendation of any ordinary composition?

But my lord imagines that he has found out a substantial reason for the afore-mentioned distinction—has detected such improprieties in the sacred narrative as 'contradict all our notions of order and of justice,' page 110. He produces, by way of specimen, the case of Noah denouncing a curse upon Canaan. This, it seems, is the capital absurdity, this the glaring error, which, he concludes, is sufficient to uncanonize the histories of the Old Testament, and degrade their writers from the class of inspiration. This, therefore, if your ladyship pleases, we will examine a little more particularly.

The charge, in general, is thus expressed : ' One is tempt

ed to think that the patriarch was still drunk, and that no man in his senses could hold such language, or pass such a sentence.' Was I at leisure to criticise upon words, I should be tempted to observe, that the diction, 'no man could hold such language,' may be French, but is scarcely English. However, from the expression, I pass to the sentiment. This, for candour and solidity, is much like the reflection of the Jews on the memorable day of Pentecost. When the apostles addressed the inhabitants of various countries, each in his own native tongue, some of their hearers ascribed this miraculous ability—to what? we are amazed when we read—to the intoxicating power of wine, Acts ii. 13. Strange, that excessive drinking, which incapacitates other people for talking common sense, should enable the disciples of Christ to speak all kinds of languages! Is it not equally strange, that a drunken disorder should enable the patriarch to deliver prophecies, and foretell future events! which (as I hope to prove) was the real import of the speech.

Perhaps this curse may seem to be the effect, if not of disorderly indulgence, yet of intemperate passion. And how incompatible is this with the character of a preacher of righteousness! Surely Noah should not have been so forward to call for the thunderbolts of vengeance. Any benevolent man, much more a pious progenitor, would rather have deprecated the blow. I wonder his lordship did not start this objection, which would have been much more plausible, and much less shocking. To this, in case it had been started, we might reply—That Noah acted as the oracle of God. This, and many other such passages, which seem to be imprecations, are really predictions. Holy men spoke as they were influenced by the Spirit, and uttered not the suggestions of their own minds, but the will of almighty God; which inclines me to think it might be no less proper, and much more suitable to the prophetic style, if we translated such passages as indicatives, rather than imperatives; making them declaratory of what is decreed in the cabinet of heaven, and will as certainly take place as if it had already existed. Cursed, rather than cursed be Canaan. Blessed of the Lord is, instead of be his land, Deut. xxxiii. 13. Thus Isaiah, foretelling the incarnation of that wonderful and adorable person, whom he styles the mighty God, says, To us a child is born, Isaiah ix. 6; so "calling the things that are not, as

though they were." Such a manner of speaking would remove, from this particular passage, all that sounds harsh, or seems uncharitable; and would, in the general, impart an unequalled majesty\* to the language of scripture.

It was God then, and not man, from whom this avenging sentence came. And God, to show his utter detestation of all iniquity, to manifest his singular delight in all virtue, frequently takes occasion to denounce vengeance, or promise happiness, when some notorious evil is committed, or some laudable good performed. And was there not a most notorious evil committed here? "Charity," says the apostle, "covereth all things;" † draws a veil over the various infirmities of every common neighbour. But this man (man shall I say? rather monster of ingratitude), sees the shame of a father—an aged father, Lev. xix. 22—a pious father; and, instead of concealing, "when he cometh forth, he telleth it." Fools they are, abandoned profligates, that, "make a mock at sin." What name then can be bad enough for a profane and unnatural wretch, who makes sport with a parent's folly, a parent's sinfulness, a parent's misery? Surely this was a most flagrant violation of filial reverence, filial love, and filial duty. ‡ Which not only implied so many particular offences,

\* Blessed be, is what any holy person might say, and comprehends no more than a supplicatory benediction. Blessed is, suits only the mouth of a prophet, and implies an authoritative blessing.

† I Cor. xlii. 7. This is one article in the finest display of social virtue that ever was exhibited to the world; and should, I think, be translated (not beareth, but) covereth or concealeth all things. The natural import of the word justifies, and the context evidently requires, this sense. Otherwise the first and last clauses of the verse will coincide in their meaning, or rather make an unmeaning tautology.

‡ The turpitude and immorality of this offence will appear in blacker colours, if we consider the very peculiar reverence, which, in those days of primitive simplicity, was paid to any aged person, much more to an aged parent.

Credebant hoc grande nefas, et morte piandum,

Si juvenis vetulo non assurrexerat, et si

Barbato cuicunque puer.

JUVENAL, Satyr. XIII.

We may see from that awful threatening, Prov. xxx. 17. with what extreme detestation the most holy God resents such an unnatural behaviour. "The eye that mocketh at his Father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick

each attended with its respective guilt, but indicated the offender to be destitute of all piety. For, to argue in the apostle's strain, how could this man venerate a father in heaven, whom he had not seen, if he was so irreverent to a father on earth, whom he had seen?

But supposing the turpitude and immorality of the action to be very enormous, and such as deserved some signal vengeance; the vengeance, it is objected, was misapplied. 'For Ham alone offended; Canaan was innocent.' My lord is not sure that Canaan was innocent, though he asserts it pretty confidently. The contrary notion has obtained among the Jews. They apprehend that Canaan was first in the transgression, and instead of being reprov'd, was imitated by his father. Bishop Patrick, Mr. Poole, and other eminent commentators, think this to be no improbable opinion.

If his lordship was unacquainted with the Hebrew, he will scarcely be thought qualified to pronounce so peremptorily concerning a case related in that language. If he was unacquainted with the original, he acts somewhat unfairly in saying, 'This notion is not only without, but against the express authority of the text,' page 111. For he must know that it receives some countenance even from the text itself. I would by no means offend your ladyship's eyes with any rugged figures or uncouth quotations. But you may venture to believe me, when I assure you, that the most exact translation of ver. 24. is, Noah 'knew what his son had done to him, the or that little one.\*' Ham could not so properly be styled the little one, since he was the middlemost, and is always placed in that order, Shem, Ham, Japheth. But the description agrees perfectly well with Canaan, the grandson of

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it out, and the young eagle shall eat it." Nay, it should seem from this text, as though all nature was ready to testify its abhorrence of such a crime; and, rather than it should escape condign punishment, the most insensible animals would rise up to execute vengeance.

\* Though it would have been very unpolite to quote Hebrew in writing to a lady, it may be judged proper, perhaps be thought necessary, now the letter is made public, to produce the original expression; that, were an argument is derived from the precise signification of the phrase, the learned reader may examine and determine for himself.—The word is used of Benjamin, Jacob's youngest son, and translated a little one, Gen. xliv. 20.

Noah; and it was customary among the Jews to call the grandchildren the sons of their grandfather, page 111.

Canaan, it is added, 'was alone cursed.' The words would run smoother if transposed in this manner—Canaan alone was cursed. As for the fact, that wants some better confirmation than my Lord's bare assertion. To me it is evident, that Ham was not exempted from the curse.—What! if it did not fall upon him in person, yet to be punished in his offspring, must be very affecting, and no less afflicting.

But hold; my Lord has forestalled us in this reply. Instead of waiting for it, or acquiescing in it, he plays it upon us with an air of triumph. 'Will it be said,—this has been said,—that Ham was punished in his posterity,' page 111. It has, and with his Lordship's leave, I will venture to say it again. Nor should I, in case Lord Bolingbroke was alive, have went farther than his own breast for a proof of my assertion. Would he, with all his exalted ideas of liberty, have thought in no punishment on himself, provided he had been the father of children, to have heard them doomed to a state of slavery, nay, to be, as he very rightly explains the sacred phrase, 'the vilest and worst of slaves?' especially if, like Ham, he was appointed, in the course of providence, to be the father of several nations? and if the doom had been pronounced by a person, of whose prophetic spirit there was so incontestable an evidence, as the universal inundation was of Noah's?

Since my Lord has no more communication with us or our affairs, I appeal to any, to every parental heart. Let nature, fond, compassionate, yearning nature, speak, whether the infliction of such a penalty on the son (perhaps a favourite son, like Joseph,) the son's sons, and the latest posterity—whether this be not properly a punishment of the father? whether the father must not feel by anticipation, what his wretched progeny must endure in reality? Nature once spoke to such a query, and this was her language: 'O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee! O Absalom, my son, my son!' 2 Sam. xviii. 33. Did history ever record, or poetry ever invent, so melancholy a moan? It breathes the very soul of woe, and exemplifies the sentiment which his Lordship would explode.



David, it is plain, was punished in the calamitous exit of this young prince, in the disasters sustained, and the disorders committed, by his other children, 2 Sam. xii. 10. Adam thought himself punished in the ruin which he brought upon the human race, and laments it, in the most pathetic terms, as the severest distress attending his apostacy.\* One wiser than Adam, one greater than David, whose judgment is always according to truth, is evidently of the same opinion; and, for that reason, has formed the sanction of a most sacred commandment upon this very principle: 'He will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him.' What God has so expressly threatened he has actually done; not on this only, but on various other emergencies. Thus Esau suffered in his descendants,† Jesu in his family, Hosea i. 4. and Hezekiah in his children, Isa. xxxix. 6, 7. who all, like the Canaanites, were children of their father's disobedience,‡ inheritors of their sin as well as of their name. But this would anticipate the reply to another objection.

Where is the equity of cursing a people that are yet unborn? Does not this 'contradict all our notions of order and of justice?' It may be contrary to our notions, or at least it would be unjustifiable in our practice, but is quite otherwise with regard to the all-seeing God. Is it not agreeable to the strictest rules of justice for a magistrate, when he has heard the witnesses, summed up the evidence, and found the prisoner guilty; is it not agreeable to the strictest rules of justice to pass sentence upon such a criminal? The question

\* See the whole of Adam's disconsolate complaint, part of which are the following lines:

—————Yet, well, if here would end  
The misery; I deserv'd it, and would bear  
My own deservings; but this will not serve.  
All that I eat, or drink, or shall beget,  
Is propagated curse. O voice! once heard  
Delightfully, Increase and multiply:  
Now death to hear: —

Paradise Lost, Book x. line 725.

† Compare Gen. xxvii. 40. with 2 Sam viii. 14. "Thou shalt serve thy brother;" here is the sentence. "All they of Edom become David's servants;" here its execution.

‡ *Morum quoque filii* — Juv. Sat. xiii.

can admit of no doubt. Yet it is equally certain, that this was the very case with reference to the supreme Judge, and those sinners the Canaanites. They practised the grossest and most inhuman idolatries, they abandoned themselves to the most horrid immoralities, such as violated nature, confounded all order, and such as it would be shocking even to mention, Lev. xviii. 24. Now all these provoking crimes were present to the view of him, by whose inspiration Noah spake. He saw them with the same circumstantial exactness as if they had been already perpetrated. Let us take these very important particulars into consideration, the excessive wickedness of those nations, and the all-foreseeing discernment of Jehovah, and then who will dare to insinuate that the everlasting Sovereign acted unjustly? that he launched the lightnings of his indignation in an arbitrary manner, or upon an innocent people? Who will be so precipitate as to affirm with my Lord, that 'no other writer but a Jew could impute to the œconomy of divine Providence the accomplishment of such a prediction, nor make the supreme Being the executor of such a curse?' Page 110.

The former of those circumstances will appear in a proper light, what his Lordship calls, 'cruelties committed by Joshua in the conquest of the Canaanites.' It will make them appear to be acts of righteous vengeance, a much needed and most desirable extirpation of a pestilent people, altogether as serviceable to the public as it was formerly to destroy the wolves from our island; or, as it is at present, to deliver over some flagitious malefactors to the sentence of the law. Yet the execution of this vengeance was delayed year after year, century after century. The seed of Abraham, for several ages, were not permitted to enter upon the possession of their destined inheritance, because 'the iniquity of the Amorites,' which was the cause of their extermination, 'was not yet full,' Gen. xv. 16. Does it then bespeak the man of integrity to represent those proceedings of Joshua under the abhorred image of cruelties, which were acts of a justice exemplary, salutary, and greatly to be revered? Is it becoming an honest inquirer after truth to suggest, without the least shadow of proof, a selfish and malignant reason for the destruction of the Canaanites; when a reason, the most equitable in its nature, the most beneficial in its consequences, is expressly and repeatedly assigned by the sacred

historian? \* This I refer to your Ladyship's decision, who, I am sure, will not err on the charitable extreme, yet, I believe, will find it difficult, with all your good nature, to acquit the author of these letters from the charge of disingenuity.

May I not add,—this way of foretelling, yet respiting the punishment, is gracious both in itself and in its consequences? In itself; because a reprieve is always reckoned an alleviation of the sentence, even though it be not the forerunner of a pardon. In its consequences; because it afforded large space for recollection, and should have awakened the offenders to a sense of their guilt. It should have incited them to use all possible diligence to avert the doom, both by a personal reformation, and by educating their families religiously. Why did they not act as king Ahab acted, 1 Kings xxi. 27, 29. and argue as the men of Nineveh argued, Jonah iii. 9. in a following age, but on a like occasion? Instead of this, instead of betaking themselves to consideration and prayer, to repentance and amendment, they ran to the same, to greater excess of ungodliness.

So that these people, being evidently inheritors of their father's sinful nature, and obstinately persisting in their father's sinful ways, were most deservedly partakers of his curse. And though God is that incontrollable Sovereign, "who giveth not," is under no obligation to give, "account of any of his matters," Job xxxiii. 13; "though he often has reasons for his dispensations, absolutely unsearchable by any mortal; yet here he is clearly vindicated even before men—even before the sinners themselves. They themselves must confess the justice of their doom; and own, that

\* Gen. xv. 16. Deut. ix. 5. "For the wickedness of those nations, the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee." See also Lev. xviii. 25 where the sacred writer describes their execrable and unparalleled vileness by one of the strongest and boldest figures imaginable. So vile they were that the very country loathed them; was weary to bear them; and acted like a disgusted nauseating stomach, when oppressed with foul and offensive food: "The land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants." Let no squeamish critic betray his false taste and worse temper, by carping at the expression. But let all be astonished at the outrageous impiety of the Canaanites, and adore the vindictive arm of Jehovah, and acknowledge, that such horrible miscreants were (not for some reasons of state, as my Lord is pleased to insinuate, deemed only, but were) really, on the most substantial principles of justice, an accursed race. Page 112.

“ God hath done righteously, but they have done wickedly ;” that God hath showed all long-suffering, and given full warning before the blow fell. Whereas they, notwithstanding this forbearance and this admonition, have continued incorrigible, and without any other change but that of becoming more consummately vile.

Agreeably to all this, and conformably to the most acknowledged rules of equity, it is declared by the sacred historian, that the Amorites, the descendants of Canaan, suffered not till they had filled up the measure of their iniquities, Gen. xv. 16. their own as well as their father's. All which, I should imagine, is sufficient, not only to justify the counsels, but to glorify the judgments of the great Jehovah ; sufficient also to satisfy any inquirer who is (as my lord very handsomely expresses himself) ‘ candid, but not implicit ; willing to be informed, yet curious to examine.’

My lord's curiosity to examine, shall I say ? or his resolution to be dissatisfied ? proceeds still farther. Accordingly he adds, ‘ Who does not see that the curse and the punishment, in this case, fell on Canaan and his posterity, exclusively of the rest of the posterity of Ham ? Page 110. 112. The particle of, so frequently repeated in a single sentence, can hardly be admired as an elegance of speech\*. But taking no more notice of such little blemishes, I shall consider the weight, not the polish of his lordship's arguments. As for this argument, I verily think, when laid in the balance of impartiality and candour, it will be found wanting. For, admitting the objection in its full scope, what follows ? Why, that the righteous God pardoneth some criminals, when he might justly punish all. And if it should have pleased the supreme Judge to repeal the sentence, and remit the penalty, with regard to some offenders, who shall arraign his conduct ? who shall censure his providence ? To exercise mercy

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\* This, and one or two more preceding remarks of the same nature, are scarcely worth our notice. Neither should I have mentioned them, had they not fallen in my way ; and were it not to put a query upon the popular notion, that his Lordship's style is so correct, elegant, and noble, as to be a standard for fine writing. It cannot, in my apprehension, justly claim this honour. If others think differently, I leave them to enjoy their opinion, and shall not (though it would be easy enough to multiply proofs) add a word more upon the subject.

is his great prerogative; an act not of debt, but of royal bounty, which he exercises when and to whom it seemeth good in his sight: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," Rom. ix. 16. is his high and holy resolve.

I might therefore answer his lordship's question by asking another, which I might propose in the plain but solemn words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "If these are spared, while those are punished, what is that to thee? Is thine eye evil because God is good?" But I shall rather reply to the objection by denying the fact. The punishment was not confined to Canaan and his posterity. It reached the other descendants of Ham; Misraim himself, the father of the Egyptians (as will be shown in a proper place) not excepted. Canaan, it is true, is particularly mentioned; because he was (as from this very circumstance is extremely probable) an accomplice \* with Ham in the breach of filial duty: because this branch of the family was more than ordinarily corrupt, nay, beyond measure vicious: because the Canaanites were, in the first place, and in the fullest manner, to feel the effects of the curse: And Moses being charged with a commission to execute the vengeance on this people only, had no occasion to concern himself with any other. Just as the sheriff of a county, demanding the body of a condemned malefactor, produces the dead warrant for his execution, without intermeddling or thinking himself under any necessity to intermeddle, with the other prisoners in the jail. This leads me to a new, and, if I judge right, by far the most important inquiry, namely, whether the curse was executed as well as pronounced.

As I hasten to the proof of this particular, my lord embarrasses and retards me with a fresh obstacle. He himself has thought proper to inform us, 'why the posterity of Canaan was to be deemed an accursed race.' But he lets the world know, 'it is not so easy to account why the posterity of the righteous Shem, that great example of filial reverence, be-

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\* This is rendered still more credible, by that particularity of style, which the scripture uses in speaking of Ham. Ham the father of Canaan, Gen. ix. 18, 22. Why of Canaan so especially? Had he no other children, no other sons? Several other. But this distinction seems to be a brand of infamy set upon the offender; and intimates, that he who was father of Canaan by blood, was his partner, was his brother in iniquity.

came slaves to another branch of the family of Ham during more than four-score years." Page 112. I am by no means convinced that the point proposed enters into the merits of our cause. Should the reasons for this dispensation remain an impenetrable secret, yet if we clear up the propriety and demonstrate the equity of the curse denounced, we compass our main end, and confute the grand censure. However, as the question is presented, it shall be considered: and, though his lordship should affect to sneer, I choose rather, in imitation of those noble writers, whose dignity I would assert, to be serious.

Why were the Israelites sojourners in Egypt? A reason occurs, that is worthy of a gracious God, and greatly for the public good; that they might carry thither the knowledge of the everlasting Jehovah, and of the promised Messiah, of the only acceptable method of worship, and the only effectual way of salvation. As Egypt was the parent of literature, and the fountain-head of science; as men of letters and curiosity came, from all parts of the world, to complete their studies at Egypt; if these heavenly doctrines were received there, they would be more likely, some streams of them at least, to be transfused into all climes, and improve every nation. So that the people of the Lord, the only depositories of divine philosophy, were settled in this land of general resort, with much the same wise and beneficent views as the ablest professors of learning are placed at our famous universities.

But why were they slaves in Egypt? This might be to try them, and to humble them; to show them what was in their heart, and to purge out their dross. We are taught in scripture, that the Almighty chastens whom he loves, and scourges the men whom he receiveth to himself. Even the Heathen classics, my lord's favourite authors, have frequently remarked, That adversity is a school, in which both private persons and public societies have learned the most heroic virtues. Besides, this might be intended to animate and inapirit the Israelites for their invasion of Canaan. They were in the general a supine and grovelling \* set of people. Had

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\* Let none imagine that the wisdom of God is impeached by selecting to himself a people of this character. His clemency, his forbearance, and all those benign perfections which are so necessary for the salvation of sinners, are hereby displayed with peculiar advantage, and to our unspeakable consolation.

they been settled in a state tolerably easy, or in territories that were but moderately commodious, they might never have aspired after the land flowing with milk and honey; never have made any resolute efforts to possess their destined inheritance. But, being driven by the lash, and instigated by the goad, of pungent galling slavery, they were even constrained to burst the chains, and push their way to liberty and Canaan. Their insupportable slavery was somewhat like bending the bow and straining the string, in order to launch the arrow. Farther, God Almighty assures Abraham that his seed, though enslaved for a while, should come out of their bondage with great substance, Gen. xv. 14; with the silver, the gold, the jewels, and the choicest treasures of Egypt. So that, when labouring for their task masters, they were in fact labouring for themselves. The wealth of the oppressors was laid up for the oppressed; and the season of their affliction in the enemies' country was like the rigorous cold of winter, which, far from obstructing, only makes preparation for the blossoms of spring, and the fruits of autumn. These considerations might have solved the difficulty to his lordship as a politician.

Other reasons are suggested by our divines, which, if my lord had thought it worthy his while to regard, might have given better satisfaction, and yielded more edification. They would have reminded the right honourable querist, that such a gloomy aspect of the Jewish affairs made way for the brightest manifestation of God's glorious attributes; of his power in rescuing them from their tyrannical rulers; of his faithfulness in fulfilling his promise made to their fathers; of his goodness in supporting and conducting them; keeping them, amidst the most formidable dangers, *as the apple of an eye*; and *bearing them*, even through the most insuperable difficulties, *as on eagles' wing*\*. This also opened a most conspicuous theatre for that amazing train of miracles which

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\* See Deut xxxii. 10, 11. These, I think, are most delightful and inimitably delicate representations. Let the pious critic try if he can conceive those tender offices, that unintermitted vigilance, and assiduity of protecting, cherishing cares, which are expressed in these fine images. For my part, I own myself incapable of describing them; but most earnestly wish, that every reader, as well as myself, may learn them in that best of schools, the school of experience!

have been in all ages, as serviceable to the faith of christians, as they were formerly conducive to the welfare of the Jews. They would farther have informed his lordship, and have confirmed their opinion by apostolical authority, that the whole of this most wonderful transaction was typical of spiritual things; was a series of living lessons, delivered, according to the eastern method of conveying knowledge, in figures and emblems. The Egyptian bondage was a resemblance of our natural condition, which is a state of the most abject slavery to sin. The arbitrary and injurious impositions of the task-masters shadow forth, though but faintly, the tyranny of unruly appetites and imperious passions. The barbarous edict for the destruction of all the infant males fitly enough represents the genuine tendency of carnal and corrupt affections, which destroy our true comfort, subvert our noblest interests, are as death to the joys and to the hopes of our souls. Their deliverance from that miserable state was an expressive sign, of our redemption from the guilt and the dominion of sin.\* Both which the Lord Jesus accomplishes, the one by price the other by power: not by slaying the first-born, but by shedding his own blood; not by softening rocks into a stream, but taking away the heart of stone; not by turning the current of Jordan backward, but by turning all our desires into a new channel. The many troubles and oppositions they met with in the wilderness, exhibit a lively picture of the molestations that attend, and the temptations that assault the christian. Trials await us: Snares are around us: Through many conflicts, and *much tribulation, we must enter into the kingdom of heaven*. Only let us beware, lest, like the ungrateful Israelites, we forget the God of our

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\* The divine writer to the Hebrews, makes the land of Canaan typical of "a better country, even of an heavenly," Heb. xi. 16. xii. 22. According to the same author, the peaceful settlement of the Israelites in Canaan suggested to their thoughts, and pointed out to their faith, that everlasting rest which remaineth for the people of God, Heb. iii. 4, 5, &c. Since the "terminus ad quem" (as the schoolmen speak) is evidently mystical and allegorical, may we not conclude that the "terminus a quo," is mystical and allegorical likewise? The it will follow, upon the clearest principles of analogy, that the intermediate steps and advances are of the same nature, significative of refined and spiritual things under earthly and sensible images. This, if I mistake not, is put beyond all doubt, 1 Cor. x. 1, 2, &c.



salvation, *and fall after the same example of unbelief.* The cloud that was spread over them by day, to intercept the glare, and screen them from the heat of the sun; the fire that shone before them in the night, to cheer the nocturnal darkness, and lead them through the trackless desert; were not these very amiable and exact emblems of our Saviour's merits, and of his holy word? The former of which are refreshing to the guilty conscience, as the veil of a thick interposing cloud is welcome to a traveller in sultry climes. The latter is a light to our feet, and a lantern to our paths, to guide us in the way everlasting. Their passage through Jordan, the priests that bear the ark of the covenant going before them, Joshua iii. 13, 14, &c. and standing in the midst of the river, till all the congregation were passed over; this very emphatically prefigured our great High Priest, bearing our sins, fulfilling the law in our stead, abolishing death, and making it a safe, as well as a short transition to life eternal.

You will excuse me, madam, for expatiating upon these topics. They are so inviting, so pleasing, so comfortable, that I can hardly persuade myself to leave them. If any other parts of the epistle, through a kind of unhappy necessity, almost inseparable from controversy, should resemble the asperity of the thorn, this, I hope, will bear some affinity to the fragrance of the rose. For which cause it is, that I choose only to touch, and but lightly touch, the one, while I would open the other into a wide expansion, and a rich effusion. Let me add one more observation on this head, and I have done. It is apprehended, by very judicious persons, that the punishment of the Egyptians, and their total overthrow, may be a presage of the misery and ruin which will sooner or later fall upon individuals and nations that reject the glorious gospel, and vilify its sacred repository, the Bible.

If the reasons I have offered are neither tiresome nor unsatisfactory to your ladyship, I shall proceed the more cheerfully to show that the curse was executed as well as pronounced. Had it been the senseless extravagance of a man intoxicated with liquor, or the rash imprecation of a man heated with resentment, or the designing interpolation of some crafty statesman, would the holy, the gracious, the true God, have set the broad seal of heaven to it? would he, who overrules all events, have suffered it to succeed—have commanded it to succeed—nay, have brought it himself to

pass by a mighty hand and stretched-out arm? Impossible to conceive! If, therefore, it was really brought to pass, and with a surprising punctuality, and not by any competency of human means, but by the most evident display of divine power, this will be such a proof of its credibility, its reasonableness and equity, as no one who thinks reverently of the Deity can deny.

Canaan was to be a servant to Shem. This was accomplished when the Israelites, the descendants of Shem, conquered the land of Canaan, slew thirty of its kings, and took possession of their cities, Joshua xii. 24; when the Gibeonites particularly, who composed one of their particular states, Joshua x. 2. became "hewers of wood and drawers of water to the congregation," Joshua ix. 27. or, in other words, the most menial servants to the lowest of the people.

*By what instruments* was this extraordinary revolution wrought? by one of the finest armies in the east or west? marshalled by the bravest officers, and headed by the most experienced general? No; but by raw, undisciplined, enslaved people, who were destitute of military skill, and without any personal qualifications, or warlike apparatus for so difficult, so dangerous an enterprise.

*Through what obstacles* was it begun, carried on, and completed? In spite of the attempts of one potent monarch to detain them in servitude; in spite of the resolution of several combined kings to dispute with them every inch of ground to the last drop of their blood. A deep river and an arm of the sea must be crossed by six hundred thousand men, with their wives, their children, their cattle; and without any vessel to transport them, or any bridge to transmit them. They must dwell forty years in a desolate, inhospitable, barren wilderness, which was infested by ravenous beasts, and fiery flying serpents; in which there was neither water nor corn, nor any sort of accommodation for abode, or sustenance for life.

*How were all these difficulties surmounted?* Not by the arm of flesh; this was utterly impracticable; but by the most astonishing interposition of Omnipotence. The Egyptian tyrant is humbled, and brought to their terms, by the infliction of ten tremendous plagues. The waters of the river are dried up, and the waves of the great deep are divided, so

as to yield them a safe unobstructed passage\*. A stream gushes even from the hard rock, and gives them drink, as it had been out of the great depths. Prodigious quantities of manna † descend with every morning-dew, and supply them, not from the garner, but from heaven, with their daily bread. Vast flights of quails arrive with every setting sun, and drop like a bird shot through the wing. ‡ “in the midst of their camp, and round about their habitations.” The walls of an impregnable city fall to the ground at the blast of ram’s horns, Joshua vi. The sun stands still in the midst of heaven at the voice of a man, Joshua x. 12, 13. All the hosts of the nations, with all their weapons of war, are “driven asunder as the foam upon the waters, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.”

\* “He led them through the deep,” encumbered as they were with their kneading troughs, and surrounded with frightful billows as “an horse in the wilderness,” with as much ease and spirit as some courageous courser makes his way through a plain, open, champaign country. Isaiah lxiii. 13.

† We are not to think that the manna took its name from any resemblance to the medicinal drug, which among us, is so commonly known and so frequently used. It is rather derived from the abrupt expression of the Israelites, on their first beholding this wonderful food. They cried out with amazement, Man hu? What is this? Which exclamation, denoting their own surprise, and the unexpected as well as unparalleled nature of the gift, became both a memorial of the one, and a denomination of the other.

‡ This is describing with the utmost vigour and beauty in that sublime piece of sacred poetry, Psalm lxxviii. 27, 28. “He rained flesh upon them as dust, and winged” (here lies a peculiar emphasis, and thus should the original be translated, winged) “fowl like as the sand of the sea.” Yet, though they were furnished with wings, and therefore might easily escape, they neglected to make use of their natural powers. The fell round the Israelitish tents, like the rain of heaven “which returneth not;” and like the sand of the sea shore “which cannot be numbered.”

This whole psalm is a manifest proof of the observation which was made in a preceding paragraph, that the historical and doctrinal passages of scripture are, like the deed and its counterpart, in their substance exactly corresponding; and, like the links of the same chain, in their connection absolutely inseparable.

And is it probable, can it be possible, that every element, and all nature, should not only concur, but alter their established course, depart from the fundamental laws of their creation, on purpose to ratify what was bolted out by the patriarch in a drunken revel, or foisted into the text by some Hebrew Michiavelian ?

Canaan was to be servant also to Japheth. Pursuant to this prediction, did not the Greeks and Romans, who derive their lineage from Japheth, make themselves masters of the residue of Canaan ? Tyre built by the Sidonians,\* and Thebes by Cadmus, were both destroyed by Alexander the Grecian. Carthage, founded by Dido, was after a long succession of losses, and a vast effusion of blood, demolished by Scipio the Roman. Which losses made Hannibal, a child of Canaan, cry out, with a mixture of astonishment and despondency, ' Agnosco fortunam Carthaginiis !'† i. e. ' I see plainly the hand of destiny working, I see that oracu-

\* ' Alexander laid siege to this city, took it by storm, and entirely destroyed it; slaying ninety thousand of the inhabitants, and selling the rest, to the number of thirty thousand more, into slavery.' PRIBRAUX'S *Connexions*, vol. i.

† Vid. Liv. lib. xxvii. ad finem. A writer of the first repute, for elegant taste, and penetrating judgment, thinks it more than probable, that Hannibal, in this dispirited and hopeless acknowledgment, refers to the prophecy under consideration; which will justify my free, though, I hope, not erroneous translation of the passage. What the same author adds, is so very ingenious, and so apposite to my purpose, that I will beg leave to transcribe it.

' That the Romans were no strangers to the same divine oracle, appears from Virgil :'

*Progeniem sed enim Trojano a sanguine duci,  
Audierat, Tyrias olim quæ verteret arces.  
Hinc populum late regem, belloque superbum,  
Venturum excidio Lybiæ. Sic volvere Parcas.*

' In translating which, if we only name the ancestors instead of the descendants, the original prophecy glares upon us.

From Japheth's loins deriv'd a race she knew  
Design'd the strength of Canaan to subdue :  
Wide-spread their empire, desin'd to succeed  
And waste the sons of Ham ; So fate decreed-

See Mr. Ridley's sermons at Lady Moyer's lecture, p. 232.

lar doom hastening to its accomplishment, in these dreadful calamities sustained by Carthage ?

If these facts are true, which have the unanimous consent of historians for their support, what can we say of his Lordship's assertion, 'That Canaan was servant to Shem, though not to Japheth ?'\* This, I am apprehensive, will be found as false as the following objection is weak ; in which he urges, that 'Canaan was servant to one of his uncles, not to his brethren,' page 111. Such a cavil (for certainly it deserves no better name) discovers an utter ignorance of the Hebrew phraseology, or else a strange inattention to it. I would not say, an egregious misrepresentation of it. I thought every one had known, till Lord Bolingbroke undeceived me, that nothing is more common in the oriental idiom, than to express any relatives of the male line by the denomination of brethren.†

I hope your Ladyship will not think this, or any of my other remarks, indecently free. In the presence of the most high God, all men are upon a level. When the honour of his divine word or glorious attributes is concerned, we are to 'know no man after the flesh,' 2 Cor. v. 16. pay no deferential regard to the distinctions of birth, or elevations of character. In these lists the privileges of peerage cease. And I should reckon myself the most abject of creatures, if,

\* The words at large are, 'Canaan became servant of servants to Shem, though not to Japheth, when the Israelites conquered Palestine, page 111. I must beg leave to inquire, why the last clause is added? Is it to prove, that when the Israelites subdued the Canaanites, the descendants of Ham were not, by this victory, made servants to Japheth's offspring? If so, my Lord encounters a phantom of his own raising, and confutes what no man asserts. Is it to insinuate, that because the race of Canaan were not, at this time, made vassals to the posterity of Japheth, therefore they never were; and, of consequence, the prophecy was eluded? This seems to be the design of the sentence. Abstracted from this design, I see not what end it can answer. But this is to draw, from premises that are true, a conclusion that is false; and is just as good logic, as the libertine's argument is sound divinity, "Vengeance is not yet, therefore it will be, executed." See 2 Peter. iii. 4.

† See Gen. xiii. 8; where Abraham and Lot, though uncle and nephew, are called brethren, Gen. xxiv. 48; where Bethuel, another of Abraham's nephews, is styled his brother. Gen. xvi. 12. xxiv. 27.

through respect of persons, I should palliate or secrete the truth, when the ever venerable oracles of inspiration are treated with contempt. A violation of decency this! by whatever hand it is offered, or from whatever quarter it comes, incomparably more flagrant than 'scandalum magnatum.'

Pardon, Madam, this digression, and permit me farther to observe, that the progeny of Ham, in another line, are, to this very day, the slaves of the whole trading world. The negroes I mean; whose descent is from that unhappy man: And what is their country but the market of slavery? Are not their persons bought\* and sold as the meanest commodities? are not they debased to the most sordid, and harassed with the most toilsome drudgery? made, in the strictly literal sense of the phrase, servants of servants?

I have not forgotten what I promised to make appear with relation to the Egyptians, neither shall I overlook what his Lordship has remonstrated from the same quarter. 'The descendants of Misraim,' he says, 'another of the sons of Ham, were the Egyptians: and they were so far from being servants of servants to their cousins the Shemites, that these were servants of servants to them,' page 112. For a season they were; but this servitude was calculated for the good of their community, and redounded to the glory of their God. It terminated in such a signal deliverance, as brought honour and opulence to themselves, confusion and ruin to their enemies. Does it then follow, from this temporary superiority of the Egyptians, which ended in so disastrous a manner, that they were excepted in the denunciation of the curse, or favoured with an act of indemnity?

What says the supreme Arbitrator? 'The nation whom they serve will I judge,' Gen. xv. 14. I myself will punish, not by any human instruments, but by my own immediate hand. Accordingly, they were visited with the most dreadful and destructive plagues. In the last of which, the first-born, the flower of their kingdom, were cut off; and at length their king and his whole army perished in the Red Sea. Does my Lord make no account of these most terrible and unexampled judgments?

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\* No less than thirty thousand, I have been informed, are every year bought for slaves by the English only.

Besides, what was the condition of this people in the following ages? If we consult Ezekiel, he will declare it as clearly, by the spirit of prophecy, Ezek. xxx. 20, 21, 23. xxix. 15. xxx. 13. as if he had lived on the spot, and seen the face of affairs. 'And it came to pass, in the eleventh year, in the first month, in the seventh day of the month, that the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and lo, it shall not be bound up to be healed, to put a roller to bind it, to make it strong to hold the sword. I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries. Egypt shall be the basest of kingdoms, neither shall it exalt itself any more among the nations. And there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt.' Is not all this confirmed by ancient history, and by the present state of Africa? From the one we learn that the Egyptians were subject first to the Persians, next to the Grecians, then to the Romans, afterwards to the Arabs.—And from the other it appears, that they now wear the Turkish yoke; are governed, not by a prince of their own, but by the Grand Seignior and his Bashaws.

Nay, let any person look around upon all the countries peopled by the progeny of Ham, and I am much mistaken if he does not find them what the psalmist describes, 'dark places of the earth, and full of the habitations of cruelty,' Psalm lxxiv. 20. the dens of rapine, and the dungeons of ignorance, where slavery drags the chain, and tyranny lifts the scourge. Insomuch that we need not scruple to say, in the emphatical words of Joshua, *Not one thing has failed of all the good or the evil things which the Lord spake by the mouth of Noah, concerning each of his sons respectively. All are come to pass, not one thing has failed,* Joshua xxiii. 14.

This calls upon me to clear up another part of the prediction—the blessing pronounced upon Shem, and the enlargement promised to Japheth; which will afford a new argument to maintain the authenticity of the passage, and assert its divine inspiration.

I said, the blessing pronounced upon: Because I would not translate the words, *Blessed be the Lord God of Shem,* but, *Blessed of the Lord God is Shem.* This will put a striking contrast between the doom of the irreligious scof-

fer, and the reward of filial piety : this is what we naturally expect from a God who is not unrighteous to forget his people, and their labours of love : this sense the original language will very commodiously bear,\* and the event seems to require. For how manifestly, how eminently, was this benedictive sentence fulfilled ! since, in the posterity of Shem, the church of God was established, and his true worship propagated. From him the Redeemer of mankind, that blessing of blessings, according to the flesh, sprung.

The great enlargement of Japheth's territories is no less certain, and no less remarkable. He had for his possession the isles of the sea westward, and the fine extensive countries near them, Spain, Italy, Greece, Asia the Less, all Europe, and the vast regions towards the north, which anciently the Scythians, now the Tartars inhabit, from whom the Americans, the people of the new world, seem to be derived. By Japheth's *dwelling in the tents of Shem*, is meant the conversion of the European Gentiles to the gospel of Christ : who, through a long progression of years, were *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope of eternal life, and without any saving knowledge of God in the world*, Eph. ii. 12. but were in due time persuaded to embrace the true faith ; were made (as the apostle elegantly speaks, and in a strain perfectly corresponding with the language of our prophecy) ' fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,' Eph. ii. 9. An event altogether as undeniable as it is important, delightful and glorious.

Upon the whole, I cannot but think that his Lordship has planted his battery, and played his artillery, if not like an unskilful, at least like an unsuccessful engineer. He has planted his battery against a place too well fortified to admit of any impression, and that must infallibly triumph over every assault. He has so played his artillery, that it recoils upon himself, and crushes his own design. And this, I apprehend, will always be the issue, when men, even of the

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\* Gen. ix. 26. — Words of the very same import in the very same construction, are thus rendered by our translators, Deut. xxxiii. 12. and will hardly admit of any other interpretation ; " Blessed of the Lord."



finest genius, and most improved capacities, presume to attack the scriptures of eternal truth.

This very passage, instead of depreciating, unspeakably ennobles the divine writings. It shows that they bear the stamp—of that all-overruling power which purposes, and none shall disannul it—of that all-comprehending knowledge which discerns events long, long before they come into existence. And let any unprejudiced reader judge what degree of esteem those books may fairly challenge, whose least considerable, or, in his Lordship's opinion, most obnoxious parts, have such a depth, and such a dignity of wisdom ! such as will be admired and revered so long as historic truth has any credit, or commercial intelligence any being.

Shall I trespass upon your Ladyship's patience a little farther ? The penmen of the Old Testament carry all the marks of the most disinterested and undesigning sincerity. They record the failings of their favourite and most illustrious heroes, without concealing the punishment inflicted on such miscarriages. The uniform tendency of their narratives and observations is to promote a religion the most pure, the most benevolent, the most elevated imaginable ; as remote from all selfish aims, and every low art of collusion, as the heavens are higher than the earth. They are men singularly qualified for their work ; being either eye-witnesses of the facts they relate, or else contemporaries with the persons they describe, or still more remarkably distinguished by their ability to work miracles, and their insight into futurity. As to the facts related, some of them had anniversary solemnities on which they were commemorated ; some of them had significant ceremonies by which they were represented. They were publicly read in the synagogues, and universally known through the nation. It was a duty of religion to talk of them by day, to meditate on them by night, and diligently to instruct the children in them. And were not these circumstances a security, an inviolable security, against any attempt to corrupt, to innovate, or alter ? So that their writings appear with every character, both internal and external, of genuine truth, and with the most unquestionable credentials from the God of power, and God of wisdom.\*

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\* Another very extraordinary peculiarity in these writings, and, to me at least, an undoubted proof, that their authors were

Consequently they have a credibility of their own, sufficient both to claim and to support the faith of an ancient Jew ; such as must command the assent of every rational and honest inquirer, even before the christian dispensation took place.

If my lord had duly adverted to these considerations, surely he would have expunged that bold and rash assertion, ' Without Christianity we have no obligation to believe the Old Testament,' page 94. Surely he would never have left behind him that unwarrantable and injurious insinuation, that the Hebrew original deserves no better credit than the fabulous story\* of the Septuagint translation—nor have found any reason to ' protest that he knew of no rule to go by,' page 100, (in settling the degree of assent due to the several parts of the Old Testament), but the fanciful distinction which has already been examined. He would rather have found reason to adopt and subscribe Agur's confession of faith ; a man who was famous in his own, who will be famous in every generation : and for this, among other most judicious maxims, *Every word of God is pure.*† It is all gold, fine gold, without any the least alloy.

For my own part, I freely acknowledge to your ladyship, that I value the sacred history, (even exclusive of its connexion with the transcendent glories of Christ, and the unspeakable benefits of redemption) on the very same principles which incline our connoisseurs to value those celebrated

divinely inspired, is, their perfect agreement and entire consistency throughout. Though they were composed by different men, placed in very different stations of life, and flourishing in very distant ages of the world, yet they are as constant and harmonious as if they had all been penned by the same hand. Any thing equal to this I never saw, never heard of, and, I believe, the most inveterate or most sagacious adversaries of the Old Testament will not attempt to produce a parallel.

\* The story is told page 86. The insinuation is made in a prolix, confused, and obscure paragraph, page 87.

† Prov xxx. 5. St. Peter bears much the same testimony to the whole order of scriptural writings. With regard to their use, he calls them milk, because nothing is so well adapted to nourish our faith and our holiness. With regard to their quality, he styles them sincere, unadulterated, pure, without any mixture of falsehood, or any tincture of folly. 1 Pet. ii. 2.

antiquities (they call medals) singular, because it is supposed there is but one of the sort extant. Considering the private interests and personal attachments which are so apt to bias the human mind, considering the imperfect information and ignorance of causes, to which all other writers are unavoidably subject, I cannot but conclude that the sacred history is, in point of strict, precise, universal veracity, singular. There is none other besides this, no, not one in the whole world, that is free from all the false colourings of prejudice, clouded with no mixture of uncertainty, most minutely true, and to be depended on in every particular. The sacred history is not only seated on the throne of truth, but, in these respects, possesses it without a rival.

Lord Bolingbroke is fond of Davila;\* because Davila discovers the hidden springs of action, and traces up almost every enterprise to its source, page 167. Is this so valuable a qualification in the Italian? How then should we admire the inspired historians, who disclose to us, not the secret measures of a court, but the unsearchable counsels of Heaven; not the little motives that actuate the politician, but the deep designs of the universal Sovereign; and all this, not from precarious surmise, but with the fullest assurance? An excellency to which no other narrative on earth can lay any claim?

The scriptures throw light upon the most memorable transactions that have passed in the Heathen world, and are recorded by the classic authors. When the Assyrian monarch subdues kingdoms, and ravages nations, we are apt to think he is only gratifying his insatiable ambition. But the scripture assures us, that he was "the staff in Jehovah's hand, and the rod of his indignation," Isaiah x. 5; an instrument made use of by the King of kings to execute his righteous vengeance. When Cyrus is habituated to all the noble exercises, educated in all the fine accomplishments that form the gallant prince, and constitute the complete general, Xenophon sees nothing more than the exertion of human policy: But Isaiah beholds the all-superintending arm of the Lord

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\* He wrote a history of the civil wars in France, in fifteen books, containing all that was remarkable, from the death of Henry II. in 1559, to the peace of Vervins, in 1598. It was originally written in Italian, and translated into French by J. Bodoin. Collier's Hist. Dict.

girding\* this hero, and preparing him for the deliverance of his people. So that the scripture history is itself, the grandest and most useful, while its intercurrent observations are a key to open the most celebrated affairs which give weight and estimation to other annals.

The grandest and most useful.—This will appear to be more than a bare assertion, if we recollect that here is a display of that great Messiah, who is “the hope of Israel,” Acts xxviii. 20. and “the desire of all nations,” Haggai ii. 7; a display of him in his mysterious incarnation, his wonderful person, and all the gracious, the benign majesty of his mediatorial offices. From the original promise made to our first parents, through all its progressive evolutions, till he arises in the New Testament, “as the only begotten of the Father,” John i. 14. with a lustre and dignity suitable to so divine a personage. Which is an event of such incomparable condescension, magnificence, and grace, that all the prophets bear witness to it, Acts x. 43. and the “very angels desire to look into it,” 1 Pet. i. 12.

How then must your ladyship be surprised to see lord Bolingbroke undertaking to assign the principal scope of the Mosaic history, page 109. (the former part of it at least), and not enlarging, not dwelling upon, no, nor so much as mentioning the Redeemer: That all-glorious, all-important Redeemer, who is the sum and substance of the whole scriptures; the Alpha and Omega in all the revelations of God—of whom Moses wrote, John v. 46. and whose day Abraham saw, John viii. 56—whose righteousness was preached by Noah,† and his final advent foretold by Enoch, Jude 14—whose merits, apprehended by faith, were the recommendation of Abel's sacrifice, Heb. ix. 4. and the consolation of Adam, Gen. iii. 15. under the loss of immortality and expulsion from Paradise—from whom many, if not all, the antediluvian patriarchs borrow their honours, and stand upon ever-

\* Isaiah xlv. 5. “I have girded thee, though thou hast not known me.” Xenophon's *KYRÆ PAIDEIA*, though written with quite a different view, is a very fine, and perhaps the very best comment on Isaiah's beautiful and expressive phrase.

† 2 Peter ii. 5. It can hardly be doubted but Noah preached the very same righteousness of which himself was an heir; and that, we are assured, was the righteousness of faith, Hebrews xi. 7.

lasting record, chiefly as being in the number of his progenitors. This capital omission is (to use his lordship's own language) 'a manifest abuse of sacred history, and quite inexcusable in a writer who knew, or should have known,' page 178. that in its most early, as well as in its latter periods, it invariably testifies of Christ, John v. 39

Thus to undertake, and thus to execute, is as if some pretender to anatomy should engage to explain the nature of animal motion, and say not a word concerning the nerves, the muscles, the heart; or, as if some smatterer in geography should offer to exhibit a complete map of our country, and leave entirely out of his plan the cities, the towns, and the rivers. Yet this is not the only incident on which my lord, however critical in profane literature, discovers himself to have been very remiss in the study, at least very superficial in the knowledge of his Bible.

From which hint I would take occasion to entreat, and with the most affectionate earnestness, all that are inclined to dispute against this divine book, first to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with it. And would they once set about the momentous work with a candid, upright, and impartial mind, free from the jaundice of prejudices, not blinded with the fumes of self-conceit, nor intoxicated with the cup of vicious pleasure; if they would thus examine the inspired volumes, they would soon perceive such a lovely constellation of truth, of wisdom, and of grace, shining forth from every page, as must turn their disesteem into admiration, and their aversion into delight.

But if they bring with them a fondness for fame, a haughty self-sufficiency of spirit, or an ignoble attachment to sensual gratifications; if they are determined to cherish, and will on no consideration divorce these seducers of the heart and perverters of the judgment, we cannot wonder that the scriptures should appear to them with much the same aspect as the miraculous cloud appeared to the Egyptians, which threw darkness on their paths, and shed horror on their souls, even while it gave light to the steps, and alacrity to the hopes, of the Israelites.\* In this case we may assign a reason for their opposition, from the unhappy circumstances re-

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\* Exodus xiv. 20. "It was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these."

corded of Ishmael :\* Their hand, their tongue, their pen, is against the word of God, because the word of God is against them, their tempers, and their ways.

In the sacred narrations we behold "the arm of the Lord revealed. Other historians only guess at the interposition of an avenging or propitious God. And though conjectures of this kind occur but very rarely in their works, they are frequently censured as a presumptuous intrusion upon the arcana of heaven. But the penmen of scripture, with unerring certainty, declare, "This is the Lord's doing:" a stroke from the sword of his justice; † or a reward from the riches of his goodness. ‡

Here we perceive, as in the brightest mirror, what practices he favours, and what methods he opposes; what courses are attended with his blessings, and what behaviour provokes his displeasure. These records set before us the most striking exemplifications, both of the divine threatenings, and of the divine promises, demonstrating from repeated experience, that the former are more than van menaces, the latter are far from alluring fallacies. By which means they are admirably well adapted to inculcate those fundamental lessons of practical religion—a continual advertence to God—a believ-

\* Genesis xvi. 12. "His hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him."

† 2 Chron. x. 15.—xv. 6.—xxv. 20.—xxviii. 5, 6.—xix. 8, 9.

‡ See 2 Chronicles xii. 7—xiii. 15. 16. 18.—xiv. 6. 12.—xxvi. 5.—xxvii. 6. I refer to the Chronicles rather than to the other parts of sacred history, in order to create a higher esteem for these excellent memoirs. Many people, I believe, are contentedly ignorant of the Chronicles, because some of the first chapters consist of Hebrew names which are forbidding, and of genealogical tables, which are useless to the generality of readers. But, notwithstanding their unpromising introduction, they contain the most memorable and momentous occurrences. They are interspersed with the most weighty and edifying remarks. They are worthy of our repeated perusal, and will amply repay the most careful attention. I would compare them to some noble mine, whose surface is barren and seems to include nothing valuable. But as you penetrate the soil the treasure opens. The deeper you go, the more riches you find. And, instead of regretting the little toil of application, you are only grieved, that you undertook the gainful search no sooner.

ing dependence on God, and an habitual expectation of success in our schemes, not merely from any address or industry of our own, but from the all-powerful benediction of God—which are, of all other precepts, perhaps the most salutary and beneficial to mankind.

My remarks would be immoderately prolix were they to enumerate all the perfections of sacred history. I shall content myself with wishing that your ladyship may esteem, may reverence, may love the whole book of God—only in proportion to its worth. Then, I am persuaded, it will have your highest esteem, your profoundest reverence, and most devoted love.

Before I conclude, give me leave, madam, to make one request: which I make under a sense of my various obligations to your ladyship, with all the engaging acts of your condescension and generosity full in my view. It ought therefore to be, and it really is, expressive of the most unfeigned thankfulness for your favours, and of the truest zeal for your happiness. It is this—That you would carry on a daily intercourse, and cultivate a holy, an intimate familiarity with the inspired writers, and their inestimable volumes. Read them: recollect them: weigh them. Contemplate them in their magnificent whole, in their beautiful parts, and their harmonious connexions.

I should be afraid to recommend, in this zealous manner, and to this assiduous perusal, the most correct compositions that ever proceeded from a human pen. But here I am under no apprehension of your exhausting the mine, and complaining of emptiness; under no apprehension lest the entertainment should flatten upon your taste, and create disgust. The more we search those storehouses of wisdom, the better we understand those oracles of truth, the more they will approve themselves to our judgment, and become dearer, still dearer to our affections. The pages of scripture, like the productions of nature, will not only endure the test, but improve upon the trial. The application of the microscope to the one, and a repeated meditation on the other, are sure to display new beauties, and present us with higher attractives. Nay, the very attempts of an adversary to blacken the scriptures serve only to increase their lustre. For my part, I never should have seen the prediction of Noah rising with such perspicuity, propriety, and glory, to observation, had

not Lord Bolingbroke made an effort to overwhelm it with objections, and sink\* it into discredit.

Above all, we may bring to this best of studies an humble mind, a mind deeply sensible of its own ignorance and weakness: yet frequently and cheerfully lifted up to God for his enlightening and animating Spirit: that, by his blessed influences, our "understandings may be opened to understand the scriptures," Luke xxiv. 45. and our "hearts opened to receive them;"† to understand them in all the fulness of their heavenly meaning; to receive them in all the force of their transforming power. That, reading the threatenings, we may tremble‡ at the awful word, and acknowledge ourselves justly liable to those terrible judgments; but at the same time believe, that "Christ has delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13; that, reading the promises, we may confess ourselves unworthy of an interest in such unspeakable blessings; yet rest assured, that "all the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus," 2 Cor. i. 20; are our unquestionable portion, through his merits and atonement, and will certainly be fulfilled through his intercession and faithfulness. Reading the precepts, let us rejoice in the belief that our Saviour, obedient unto death, has fulfilled them perfectly for our justification; that our Saviour, exalted unto heaven, has engaged to

\* An allusion to the motto in the title page,  
"Merces profundo, pulchrior evenit;"  
and expressive of its meaning.

† Acts xvi. 14. Such is the darkness, such the depravity of our minds, that they will not, they cannot, be made wise unto salvation, even from the scriptures themselves, without the powerful agency of the blessed Spirit. Unless his influences enlighten our understandings, and apply the doctrines, when understood, to our hearts, we shall be, even with the word of light and life in our hands, somewhat like blind Bartimeus, sitting amidst the beams of day; or like the withered arm with invaluable treasures before it. This, I think, experience must acknowledge; this, I am very certain, the texts referred to, in concert with many others, evince.

‡ See Ezra x. 3. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27. where it might not be amiss to compare the temper of true believers, and the behaviour of an illustrious king, with the spirit that runs through his Lordship's performance.



“to put his Spirit within us” for our sanctification; “causing us to walk in his statutes, and to keep his judgments and do them,” Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Contemplating the various examples, may we use some of them as admonitory sea-marks to avoid the rocks of sin; use others as a conducting clue to guide our feet into the way of peace; use all as so many incitements to awaken our circumspection or quicken our diligence in “making our calling and election sure.”

Then we shall have another proof that the original of these holy books is not from man, but from the Lord Jehovah; a proof which some people may explode as imaginary or enthusiastical, but is really of the utmost solidity, and of the last importance: which, though by no means independent on, much less exclusive of, other evidences, is nevertheless to each individual person, incomparably more valuable than any, or every other attestation. We shall “have the witnesses in ourselves,” 1 John v. 10. We shall experience, on our own souls, the happy energy of the scriptures. They will be the instrument of working such a lively faith in Christ, such an ardent love of God, such a cordial benevolence for our fellow-creatures,\* as cannot fail to exalt our desires, refine our affections, and dignify our tempers;—such as will administer comfort under affliction, and impart an additional relish to prosperity;—such as will teach us to order our conversation right amidst all the snares, all the labyrinths of time; and gradually train us up for the pure bliss, and consummate enjoyments of eternity.

May this proof, madam, be written on your heart—writ-

\* This is what his Lordship means, or ought to mean, when he speaks of the proper force of religion; that force which ‘subdues the mind, and awes the conscience by conviction,’ page 182. And I am well assured, whatever he may surmise to the contrary, that this voucher to the real inspiration of the scriptures, and divine original of Christianity, ‘is not wanting.’ Nay, I durst venture to engage, that it never will be wanting to any person who seeks it with due attention and becoming diligence; and neither forgets nor neglects those necessary preparatives prescribed by the great Master of the Christian school; The one comprehended in this maxim, “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.” John vii. 17. The other delivered in the following direction. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.” James i. 5.

ten in bright and indelible characters—written by the finger of the living God! Then, I am assured, every attempt to stagger your belief, or withdraw your veneration from the **BIBLE**, will be like an attempt to shatter the rock in pieces with a bubble, or to pierce the adamant with a feather. This is not only the sincere wish, but, so long as religion and gratitude have any place in my breast, it will also be the earnest prayer of

Your ladyship's much obliged,

And most obedient humble servant,

**JAMES HERVEY.**

April 22, 1752.

### *POSTSCRIPT.*

I have taken no notice of his lordship's animadversions relating to the genuineness of the gospel-history, because this would be entering upon a new field, which I leave open and untouched for some more able defender of that invaluable depositum; not that I apprehend there is any thing very formidable in the attack; but I think it would be serviceable, as I am persuaded it is easy, to show the weakness and unreasonableness of those arguments, which men of superior abilities are obliged to take up with, when they list themselves under the banner of scepticism or infidelity. It would also be a piece of public justice to inquire into the sincerity, probity, and consistency of those writers, who, in some places, lay a mighty stress upon the authority of the New Testament (page 94.) in others, endeavour to sap the very foundation of its credibility (page 177.)



# CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

PREVAILING CUSTOM

OF

VISITING ON SUNDAYS.



**THE** sentiments here offered against the prevailing custom of profaning the Sabbath will probably be a satisfaction to every serious reader, and be productive of much good; especially as it is in every body's power to reform one, and as then his own conduct will be a tacit reproof to his acquaintance, who may probably, through his example, be induced to weigh these proceedings attentively, and no longer follow a multitude to do evil. It is certainly a matter of importance to inquire, whether Sunday-visits are justifiable upon the principles of scripture and of reason? as the conscientious observation of the Sabbath has of late years been so much disregarded, and as it is now become the principal day of visiting among persons of all ranks. The chief advocates for the continuance of such a practice should, methinks, defend it publicly, that their arguments may be properly examined, if (in their opinion) such a custom can admit of any rational defence. And those who are sufficiently convinced by what is here advanced should resolve to discontinue Sunday-visits themselves, and discountenance them in others as far as they can, consistent with decency and prudence. That the number of such well disposed persons may be daily increasing, is undoubtedly the hearty wish of every one who is sincerely desirous of promoting the glory of God, and the good of mankind.

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**Q.** *Whether it be right for TRULY SERIOUS persons to visit on Sundays?*

**THE** persons here mentioned are the truly serious. As to many people, it matters not whether they are at home or abroad: God is not in all their thoughts, they have no concern for their eternal welfare; they therefore are in every place altogether and alike unprofitable.

But when we begin to discern the things that are excellent, when we sincerely desire to "obtain salvation, with eternal glory by Jesus Christ," then, whether it be proper to fall into the prevailing custom of visiting on Sundays? is the question.

Were our companions religious, and was our conversation edifying, I should make no scruple to give my voice in the affirmative. Every parlour would then be a little sanctuary, would echo back the exhortations, and second the designs of the pulpit; and we might truly say, "It is good for us to be here."

But, alas! where do we find such company? when do we hear such conversation? The general conversation is all impertinence, not so much as seasoned with a spice of religion. "They talk of vanity every one with his neighbour," Psalm xii. 2. For which reason, I cannot think it safe or expedient, allowable or innocent, **HABITUALLY** to visit on Sundays.

It is inconsistent with the best example. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," says St. John. I was filled with the communications of the Holy Spirit, giving me clear views of Christ, bright hopes of glory, and shedding abroad the love of God in my heart. But is this compatible with the idle, trifling, insignificant chat, which engrosses our ordinary visits?

**OBJECT. I.** Will it be said the apostle's was a peculiar case? I answer, It was a peculiarly happy case. And will a prudent christian relinquish the prospect of such unspeakable happiness for the most empty and delusive amusements? But, I believe, it was not peculiar to the apostle, rather the common privilege of all believers; written as a pattern for their practice, and to be the plan of their expectations.

It is contrary to the divine prohibition. The negative law relating to the Sabbath is, "not doing thy own ways, not

finding thy own pleasure, not speaking thy own words," Isa. lviii. 13. "Not doing thy own ways," abstaining from secular business, and all worldly pursuits. "Not finding thy own pleasure;" renouncing all those recreations and amusements, which may tend to gratify thy taste, not to glorify thy almighty Lord. "Not speaking thy own words;" conversing on spiritual, sublime, and heavenly subjects; not on low, earthly, temporal matters, which, having no reference to the Creator's honour, are therefore called "thy own." However some people may act, or whatever they may think, this is the express and unalterable law established by the God of heaven. Whether it be possible to mingle in modish company, and obey this law, let those judge who are acquainted with the world.

It breaks the divine command. The positive law relating to the Sabbath is, "Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy." Remember, take particular notice of this injunction. It is a duty greatly to be regarded, and most conscientiously to be observed. Upon the due observance of this, our disposition and ability to observe the other precepts, in good measure depends. "Keep it holy;" devote it to holy purposes; spend it in holy exercises, and not only an hour or two, not barely the intervals of private and public devotion, but the day, the Sabbath-day, the whole day. Neither will the whole day be too long, if we make conscience of discharging the several duties of religion, reading and meditation, prayer and praise, teaching our children, and instructing our domestics; examining our hearts, and taking heed to our ways. All these offices, if properly performed, will leave very little, rather no time for unnecessary elopements. And shall we huddle over all these important offices, or totally neglect some of them, only to indulge ourselves in the most unprofitable levities? at once doing an injury to our spiritual interests, and violating the divine precept.

I fear it will be a kind of "crucifying afresh our blessed Master," Heb. vi. 6. This expression we have often read, but think ourselves free from the guilt implied in it, and indeed from the very likelihood of contracting it. But let us be reminded, that "we crucify our Lord afresh," when we give others occasion to conclude, that we have very little esteem for him, or gratitude to him; consequently, that he has little or no excellency for which we or others should de-

sire him. Now, what else can the world conclude, when they see us giving into the vanities of a licentious mode on that very day which is sacred to the commemoration of his resurrection? 'Surely,' might the children of this world say, 'if these christians had any real reverence for their Lord, they would show it on his own day. They would either be retired to contemplate and adore him, or else come abroad to exalt and glorify him. But they come abroad to be as frothy in their talk, and as trifling in their temper, as forgetful of their Saviour, and as regardless of his honour, as the most arrant worldling among us all.' To afford a handle for such reflections, is to wound the Redeemer in the house of his friends.

It will "grieve the Holy Spirit," Eph. iv. 30. Christians believe, that he is infinitely wise, all-gracious and ever blessed; that he dwells in their hearts, and is the source of all their holiness, and all happiness. Therefore, we pray daily in our liturgy, 'That the Holy Spirit may not be taken from us.' On Sunday, we commemorate the descent of this divine guest, and are, in a particular manner, to implore his presence, and cultivate his influences. But can this be done by neglecting his express prohibition, and breaking his positive command? by disregarding the examples which he has set before us, and dishonouring that Saviour whom he delights to magnify? Besides, dare any mortal presume to say in his heart, amidst a circle of our polite visitants, 'I am now acting in a manner becoming my relation to the eternal Spirit. Are these sentiments and this discourse, suitable to his dignity, wisdom, and glory, a proper method of celebrating and honouring the day of his miraculous mission?'

Should any one ask, 'What is meant by grieving the Holy Spirit?' It means offending his exalted Majesty, and causing him to act as men commonly act, when they are grieved and displeased with any one; they withdraw from his company, and visit him no more. When Samuel was grieved for Saul's misbehaviour, it is written, 'He came no more to see Saul.' If the almighty Comforter be provoked to deal thus with our souls, alas! what a loss must we sustain! a loss unspeakable, irreparable, eternal!

So that if this practice were not sinful, it must be exceedingly detrimental, and that not in one only, but in various respects. Have we received spiritual good from the public

ordinances? The admonition of heaven is, 'We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip,' Heb. ii. 1. By this practice we not only suffer them to slip, but open, as it were, a leak for their immediate discharge. Have we been under edifying impressions from our private exercises? The unerring direction is, 'Quench not the Spirit.' Stifle not the serious desires which he has awakened; allow them their full scope, till they are formed into gracious habits.—By the practice under consideration, we pour water instead of oil upon the feeble flame; we extinguish what we should cherish. Is the heavenly seed sown in our breasts? These dissipating interviews are the ravenous birds which follow the seedsman, and devour the grain, so that nothing takes root. No fruit of faith, of joy, or love, is produced.

Let me only add, that, on a dying-bed, the misimprovement of all our time will be most bitterly regretted. How much more the misimprovement of those hours which God himself has hallowed, has set apart for the noblest purposes, and is wont to bless in an especial manner! 'While others were seeking the pearl of great price, and gathering those treasures of wisdom and grace which endure to everlasting life, I, alas! was squandering away the precious opportunities in very vanity.' To see the curtain of time dropping, to see a vast eternity opening before us, and to have such reflections haunting our conscience; this will cause misery not to be expressed, create anguish not to be conceived.

OBJECT. II. Will it be said, in answer to these considerations, 'That company, even trifling company, is a relaxation. We return to the instruction of our families, and to our evening devotion with fresh alacrity, being sick of these triflers?' A strange argument! It should rather be reversed. The objectors might truly say, being sick of religion and its services, we want such triflers to afford us some relief. The sincere servant of Christ would find no recreation, but feel grief of heart in such interviews. It must be a real affliction to observe his divine Lord absolutely disregarded; disregarded on the day peculiarly devoted to his honour; every vanity now preferred before him, as Barabbas the robber was formerly. The true refreshment for our souls consists in having our faith increased, our hope elevated, and our views of heaven enlarged, in contemplating the infinite per-



fection and glory of our Redeemer, the infinite grandeur and fulness of his propitiation, and our complete, I might have said our infinite, security from wrath and vengeance, by being interested in his merits.

**OBJECT. III.** 'Sunday is the best part of our time for this purpose ; business is suspended, every body is ready dressed, all circumstances invite.' Is it the best part of our time? Then let it be devoted to the best of beings. Who is more worthy of our choicest thoughts, affections, hours, than that divinely compassionate Saviour, who offered himself, in the very prime of his life, a bleeding victim for our sins, that his sacrifice might have every recommending circumstance which could render it acceptable to God, and available for man?

**OBJECT. IV.** 'It is the universal custom ; to discontinue it, would render us unfashionable :' And cannot you bear to be a little unfashionable for his sake, who was despised and rejected, who humbled himself to death, even the death of the cross, for your sake? Is it the universal custom? Then custom is the idol which we are called to renounce. I must say of custom in this case as Elijah said of Baal, If custom be God, follow its dictates ; but if Jehovah be God, observe his precepts. It is written in the scriptures, Rom. xii. 2. 'Be not conformed to this world.' To what does this prohibition relate? To such ungodly customs, no doubt. No battery of cannon was ever pointed more directly against a citadel to be demolished, than this text against such customs. In indifferent matters, let the christian avoid singularity ; let him dress somewhat like his neighbours ; let him make an appearance suitable to his station ; but let him *not follow a multitude to profane the Sabbath, or to do any evil.* Here religious persons should by all means be singular, should distinguish themselves by a becoming zeal for their God, should set an example, and shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation ; otherwise they may do, not themselves only, but others also incredible harm.

**OBJECT. V.** Some perhaps may start and reply, 'If these things are so, to what a degree of sinful negligence is even the christian world arrived!' With regard to the world called christian, this is too true, and no measure of sorrow can be sufficient to bewail the deplorable degeneracy. Negligence,

or rather obstinacy, in this capital instance, is a melancholy indication of no less disobedience in other respects.

OBJECT. VI. 'This will be irksome, will render our religion a burden.' I hope no one that pretends to seriousness will offer to make this objection. The sinners in Zion made it; for which reason they are branded, and by the divine Spirit himself, with infamy that shall never be blotted out: 'O! what a weariness is it! when will the Sabbath,' and its irksome solemnities, 'be gone?' Mal. i. 13. and Amos viii. 5. This discovers a heart alienated from God, that has not tasted the good word of grace, and savours not the things which be of Christ. Otherwise such would be the language, 'One day thus employed is better than a thousand,' Psalm lxxxiv. 10. Is it tedious and burdensome to pass a single day in devout exercises? How then shall we pass, how shall we endure the ages of eternity! since we are assured that those happy beings who stand around the throne, clothed with white robes, serve their God, day and night, for ever and ever, in his temple. In the regions of immortality they find a heaven, because there they have a never-ceasing and eternal communion with God; because there they have an uninterrupted and everlasting Sabbath.



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A  
**TREATISE**  
ON THE  
**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**  
OF  
**DAUGHTERS.**



Prov. xxii. 6....Train up a child in the way she should go, and  
when she is old, she will not depart from it.

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**VOL. V.**

**S**

### **ADVERTISEMENT.**

*AS this little treatise was intended for the press by Mr. Hervey, he had transcribed it from his short-hand copy. The candid reader will, however, make the proper allowances for a posthumous piece, which would undoubtedly have appeared less defective, had it been revised by the ingenious author.*

ON THE  
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
OF  
DAUGHTERS.



IT has long been a prevailing report, that, among persons of education and distinction, true religion is very rare. This, I would hope, is an invidious rumour, rather than a true representation of the case. May it not be an artifice of the grand enemy, calculated to bring the best and noblest of causes into disrepute, as though politeness and piety were inconsistent, as though grace and good breeding were irreconcilable? Is then the faith of Christ quite fatal to refined manners, as the rod of Moses was to the counterfeit miracles of the magicians? No; it is rather like the influence of the sanctuary on the rod of Aaron; which, while it remained at a distance from the tabernacle, was a dry, sapless, and barren stick; but, when deposited before the ark, was quickened into vegetable light, was adorned with a milk-white bloom, and enriched with full-grown fruit; or, as the sacred historian expresses this surprising fact, 'It brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds,' Numbers xvii. 8.

I find upon the list of saints the most renowned kings and victorious generals; the ablest politicians, and the greatest philosophers; men who have bid the sun stand still, and prolong the departing day; have laid an embargo upon darkness, and protracted the shades of night; have commanded the ground to cleave asunder, and transmit their presumptuous foes to a strange and inevitable destruction; have divided the impetuous waves, and led their followers to safety and to conquest through the depths of the sea; men who have walked in the burning fiery furnace as under the

shelter of an imbowering arbour, and sat in the lion's den, amidst a herd of hungry monsters, with as much serenity and as much security, as amidst a circle of bosom friends.

I myself have known various persons admired for their accomplished behaviour, and revered for their exalted station, who have thought it their highest honour to be servants of Jesus Christ. My excellent friend Camillus, at whose house I now reside, is one of the number. I cannot refrain from giving a portrait of Camillus, or rather, of a few of his most distinguishing features; for, to paint him in full proportion, as he daily appears, in all the mild, the benign majesty of domestic authority, parental government, and christian zeal; to do this would require a much abler hand than mine.

Camillus, not long ago, entertained in his house a young clergyman, who was always treated with a respect suitable to the dignity of his office, and the piety of his behaviour. Having lately presented the worthy ecclesiastic to a living, and always requiring residence on the benefice, he is now destitute of a chaplain. Remembering, however, that all christians are spiritual priests, he thinks it no dishonour to have an immediate and personal audience with the King of heaven, not acting at all out of character to represent the wants of his household with his own mouth at the throne of grace.

Before supper is introduced, the evening incense ascends. This, rather than a later hour, is pitched upon, that the little congregation may join in the sacred service with a lively devotion. After a plentiful meal, when the limbs are weary, people, even though kneeling, and in the presence of God, are more inclined to nod than to pour out their souls; are very apt to mistake the cushion for a pillow. No servant is allowed to be absent, one only excepted, whose presence in the kitchen is absolutely necessary. Acquainted with their master's resolution, they are careful so to manage their affairs, and dispatch their business, that no avoidable obstacle may intervene to detain them from the stated worship.

When all are assembled, without either tumultuous disorder in their approach, or a slovenly negligence in their apparel, a chapter is read. Camillus makes the choice. He imagines it is not so useful for his family, whose memories are weak, and their capacities scanty, to read the lesson for the day. He has, therefore, selected some of the most instruc-

tive and animating portions of scripture; and judges it advisable to peruse these again and again, rather than to go regularly through the whole inspired writings. The servants take it by turns to read, which improves them in the practice, and keeps them awake. If any of them discover a disposition to sleep, to him the office is sure to be assigned.

When the chapter is finished, Camillus singles out some one verse, of very weighty and edifying import, which for the space of five or six minutes, he explains, applies, and affectionately urges upon their consciences. This done with great seriousness, and profound reverence, he offers up evening prayers. His prayers consist of short sentences, and the whole is performed in a little time. Every part is pronounced with that deliberate slowness, and solemn accent; which command attention, and create awe. He makes a very perceivable pause at the close of each petition, that every one may have leisure to add, in silence, a hearty Amen; and to recollect the merits of that blessed Redeemer, which render every thanksgiving acceptable, and every supplication successful.

In the morning before breakfast, the worship of the living God is renewed. At this juncture, Camillus omits the chapter, but requires one of his domestics to repeat the verse on which he enlarged the preceding night. None knows who shall be called to this task; therefore, every one is obliged to be properly prepared. He throws the substance of his exhortation into a few searching and interesting questions, which he addresses to one of his children or servants: for in this respect, no difference is made. All are equally enjoined to remember, all are equally accountable for what they hear. Sometimes he encourages those whose answers show that they have given diligent heed to his instructions. Sometimes he puts on an air of severity, mixed with tenderness, and reproves the notoriously negligent. Always he re-inculcates the principal points, charging them to retain the doctrines in their memory, and revolve them in their thoughts, while they are pursuing their respective business. These doctrines are the seed of faith, the root of godliness. Unless these be lodged in the mind, and operate on the heart, he never expects to have his domestics, commence true believers or real Christians; no more than the husbandman can reasonably expect a crop in harvest without sowing his field, or the flo-



rist promise himself a blow of tulips without planting his parterre.

I have given a glimpse of Camillus at the head of his family: let me now show my favourite in another attitude. Camillus is convinced that no trust is of superior or of equal importance to the tuitionary cultivation\* of an immortal soul. As Providence has blessed him with two fine daughters, their present and future happiness is the reigning object of his care. He has no interest so much at heart as to give them a truly refined education; such as may render them an ornament and a blessing to society, while they pass the time of their sojourning here below; and may train them up for a state of everlasting bliss, when the world, and its transitory scenes, shall be no more.

Camillus never could persuade himself to admire the maxims of prudence, said to be gathered from the extravagant rant of our tragedies; and less is his esteem for those modest dispositions which people pretend to imbibe from the luscious gallantries of comedy. For which reason, he has no impatient desire to secure for Miss Mitissa and Miss Serena a place in the front-box. However, as we are apt immoderately to covet what is absolutely forbidden, he has himself attended them once or twice, to the theatrical entertainments and public diversions; thinking it much the safest method, that their curiosity should be gratified under his own inspection; and hoping to make them sensible how much they endanger their virtue, who too often frequent them; how shamefully they debase their affections, who are passionately fond of them; and what mere phantoms they follow, who seek for satisfaction in such delusory delights.

They learn to dance, in order to acquire a genteel air, and a graceful demeanor; not to shine at a ball, or win the worthless admiration of fops. He is content to have them unacquainted with the wild and romantic fables of Heathen poetry; nor is under any painful apprehensions of damping the sprightliness of their temper, though they have no taste for

• *Sensere, quid mens rite, quid indoles*

*Nutrita faustis sub pene tralibus*

*Posset.*

*Hor.*

The meaning of which in English is,

• What could be done we know, were we but led

• By bright example, and by virtue bred.

the chimerical adventures of our romances, and are strangers to the loose intrigues of our novels, being fully persuaded that there is as much sound sense as smartness of thought in that celebrated saying,

Retire, and read your Bible, to be gay,  
There truths abound of sovereign aid to peace !\*

He has introduced them to the knowledge of history, and its instructive facts. They have a tolerable idea of the four universal monarchies, so eminent for their great events, and so circumstantially foretold in scripture. They have been led through the most remarkable transactions of our own country, and are pretty well acquainted with the present state of Europe. They have, all along, been taught to observe the wonderful revolution of empires, and the adorable procedure of Providence : that they may discern how ' the fashion of this world passeth away ;'† and how ' happy are the people,' how happy are the persons, ' who have the Lord for their God.' They have been taught to observe the honourable success that has usually attended the practice of integrity, guided by Prudence ; together with the scandal and ruin which have always pursued folly in her senseless rambles, and dogged vice to her horrid haunts : that they may see the rocks on which some have split, and avoid the destructive track ; see the road which has conducted others to the haven of happiness, and steer the same auspicious course.

They have been initiated in geography, and understand the several divisions of the globe, the extent of its principal kingdoms, and the manners of their various inhabitants. They will tell you the peculiar commodities which each climate produces : whence comes the tea that furnishes their

\* Dr. Young's eighth Night Thought.

† 1 Cor. vii. 31. Not only the little projects and puny achievements of private persons, but the power of distinguished families, the policies of mighty states, the magnificence of the greatest kingdoms ; all, all are in a state of perpetual fluctuation. They fade away, (as the apostle most significantly describes the case) like the graceful and glossy aspect of some delicate flower, when the sun arises with a scorching heat, James i. 11. They pass away (as the prophet still more emphatically speaks) like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, which the wind carries off on its wings, and the place thereof is known no more, Dan. ii. 34,

breakfast, and whence the sugar that renders it palatable: what mountains supply them with wines, and what islands send them their spices: in what groves the silk-worms spin the materials for their clothes: and what mines\* supply them with the diamonds that sparkle in their ear-rings. A screen, covered with a set of coloured maps, and a custom of referring from the public papers to those beautiful draughts, has rendered the acquisition of this knowledge a diversion rather than a task, has enticed them into a valuable branch of science, under the inviting disguise of amusement. This serves to enlarge their apprehensions of things, gives them magnificent thoughts of the great Creator, and may help to suppress that silly self-admiration, which prompts so many pretty idols to fancy themselves the only considerable creatures under heaven.

They spell to perfection, and have obtained this art by a sort of play, rather than by a laborious application. Whenever they asked any little gratification, it has been their papa's custom to make them spell the word; which, if they performed aright, they seldom failed to succeed in their request. They are mistresses of the needle; and the youngest, whose genius inclines that way, is expert in using the pencil. Music is their recreation, not their business. The eldest, to a skilful singer, adds a melodious and well regulated voice. She often entertains me with singing an anthem to her harpsichord. Entertains, did I say? she really edifies me. These truly excellent performances exalt the desires, and compose the affections. They inspire such a serenity of delight, as leaves neither a sting in the conscience, nor a stain on the imagination. Methinks they bring us a little antepast of heaven, and tune our souls for its harmonious joys.

Thoroughly versed in the most practical parts of arithmetic, they have each their week wherein to be intrusted with the management of a sum of money. This they disburse, as circumstances require, for the smaller necessaries of the family. Of this they keep an exact account, and make a regular entry of each particular in their day book. Not

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\* The best of the diamond mines are in the kingdom of Golconda, near to Madras (or Fort St. George, as it is frequently called, because the East-India Company have so named the fort they have built for the security of their important factory at Madras.)

long ago a tenant of inferior rank came to Camillus with his rent. Instead of receiving it himself, he referred it to Miss Serena. You would have been delighted to observe the behaviour of our little landlady on this occasion, the engaging condescension with which she addressed the honest rustic, the tender good-nature with which she inquired after my dame and the family at home, the ready dexterity with which she wrote and subscribed a proper receipt; and, above all, her amiable generosity in returning half a crown, to buy a copy-book for his eldest son, 'who,' he said, 'was just going into joining-hand; but, he feared, would never come to spell or write half so well as her ladyship.'

Though Camillus is careful to ground them betimes in the rules of œconomy, he is equally careful to cultivate a spirit of discreet beneficence. A few days ago, when my friend and his lady were abroad, Miss Mitissa was informed of a poor woman in the parish just brought to bed, after a long and hard labour; who, being unhappily married to a sot of a fellow, was, at a time when the choicest comforts are scarcely sufficient, destitute of the meanest conveniences. Upon hearing the calamitous case, she immediately dispatched a servant with a crown from her weekly stock; part to buy for the afflicted creature some present accommodations, and part to defray the expenses at such a juncture unavoidable; but gave a strict charge, that the whole should be employed for the relief of the distressed mother and her helpless infant, none of it fingered or enjoyed by the worthless drone her husband. When Camillus returned, he was so pleased with this seasonable and well-judged charity, that, besides his commendation and caresses, he farther rewarded our considerate matron-like benefactress, by making her a present of Clarissa.\* For he always contrives to make what tends to their improvement the matter of their reward. If they have committed a fault, they are forbid the privilege of using their maps. If they have behaved in a becoming manner, their recompense is, not a piece of money, or a paper of sweet-meats, but some new instruction on the globe, some new lesson on the harpsichord, which may at once delight and improve them.

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\* A book admirably calculated to instruct and entertain, wrote by the celebrated Mr. Richardson, in eight volumes.

To prevent a haughty carriage, and to worm out all inordinate self love, he teaches them to consider their neighbours as members of the same universal family, and children of the same almighty Father. However poor in their circumstances, or mean in their aspect, they are the objects of God's infinitely tender regards; of that God, who has given his own Son to suffer death for their pardon, and has prepared a heaven of endless bliss for their final reception. For which reason they should despise none, but honour all; should be as ready to do them good, as the hand is ready to sooth the eye when it smarts, or ease the head when it aches. One afternoon, when he was going to treat them with an orange, he bid each of them bring a fine toy, lately received for a present. It was made in the shape of a knife, the handle of ivory, and inlaid with the gayest colours; the blade of glass, most dazlingly bright, but without an edge. Cut the orange in two, said their papa. When they both tried with their pretty knives, and, to their no small mortification, both failed, he furnished them with another of more ordinary appearance; but tolerably sharp. With this they easily pierced the rind, and came at the delicious juice. 'Who now,' said Camillus, 'would not prefer one such serviceable though plain utensil to a hundred of those glittering though worthless trifles? And you, my dear children, if you have no other recommendations than a showy person and the trappings of dress, you will be as contemptible in your generation as that insignificant bauble. But if it is the desire of your hearts, and the endeavour of your lives, to be extensively useful, you will gain, and, what is better, you will deserve respect; your names will be precious, and your memories blessed.'

With equal watchfulness he discountenances all those acts of petulant barbarity which children are so apt to exercise on the reptile creation. He will allow no court of inquisition to be erected within his house; no, not upon the most despicable, or even the noxious animals. The very nuisances that are endued with life, he thinks should be dispatched, not with a lingering butchery, but with a merciful expedition. To rend in pieces a poor fly, and feast their eye with the mangled limbs, shivering and convulsed in the pangs of death; to impale a wretched insect on the needle or the bodkin; and, what is still more shocking, to take pleasure in

hearing its passionate moan, and seeing its agonizing struggles ; such practices he absolutely forbids, as insufferable violations of nature's law, such as tend to extinguish the soft emotions of pity, and inure the mind to a habit of inhumanity. He often informs his lovely pupils, that every living creature is sensible of pain, that none can be abused in this cruel manner without suffering very exquisite misery. To turn their torments into pastime, and make sport with their anguish, is a rigour more than tyrannical, worse than brutal, is the very reverse of that benign Providence, whose ' tender mercies are over all his works.'

He proposes to give them a taste of natural philosophy, and to accommodate them with the best microscopes ; that the use of these instruments, and a spice of that knowledge, may inspire them with an early admiration of nature's works, and with the deepest veneration of nature's almighty Author. Camillus has no design to finish a couple of female philosophers, or to divert their attention from those domestic arts which are the truest accomplishments of the sex ;\* yet neither would he have his daughters debarred from that rational and exalted delight, which is to be found in contemplating the curiosities of the great Creator's cabinet. Why may they not, without departing from their own, or encroaching on the masculine character, why may they not be acquainted with the accurately-nice structure of an animal, or with the process and effects of vegetation ? Why may they not learn the admirable operations of the air, or the wonderful properties of the water ? have some general notion of the immense magnitudes, the prodigious distances, and the still more amazing revolutions of the heavenly orbs ? He apprehends it very practicable to conduct an entertainment with dignity, and order a family with propriety, even while they retain some tolerable idea of those magnificent laws which regulate the system of the universe.

The microscope, whenever they are inclined to amuse themselves, will show them a profusion of splendid ornaments in some of the most common and contemptible objects. It will shew them gold and embroidery, diamonds and pearl, azure, green, and vermillion, where unassisted

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\* ——— For nothing lovelier can be found  
In woman, than to study household good. MILT.

eyes behold nothing but provocatives of their abhorrence.— This instrument will show them the brightest varnish, and the most curious carving, even in the minutest scraps of existence. Far more surprising than the magic feats of the most dexterous juggler, it will treat their sight, not with delusive, but with real wonders. A huge elephant\* shall stalk where a puny mite was wont to crawl. Blood shall bound from the bleeding heart, and eyes sparkle with a lively lustre; limbs shall play the most sprightly motions, or stand composed in the most graceful attitudes, where nothing ordinarily appeared, but a confused speck of animated matter. A tincture of philosophy will be the cosmetic of nature, will render all her scenes lovely, and all her apartments a theatre of diversion; diversions infinitely superior to those dangerous delights which are so apt to inveigle the affections, and debauch the minds of young people. When philosophy lends her optics, an unclouded morning, beautiful with the rising sun, a clear night, brilliant with innumerable stars, will be a more pleasing spectacle than the gaudiest illuminations of the assembly-room. The melody of birds, and the murmurs of the fountains, the humming insect, and the sighing gale, will be a higher gratification than the finest air of an opera. A field covered with corn, or a meadow besprinkled with daisies, a marsh planted with osiers, or a mountain shaded with oaks, will yield a far more agreeable prospect than the most pompous scenes that decorate the stage.— Should clouds overcast the heavens, or winter disrobe the flowers, an inquiry into the causes of these grand vicissitudes will more than compensate the transitory loss. A discovery of the divine wisdom and divine goodness, in these seemingly disastrous changes, will impart gayety to the most gloomy sky, and make the most unornamented seasons smile.

It is for want of such truly elegant and satisfactory amusements, that so many ladies of the first distinction and finest genius have no proper employ for their delicate capacities, but lose their happiness in flights of caprice, or fits of the vapour; lose their time in the most insipid chat, or the most whimsical vagaries; while thought is a burden, and

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\* What is allusively said of the detracting tongue may, I think, without a figure, be affirmed of this wonderful instrument. "Trabem in festuca, elephantem in culice, Alpes et Pyrenæos saltus in verruca ostendit."

reflection is a drudgery, solitude fills them with horror, and a serious discourse makes them melancholy.

Above all, Camillus is most earnestly desirous to have his tender charge grounded in the principles and actuated with the spirit of christianity. No scheme, he is thoroughly persuaded, was ever so wisely calculated to sweeten their tempers, to exalt their affections, and form them to felicity either in this world or another. It is therefore his daily endeavour, by the most easy and endearing methods of instruction, to fill their minds with the knowledge of those heavenly doctrines, and win their hearts to the love of that invaluable book in which they are delineated. He longs to have a sense of God Almighty's goodness impressed on their souls. From this source, under the influences of the sanctifying Spirit, he would derive all the graces and all the duties of godliness.\* With this view, he speaks of the divine Majesty, not only as supereminently great, but as most transcendently possessed of every delightful, every charming excellence. He represents all the comforts they enjoy, and every blessing they receive, as the gifts of his bountiful hand, and as an earnest of unspeakably richer favours. He often, often reminds them, that whatever their heavenly Father commands, forbids, inflicts, proceeds from his overflowing kindness, and is intended for their eternal good, if, by these expedients, he may awaken in their minds an habitual gratitude to their everlasting Benefactor. The actings of which noble principle are not only fruitful in every good work, but productive of the truest satisfaction; somewhat like the fragrant steams of consecrated incense, which, while they honoured the great object of worship, regaled with their pleasing perfumes of devout worship.

Nothing is more displeasing to Camillus than the fond flatteries which their injudicious admirers bestow on their shape

\* This method is perfectly conformable to the practise of the psalmist; "The loving-kindness is ever before mine eyes, and," animated by this sweet inducement, "I will walk in thy truth," Psalm xxvi. 3. To the injunction of the divine Master, "If you love me," let this be the proof, this the fruit of your affection, "keep my commandments." John xiv. 15. And to the experience of the chief of the apostles, "The love of Christ," though not exclusive of, yet superior to every other motive, "constraineth us," 2 Cor. v. 14.



and their complexion, the gracefulness of their carriage, and the vivacity of their wit. He would fain make them sensible that these embellishments are of the lowest value, and most fading nature;\* that if they render their possessors vain and self-conceited, they are far greater blemishes than a hump on the back, a wen in the neck, or stuttering in the speech. He would have them thoroughly convinced, that notwithstanding all their silks, diamonds, and other marks of their superior circumstances, they are ignorant, guilty, impotent creatures; blind to truths of the last importance, deserving the vengeance of eternal fire, and unable of themselves to think a good thought; that, from such convictions, they may perceive their absolute need of a Saviour; a Saviour in all his offices—as a prophet to teach them heavenly wisdom—as a priest to atone for all their many, many sins—as a king to subdue their iniquities, write his laws in their hearts, and make them, in all their conversation, holy.

In short, the point he chiefly labours is, to work in their hearts, a deep, and abiding sense, that God is their supreme, their only good; that the blessed Jesus is the rock of their hopes, and the fountain of their salvation; that all their dependence for acquiring the beauties of holiness, and tasting the joys of the sublimest virtue, is to be placed on the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. Amidst all these efforts of his own, he never forgets, never fails to plead, that precious promise of the unchangeable Jehovah; “I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring; and they shall grow up” in knowledge and in grace, “as willows by the water-courses.”†

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\* Here is the amiable and noble reverse of that modish picture represented by Milton:

For that fair female troop thou saw'st, that seem'd  
Of goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,  
Yet empty of all good, wherein consists  
Woman's domestic honour, and chief praise;  
Bred only and completed to the taste  
Of lustful appetite, to sing, to dance,  
To dress, and troll the tongue, and roll the eye.

Book XI. l. 614.

† Isaiah xlv. 3, 4. A promise of inestimable worth, never to be forgotten by believing parents; better to their children than the largest patrimony, or the richest dowry. It is exceed-

A lady of brilliant parts, but no very extraordinary piety, told Camillus, that he would spoil the pretty dears, would extinguish that decent pride, and fondness for pleasure, which are shining qualifications in an accomplished young lady, which give her an elevation of sentiment, and a delicacy of taste, greatly superior to the ignoble vulgar. To whom he replied, 'Far from extirpating their passions, I only attempt to turn them into a right channel, and direct them to the worthiest objects. Willing I am that they should have a decent ambition, an ambition not to catch the giddy coxcomb's eyes, or be the hackneyed toast of rakes, but to please their parents, to make a husband happy, and to promote the glory of God. They may entertain a fondness for pleasure, but such pleasure as will ennoble their souls, afford them substantial satisfaction, and prepare them for the fruition of immortal bliss. Let them be covetous also, if you please, madam, but covetous of redeeming their time, and of gaining intellectual improvement; covetous of those riches which no moth can corrupt, nor thief steal; which neither time nor death destroy.'

In all these instances of parental solicitude, his beloved Emilia takes her constant, her willing share; contributes her advice in every plan that is concerted, and her hearty concurrence in every expedient that is executed; every expedient for polishing the human jewel,\* and making their manners as faultless as their forms. May the God of infinite goodness, the sacred source of all perfection, prosper their endeavours! that, as the young ladies are adorned in their persons with native beauty, they may be enriched in their understandings with refined knowledge, and dignified in their souls with the spirit of the blessed Jesus. Then, surely, more amiable objects the eye of man cannot behold; more desirable partners the heart of man cannot wish.

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ingly beautiful, and equally comfortable. Nor, I will drop, I will distil, but I will pour: denoting a large and copious supply. They shall grow, not as a root out of a dry ground, but as a tree planted in a most kindly soil, where it is plentifully watered, and flourishes in the most ample manner.

\* Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,  
To teach the young idea how to shoot,  
And pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind.

THOMSON'S Spring.



# PREFACE.

TO

## BURNHAM'S PIOUS MEMORIALS.



**RELIGION**, or an affectionate and firm connexion of the soul with God, is the highest improvement of the human mind, and the brightest ornament of the rational nature. It is the most indissoluble bond of civil society, and the only foundation of happiness to every individual person.

The gospel, by which we have access to the King immortal, invisible, through the merits of Jesus Christ; by which we are conformed to his amiable and holy image, through the operations of the blessed Spirit; the gospel is, of all other religions, most exquisitely adapted to compass those desirable ends.

This point hath often been demonstrated with all the strength of argument, and illustrated by every decoration of eloquence. In the following sheets we are presented with a new proof of the same important truth, deduced from a topic, level to every capacity, and from a scene, in which all must, sooner or later, be personally concerned.

Nothing strikes the mind of a wise and attentive observer so forcibly as fact; nothing hath so strong a tendency to convince the judgment, and influence the conduct. In the collection before us we have a series of indubitable and interesting facts. Here are some of the most renowned, many of the most worthy persons, after a life of exemplary devotion and exalted virtue, bearing their dying testimony to the excellency of the gospel, and the pleasures of religion: Persons from different countries, of different denominations, and flourishing in distant periods of time: Persons in the most awful moments of their existence, when hypocrisy drops the mask, when worldly motives lose their weight, and there remains no more temptation to deceive—all these, uniting in the same sentiments, all reposing their confidence on the

same great Mediator, all proclaiming the dignity, efficacy, and glory of the evangelical system, in a manner superior to language ; proclaiming it by a piece of conscience which the whole world cannot give, and a joy of heart which transcends all description.

Such a collection of memoirs is, I think, a valuable addition to the evidences of Christianity, a considerable aid to the interests of piety, and worthy both of frequent perusal and universal acceptance.

A work of this nature hath often appeared to me among the desiderata of the closet. I have sometimes wondered that no ingenious pen hath attempted it ; and always thought that, when duly executed, it would bid fair for extensive usefulness. But I am glad to find myself anticipated in this opinion by a writer\* whose words I shall beg leave to transcribe, and whose judgment cannot be questioned :—‘There is nothing in history which is so improving to the reader as those accounts which we meet with of the deaths of eminent persons ; and of their behaviour in that dreadful season.’† Here is a large field, in which the reader may not barely glean a few ears, but gather his sheaves, or reap a harvest of that sacred improvement which our admired critic mentions. Here is a multitude of those most distinguished and animating parts of history, traced through various ages of the church ; from the heroic martyrdom of venerable Ignatius, to the peaceful exit of the pious and ingenious Dr. Watts.

These histories are not only unquestionably true, but of the most unexceptionable kind. They are delivered in the very words of the author from whose writings they are extracted ; so that we may depend upon a strict exactness in point of authenticity, and shall be entertained with an agreeable diversity in reference to style. None of these accounts personate the romantic insensibility of the stoic, or the brutal hardness of the sceptic. None of them exhibit the indecent levity of a Petronius, or the pitiable fluctuation of a Socrates. But all display true fortitude, rational tranquillity, and well grounded hope ; built upon the divine promises, supported by the divine Spirit, rendered steadfast and immovable by a divine propitiation and righteousness.

Here the minister of the gospel may furnish himself with

\* Mr. Addison.

† Spect. Vol. IV. No. 289.

noble materials to enrich and enliven his compositions for the pulpit: And I dare venture to foretell, that no part of his public addresses will be heard with a closer attention, or collected with a sweeter relish, than his pertinent application of the last sayings of truly religious men.

Here the strong Christian may view, not without a glow of gratitude, perhaps with a rapture of delight, the inviolable faithfulness of his divine Master, who never leaves nor forsakes his servants; no, not at that trying season which may most emphatically be styled the time of need. He may view the never-failing tenderness and grace of that good Spirit, who opens the rich promises of scripture, applies the precious atonement of a Saviour, and make the soldier of Jesus always to triumph.

Here the feeble trembling believer may see imperfect creatures, men of like passions and of like infirmities with himself, looking death in the face with intrepidity. He may hear them addressing that ghastly monarch in the triumphant language of the apostle, "O death, where is thy sting!" To hear and see this, will be a more effectual expedient to establish his heart, more sovereign to deliver him from the bondage of fear, than the most spirited exhortations, or the most sage directions.

Should the unbeliever be so impartial as to mark these disciples of Jesus, and consider the end of their conversation, he must surely acknowledge both the divine origin and unequalled energy of the glorious gospel; since it administers such strong consolation amidst the pains of a mortal distemper, and the ruins of dissolving nature. Vain, inexpressibly vain and insignificant, must every other scheme of salvation appear, which is destitute of an all-sufficient Redeemer, and void of an almighty Comforter.

Should the libertine, in a serious interval, approach these death-beds of the just, he may behold the genuine fruits of faith unfeigned, and the blessed consequence of vital holiness.—And where can he behold

A scene, so strong to strike, so sweet to charm,  
So great to raise, so heavenly to inspire,  
So solid to support fair virtue's throne?\*

Or how can he behold all this without feeling some pangs of

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\* Night-Thoughts, Night II.

solitary regret: without entering into himself, and forming some useful reflections? 'Will my vicious gratifications create such sweet composure, such humble joy, such heavenly hope, at the last awful hour? Alas! will they not rather sharpen the fatal arrow, add poison to the point, and anguish, inconceivable anguish, to the wound?'

There may be, and there doubtless is, a variety of treatises, written upon a variety of subjects, in which many people are no way interested. But the subject of this book appertains to all. It is appointed, and by an irrevocable decree, that all must die. There is no discharge in this warfare; no, not for the votaries of gayety and indolence. This consideration, methinks, should incline even the gay and indolent to observe what is transacted in the antechambers to those apartments, where they themselves, must shortly lodge. And would they, from the ensuing narratives, make their observation, they might be led to entertain more favourable apprehensions of our holy religion. They will find, that far from embittering life, it sweetens death. Instead of damping the enjoyments of health, it softens the bed of sickness, and soothes even the agonies of dissolution. Why then should they be afraid of pure and undefiled religion? why stand aloof, why withdraw themselves, from its benign invitations? Can that throw a gloom upon the delectable hills, which is able to gild and gladden the valley of darkness?

Some, perhaps, may be prompted by curiosity to cast an eye upon this solemn and august spectacle—a multitude of rational beings, arrived on the very borders of the invisible state, bidding a final adieu to time—and just launching out into the abysses of eternity. And, blessed be the divine goodness, the spectacle is as delightful as it is august. Their God, their God sustains them in the greatest extremity. They overcame the last enemy through the blood of the Lamb. Their discourses savour of heaven—their hopes are full of immortality. And is not this a privilege devoutly to be wished? \* Who that has the least seriousness, or feels

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\* Even a Pagan writer could not but discern the excellency of such a blessing, and made it one of the principal ingredients which constitute happiness.

Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,  
Atque meus omnes et inexorabile fatum  
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.

VIRG. Georg. lib. ii.

any concern for his true happiness, can forbear crying out, on such an occasion, Let me die the death of the righteous? Numb. xxiii. 10.

Life, take thy chance. But oh ! for such an end !\*

Upon the whole, I would persuade myself, that THE PIOUS MEMORIALS may be a *word in season*, a welcome and well-adapted address to readers of every character ;— may be a means, in the hand of Providence, to awaken the thoughtless, and fix their attention upon important and everlasting things ;—may tend to reclaim the dissolute from ruinous practices, and engage them in the pursuit of those substantial acquisitions, which will ‘ bring them peace at the last ;’—may animate the christian to fresh zeal and renewed activity in the service of our adorable Immanuel. That each, while he is running his race, may be inspirited to say, with the holy apostle, ‘ To me to live is Christ ;’ and each, when he hath finished his course, may be emboldened to add, ‘ To me to die is gain.’

With this aim the narratives were collected ; with this aim they are published. May the Lord of all power and might make them effectual to accomplish what is so laudably designed ! Then it will not be deemed a piece of officious impertinence or presuming boldness for me to recommend them ; it will rather be looked upon as an act of friendship to the deceased author and his distressed widow ; as an effort of true, of christian benevolence to my fellow-creatures ; and a proper expression of my gratitude to the public for that remarkable candour and indulgence shown to

Their obliged and very humble servant,

JAMES HERVEY.

Weston-Favel, }  
July 18, 1753. }

I wish I could do justice to Virgil's beautiful lines ; but though I dare not attempt a translation, I will assure the unlearned reader, that no book in our language, none at least that I am acquainted with, contains so copious an exemplification of their meaning, as the following pages afford. Here he may see what the charming poet so delicately describes, but what the poor Heathen never knew where to find.

\* Night-Thoughts, Night II.



A

# LETTER

TO

MR. JOHN TRAILL,

Late Bookseller in Edinburgh, now Minister of a Congregation of Protestant Dissenters at Chelsea, near London.

SIR,

I RECEIVED your very valuable, and no less acceptable present\* some weeks ago. I should have acknowledged the favour sooner, but I chose to stay till I had tasted the dish you set before me; and indeed I find it to be savoury meat, the true manna; food for the soul.

Your worthy relative† was a workman that need not be ashamed. He knew how clearly to state, and solidly to establish the faith of God's elect, and the doctrine according to godliness. O! that my heart, and the heart of every reader, may be opened by the eternal Spirit to receive the precious truths!

The letter at the end of the first volume‡ is a judicious performance. It rightly divides the word of truth, and lays the line with a masterly hand, between the presumptuous legalist and the licentious Antinomian. I am particularly

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\* Mr. Traill had sent Mr. Hervey a copy of his new edition of the first two volumes of the works of the Rev. Mr. Robert Traill, late minister in London: the third volume was not republished till after Mr. Hervey's death.

† Mr. Robert Traill was uncle to Mr. John Traill.

‡ This letter is entitled, 'A Vindication of the Protestant Doctrine concerning Justification, and of its Preachers and Professors, from the unjust Charge of Antinomianism.'

pleased with the honourable testimony borne to those two excellent books, Dr. Owen's *Treatise on Justification*, and Mr. Marshall's *Gospel-mystery of Sanctification*;\* books fit to be recommended by so good a judge.

If the Lord pleases to give Theron and Aspasio any acceptance in Scotland, I shall be sincerely glad; but if he vouchsafes to make them not only welcome, but useful visitants, I shall exceedingly rejoice. In case you should think them calculated to promote the honour, and further the gospel of Jesus Christ, I hope you will favour them with your recommendation, and accompany them with your prayers; which will be a fresh instance of kindness to,

Sir,

Your obliged friend,  
and obedient servant,

JAMES HERVEY.

Weston-Favel, }  
July 8, 1755. }

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\* 'I think,' says Mr. Traill, 'that Dr. Owen's excellent book of Justification, and Mr. Marshall's book of the Mystery of Sanctification by Faith in Jesus Christ, are such vindications and confirmations of the Protestant doctrine, against which I fear no effectual opposition. Mr. Marshall was a holy and retired person, and is only known to the most of us by his book lately published. The book is a deep, practical, well jointed discourse, and requires a more than ordinary attention in reading of it with profit. And if it be singly used, I look upon it as one of the most useful books the world hath seen for many years. Its excellence is, that it leads the serious reader directly to Jesus Christ, and cuts the sinews, and overturns the foundation of the new divinity, by the same argument of gospel-holiness by which many attempt to overturn the old. And as it hath already had the seal of high approbation by many judicious ministers and Christians that have read it, so I fear not but it will stand firm as a rock against all opposition, and will prove good seed, and food, and light to many hereafter.'

## PROMISES,

*To be pasted at the beginning of a Bible.*

“ God hath given us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature,”  
2 Pet. i. 4.

## DIVINE TEACHING.

Isa. xxix. 18. The eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity.  
Jer. xxxi. 34. They shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them.  
John xiv. 26. The Holy Ghost shall teach you all things.  
Isa. lviii. 11. The Lord shall guide thee continually.

## PARDON.

Isa. xliii. 25. I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions.  
Isa. i. 18. Sins as scarlet—shall be as white as snow.  
1 Pet. ii. 24. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.  
1 John i. 7. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.

## JUSTIFICATION.

Rom. viii. 33, 34. It is God that justifieth.  
Rom. iii. 21, 22, 23, 24. Justified freely by his grace.  
Isa. xlv. 24, 25. In the Lord have I righteousness  
2 Cor. v. 21. We are made the righteousness of God in him.

## SANCTIFICATION.

Ezek. xii. 19, 20. I will put a new spirit within you.  
Tit. ii. 14. Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.  
Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12. I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.  
1 Thes. v. 23. The God of peace sanctify your whole spirit, and soul, and body.

**PROMISES,***To be pasted at the end of a Bible.***TEMPORAL BLESSINGS.**

- 1 Tim. iv. 8. Godliness hath the promise of the life that  
now is.  
Psalm xxxvii. 3. Verily thou shalt be fed.  
Matth. vi. 43. Seek first the kingdom of God, and all  
things shall be added.  
1 Tim. vi. 17. Who giveth us all things richly to enjoy.

**TEMPTATION.**

- 1 Cor. x. 13. God will not suffer you to be tempted above  
that ye are able.  
2 Cor. xii. 9. My grace is sufficient for thee.  
Rom. vi. 14. Sin shall not have dominion over you.  
Luke xxii. 32. I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.

**AFFLICTION.**

- Job v. 17. Happy is the man whom God correcteth.  
Lam. iii. 32. Though he cause grief, yet will he have com-  
passion.  
Psalm l. 15. Call upon me in trouble ; I will deliver thee.  
Rev. iii. 19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

**DEATH.**

- 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57. God giveth us the victory through  
our Lord Jesus Christ.  
2 Cor. v. 1. If our earthly house is dissolved, we have a  
building of God.  
John iii. 16. Whosoever believeth shall have everlasting  
life.  
Psalm xxiii. 4. Though I pass through death, I will fear no  
evil.

**CONCLUSION.**

“ God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of  
promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an  
oath,” Heb. vi. 17.



# LETTER

TO

RICHARD NASH, ESQ.

LATE MASTER OF THE CEREMONIES AT BATH.\*



*Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near, Isaiah lv. 6.*

SIR,

THIS comes from your sincere friend, and one that has your best interest deeply at heart; it comes on a design altogether important, and of no less consequence than your everlasting happiness, so that it may justly challenge your careful regard. It is not to upbraid or approach, much less to triumph and insult over your misconduct; no, it is pure benevolence, it is disinterested good-will prompts me to write; so that I hope I will not raise your resentment; however, be the issue what it will, I cannot bear to see you walk in the paths that lead to death, without warning you of your danger, without sounding in your ears the awful admonition, "Return and live;—for why will you die?" I beg of you to consider whether you do not, in some measure, resemble those accursed children of Eli; whom, though they were famous in their generation, and men of renown, yet vengeance suffered not to live. For my part, I may safely use the expostulation of the old priest; 'Why do you such things? For I hear of your evil dealings by all this people; nay, my brother, for it is no good report I hear; you make the Lord's people to transgress.' I have long observed and pitied you: and a most melancholy spec-

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\* Mr. Hervey is supposed to have written this letter when he was at Bath in the year 1743. It was found among Mr. Nash's papers after his death, and an extract of it was inserted in an account of his death, published several years ago. For ought that appears, this man of pleasure despised the awful warning given by the benevolent Mr. Hervey, and died as he had lived.

tacle I lately beheld, made me resolve to caution you, lest you also come into the same condemnation.

I was, not long since, called to visit a poor gentleman, erewhile of the most robust body and gayest temper I ever knew; but when I visited him, oh! how was the glory departed from him! I found him no more that sprightly and vivacious son of joy which he used to be, but languishing, pining away, and withering under the chastising hand of God! his limbs feeble and trembling, his countenance forlorn and ghastly, and the little breath he had left sobbed out in sorrowful sighs! his body hastening apace to the dust, to lodge in the silent grave, the land of darkness and desolation; his soul just going to God who gave it, preparing itself to wing away to its long home, to enter upon an unchangeable and eternal state. When I was come up into his chamber, and had seated myself on his bed, he first cast a most wishful look upon me, and then began, as well as he was able, to speak. 'Oh! that I had been wise, that I had known this; that I had considered my latter end! Ah! Mr. Hérvey, death is knocking at my doors; in a few hours more I shall draw my last gasp, and then judgment, the tremendous judgment! How shall I appear, unprepared as I am, before the all-knowing and omnipotent God? how shall I endure the day of his coming?' When I mentioned, among many other things, that strict holiness which he had formerly so lightly esteemed, he replied, with a hasty eagerness, 'Oh! that holiness is the only thing I now long for; I have not words to tell you how highly I value it; I would gladly part with all my estate, large as it is, or a world, to obtain it; now my benighted eyes are enlightened, I clearly discern the things that are excellent; what is there in the place whither I am going but God? or what is there to be desired on earth but religion?' But if this God should restore you to health, said I, think you that you would alter your former course? 'I call heaven and earth to witness,' said he, 'I would labour for holiness as I shall soon labour for life; as for riches and pleasures, and the applauses of men, I count them as dross and dung; no more to my happiness than the feathers that lie on the floor. Oh! if the righteous Judge would try me once more; if he would but reprieve and spare me a little longer; in what a spirit would I spend the remainder of my days? I would know no other business, aim at no other end, than perfecting myself in ho-

liness; whatever contributed to that, every means of grace, every opportunity of spiritual improvement, should be dearer to me than thousands of gold and silver. But alas! why do I amuse myself with fond imaginations? The best resolutions are now insignificant, because they are too late; the day in which I should have worked is over and gone; and I see a sad horrible night approaching, bringing with it the blackness of darkness for ever. Heretofore, (woe is me!) when God called, I refused; when he invited, I was one of them that made excuse; now, therefore, I receive the reward of my deeds; fearfulness and trembling are come upon me; I smart; I am in sore anguish already, and yet this is but the beginning of sorrows! It doth not yet appear what I shall be; but sure I shall be ruined, undone, and destroyed with an everlasting destruction.'

This sad scene I saw with my eyes; these words, and many more equally affecting, I heard with my ears; and soon after attended the unhappy gentleman to his tomb.—The poor breathless skeleton spoke in such an accent, and with so much earnestness, that I could not easily forget him or his words; and as I was musing upon this sorrowful subject, I remembered Mr. Nash; I remembered you, Sir,—for I discerned too near an agreement and correspondence between yourself and the deceased. They are alike, said I, in their ways, and what shall hinder them from being alike in their end? The course of their actions was equally full of sin and folly, and why should not the period of them be equally full of horror and distress? I am grievously afraid for the survivor, lest, as he lives the life, so he should die the death of this wretched man, and his latter end should be like his.

For this cause, therefore, I take my pen, to advise—to admonish—nay—to request of you to repent while you have opportunity, if happily you may find grace and forgiveness; yet a moment, and you may die; yet a little while, and you must die; and will you go down with infamy and despair to the grave, rather than depart in peace, and with hopes full of immortality?

But I must tell you plainly, Sir, with the utmost freedom, that your present behaviour is not the way to reconcile yourself to God; you are so far from making atonement to offended justice, that you are aggravating the former account,



and heaping up an increase of wrath against the day of wrath. For what say the scriptures? those books which, at the consummation of all things, the Ancient of days shall open—and judge you by every jot and tittle therein; what say these sacred volumes? Why, they testify and declare to every soul of man, “That whosoever liveth in pleasure is dead while he liveth;” so that, so long as you roll on in a continual circle of sensual delights, and vain entertainments, you are dead to all the purposes of piety and virtue: you are odious to God as a corrupt carcase that lies putrefying in the church-yard; you are as far from doing your duty, or working out your salvation, or restoring yourself to the divine favour, as a heap of dry bones nailed up in a coffin is from vigour and activity. Think, Sir, I conjure you, think upon this, if you have any inclination to escape the fire that never will be quenched. Would you be rescued from the fury and fierce anger of Almighty God! would you be delivered from weeping, and wailing, and incessant gnashing of teeth? Sure you would! Then I exhort you as a friend; I beseech you as a brother; I charge you as a messenger from the great God, in his own most solemn words: “Cast away from you your transgressions; make you a new heart, and a new spirit; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.”

Perhaps you may be disposed to contemn this and its serious purport, or to recommend it to your companions as a fit subject for raillery; but let me tell you before-hand, that for this, as well as for other things, God will bring you into judgment; he sees me now write; he will observe you while you read; he notes down my words in his book; he will note down your consequent procedure: so that not upon me, but upon your own self, will the neglecting or despising of my sayings turn. “If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.”

Be not concerned, Sir, to know my name; it is enough that you will know this hereafter; tarry but a little, till the Lord, even the most mighty God, shall call the heaven from above, and the earth, that he may judge his people—and then you will see me face to face; there shall I be ready, at the dreadful tribunal, to joy and rejoice with you, if you regard my admonitions, and live; or to be—what God prevent—by not inclining your heart to receive this friendly admonition.

# RULES AND ORDERS

OF THE

ASSEMBLY FOR CHRISTIAN IMPROVEMENT.\*



*God is greatly to be feared in the assemblies of his saints, and to be had in reverence by all that are round about him, Psalm lxxxix. 7.*

## I.

THAT this assembly consist of no more than ten or twelve at the utmost, lest an increased number should produce confusion or dissensions; and that each member, in order to prevent any sinister reflections from the inconsiderate or vicious, be cautious of mentioning to any others that he belongs to such an assembly. And that each member, before he sets out, on his return, do use the forms of prayer which are specified in the minutes, and particularly adapted to this occasion.

## II.

That no one shall be admitted a member who has not been proposed by the chairman at the preceding assembly, or who shall be disapproved of by any two of the members on a ballot, which shall always be taken on such occasions, how unanimous soever the members may seem to be beforehand.

## III.

That the members shall be registered alphabetically in the minutes of the assembly's proceedings, and that the chairman of the day be appointed regularly according to that

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\* Referred to in Mr. Hervey's life.

† As this assembly met at different inns, public prayer would have alarmed the attendants, and caused gross misrepresentation. Besides, the real design of the meeting was known only to few, and the injunctions of secrecy were given to each member, in order to avoid the appearance of religious ostentation, and in compliance with the apostle's precaution, viz. 'Let not your good be evil spoken of,' Rom. xiv. 16.

list; so that no misunderstanding may arise about precedence; and that a treasurer be elected annually, the first Tuesday in January.

## IV.

That the assembly meet on the first Tuesday in every month, during the summer-season, punctually at twelve o'clock; and on the moon-light Tuesday, during the winter-season, exactly at ten, at such inn as shall from time to time be agreed on by the majority; and that dinner be ready precisely at two in the summer, and one in the winter.

## V.

That as soon as the assembly is met, the names of the present members shall be entered in the minutes and the forfeits (if there be any due) deposited in the charity-purse. After which the chairman shall inquire if the prayers, as agreed upon by the assembly, and entered in their minutes, have been properly used by each member at his own home. Then the chairman shall, in a short charge or exhortation, remind his associates of the importance of such a meeting, and enumerate the good effects which the selected chapters, if rightly improved, may produce.

## VI.

The chairman shall then read the chapter in the Old Testament in English, and shall pause at the end of every verse, that any one who pleases may make such enquiries and reflections as may occasionally arise; but that no two persons speak at a time; and if two accidentally begin, the chairman shall direct which is to go on. And that every member shall, against the next meeting, send to the chairman whatever observation of his on the chapter of the day the members then present had desired to have entered in their minutes; by which method many useful observations may be preserved; and in case any verse shall not be cleared of its difficulties to the satisfaction of the present members, the said verse shall be reconsidered at the next meeting.

## VII.

At three o'clock precisely during the summer-season (no more than an hour being allowed for dinner,) the chairman shall proceed in reading a chapter in Greek out of the New Testament, to be commented on in like manner as that out of the Old. But in the winter-season, when the assembly meet at ten, the chapter both in the Old as well as New Tes-

tament, shall be read before dinner; and after dinner, no other business than that specified in the ninth article shall be entered on.

## VIII.

That the two chapters to be considered by the assembly at their next meeting, be previously appointed before the adjournment of every assembly, either by the succeeding chairman, if present, or, in case of his absence, by the majority; of which chapters the absent members shall have timely notice sent them in writing.

## IX.

That at every meeting (as time permits) each member, in an alphabetical order, shall be desired to give an account of some religious author (which he has read in the preceding month) in as concise and succinct a manner as possible.

## X.

That at every meeting, half a crown shall be given by each member for charitable uses; and that, at the end of the year, the money shall be expended in clothing or educating such poor persons, or relieving such incurables, as the members in their alphabetical order shall recommend to the assembly.

## XI.

That every member who is absent, though occasioned by the most urgent business, or even indisposition (unless such indisposition shall continue longer than a month), shall pay half a crown towards the charity-purse, and one shilling and sixpence towards the dinner, in the same manner as if he had been present.

## XII.

That the assembly break\* up by seven in the summer, and by four in the winter; and that each member, on his return home, use the form of prayer which is specified in our minutes, and peculiarly adapted to this occasion.

We, whose names are underwritten, have this day (being the seventh of July 1747) subscribed our assent to these rules and orders, as witness our hands.

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\* Some of the members lived five or six miles from the place of meeting, which was always at public-houses, and as near the centre of each member's residence as could be conveniently contrived.

**The FORM of PRAYER** composed by Mr. HERVEY,  
to be used by each member before setting out for the  
**ASSEMBLY.**

*Lord, thou hast said, Where two or three are gathered together in thy name, there am I in the midst of them. Mat. xviii. 20.*

Almighty and immortal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through him the God of all mercies, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to look down upon us thy sinful servants, who are preparing to meet together in thy name, and with an humble desire to build up one another in our most holy religion. Pardon all our iniquities through the blood of the everlasting covenant, and make us and our services accepted through the Beloved. O heavenly Father, unite us to one another by mutual love, and to thy blessed self by faith unfeigned. Enlighten our minds with the knowledge of thy truth, and sanctify our hearts by the power of thy grace. Direct our counsels, and prosper all our endeavours, to the glory of thy divine Majesty, and the salvation of our own, and the souls of others. Grant this, most gracious God, through the precious death and never-ceasing intercession of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**The FORM of PRAYER** composed by Mr. HERVEY,  
to be used by each member when returned from the  
**ASSEMBLY.**

*Lord, thou hast said, If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that ye shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. Matth. xviii. 19.*

O Lord God of our salvation, thou giver of every good and perfect gift, we adore thy glorious name and beneficence, for the redemption of our souls by Jesus Christ, and for all thy other unnumbered and undeserved mercies. In a particular manner we praise thy unspeakable goodness for the valuable opportunity we have this day enjoyed, of provoking one another to love, and to good works. Pity our infirmities, most merciful Father, and pardon whatever thou hast seen amiss in the tenor of our conversation, or in the spirit of our minds. Sanctify, we humbly beseech thee, thy holy

word, which we have heard. Command it to sink deep into our souls, and to be a lively and lasting principle of godliness in our hearts. O! let us, by every such conference, grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; that, through thy infinitely precious favour, we may become stedfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity; and so much the more, as we see the day approaching. And forasmuch as we are now separated into a world where wickedness abounds, preserve us, O God, our defence, from the least infection, and from every appearance of evil. Inspire us with wisdom so to order our conversation, that we may give no just occasion of offence in any thing. Endue us with holiness, that we may adorn the gospel of God our Saviour in all things: and animate us with such a steady and well-tempered zeal, that neither the slothfulness of our nature, nor the fear of the world, may withhold us from pursuing such courses as may be conducive to the glory of thy blessed name, the advancement of true religion, and the salvation of our immortal souls. This, and whatsoever else is needful for us, and for carrying on the work which thou hast given us to do, we humbly beg, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our only Mediator, and all-sufficient Redeemer. Amen.

**RULES\* and ORDERS of a RELIGIOUS SOCIETY,  
consisting of TWO CLASSES, viz.**

**Of Men, into which no Woman can be admitted ; and of  
married Men, their Wives, and other Women, into  
which no unmarried Man can be admitted.**

*Each Class meets every other week alternately.*

**RULE I.**

**AS** the sole design of this society is to promote real holiness in heart and life, every member of it is to have this continually in view, trusting in the divine power and gracious conduct of his holy Spirit, through our Lord Jesus Christ, to excite, advance, and perfect all good in us.

**RULE II.**

That, in order to the being of one heart and one mind, and to prevent all things which gender strifes, as well as to remove all occasion of offence from being taken against this society, no person is to be admitted a member, or allowed to continue such, who is a member of any other meeting, or follows any other preaching than that of the established ministry of the church of England. That none be members but such as attend the sacrament every month, and that no person be at any time introduced, except by the request of the director.

**RULE III.**

That no person be admitted a member but upon the recommendation of the director, with the consent of the ma-

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\* As the plan and proceedings of this society, so much commended by Mr. Hervey, may probably be extensively useful, it is here printed from a private copy, by the particular desire of several of Mr. Hervey's friends; and it is hoped the worthy director and members of the society at Truro will excuse the liberty here taken without their knowledge, when they consider the good effects which may probably arise from this publication. See Mr. Hervey's Letters, let. 132. vol. vi.

majority of members then present: And that the director be the Reverend Mr. Walker.\*

## RULE IV.

That the members of this society meet together one evening in a week, at a convenient place, and that they go home at nine o'clock. And that all matters of business be done before the sentences begin.

## RULE V.

That every member give constant attendance, and be present at the hour of meeting precisely. And that whoever absents himself four meetings together, without giving a satisfactory account to the director, which shall by him be communicated to the society, shall be looked upon as disaffected to the society.

## RULE VI.

That, to prevent confusion, no person be removed from this society but by the director, who shall be present on such occasions. That any member do before-hand apply to the director, in case he judges such removal necessary. That a disorderly† carriage, or a proud, contentious, disputing temper (the greatest adversary to christian love and peace) be sufficient ground for such complaint and removal.

## RULE VII.

That all the members, considering the sad consequences of vanity and amusements over the nation, do, in charity to the souls of others, as well as to avoid the danger of such things

\* This society is very happy in having so accomplished a person at their head. But where such a one can not be had, perhaps it would be prudent to elect a director annually, whose office might be continued more or less number of years, as seemed best for the general good.

† By a disorderly carriage we mean, not only the gross commission of scandalous sins, but also what are esteemed matters of little moment in the eyes of the world, such as a light use of the words, Lord, God, Jesus, &c. in ordinary conversation, which we cannot but interpret as an evidence of want of God's presence in the heart. The doing needless business on the Lord's day. The frequenting ale-houses or taverns without necessary business.



themselves, look upon themselves as obliged to use peculiar caution with respect to many of the usual amusements, however innocent they may be, or be thought in themselves; such as cards, dancings, clubs of entertainments, play-houses, sports at festivals and parish-feasts, and, as much as may be, parish-feasts themselves—lest, by joining herein, they should be a hindrance to themselves or their neighbours.

RULE VIII.

That, with the consent of the director, the major part of the society have power to make a new order when need requires; but that the proposal for this purpose be made by the director. And that any member may consult the director hereupon before the day of meeting.

RULE IX.

That persons disposed to become members of this society must first be proposed by the director, in order that the members of the society may observe their conduct for the space of three months before admittance.

RULE X.

That every member do consider himself as peculiarly obliged to live in an inoffensive and orderly manner, to the glory of God, and the edifying his neighbours. That he study to advance in himself and others, humility, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, love to God, gospel-repentance, and new obedience, wherein christian edification consists. And that, in all his conversation hereupon, he stick close to the plain and obvious sense of the holy scriptures, carefully avoiding all niceties and refinements upon them.

RULE XI.

That these orders shall be read over at least four times in the year by the director, and that with such deliberation, that each member may have time to examine himself by them.

RULE XII.

That the members of this society do meekly and humbly join together in the following offices of devotion.

*The office of devotion used weekly at the meeting of the Society.*

The director shall read these sentences, himself and every one standing.

“GOD is greatly to be feared in the assemblies of his saints, and to be had in reverence by all that are round about him,” Psalm lxxxix. 7.

“God is a righteous Judge, strong and patient, and God is provoked every day,” Psalm vii. 12.

“God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil,” Eccles. xii. 14.

“He that hideth his sins shall not prosper; but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy,” Prov. xxviii. 13.

“If any man sinneth, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins,” 1 John ii. 1, 2.

“O come, let us worship, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker,” Psalm xcv. 5, 6.

*Then shall be said these three collects, all kneeling :*

‘Prevent us, O Lord,’ &c.

‘Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy scriptures,’ &c.

‘O God, for as much as without thee,’ &c.

*All seating themselves, a portion of scripture shall be read.*

*Then kneeling down, they shall join in this confession of sin :*

‘Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men,’ &c.

‘Our Father, which art,’ &c.

*After which, the director shall say,*

‘Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made,’ &c.

O! thou most holy blessed God! the Creator, Governor, and Judge of all; who hatest falsehood and hypocrisy, and wilt not accept the prayer of feigned lips, but hast promised to shew mercy to such as turn unto thee by true faith and

repentance ; vouchsafe, we pray thee, to create in us clean and upright hearts, through an unfeigned faith in thy Son, our Saviour. To us indeed belongeth shame and confusion of face ; we are not worthy to lift up our eyes or our voice towards heaven ; our natures are depraved, and our ways have been perverse before thee. O let not thy wrath rise against us, lest we be consumed in a moment ; but let thy merciful bowels yearn over us, and vouchsafe to purify and pardon us, through thine all-sufficient grace and mercy in our Lord Jesus Christ : Since it hath pleased thee to offer him up as a sacrifice for sinners, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to cleanse us from all iniquity through his blood. We believe that he is able to save to the uttermost those that come unto thee by him, and we do earnestly desire to embrace him as our Prince and Saviour. O give us repentance and remission of sin through his name. All we like sheep have gone astray, every one in his own way ; good Lord, reduce us into thy fold through this great Shepherd of souls, and be pleased to lay on him the iniquity of us all. And as we have much to be forgiven, be pleased to incline our hearts to love thee much, who forgivest iniquity, transgression, and sin. Give us that faith that worketh by love, and such love as will constrain us to have regard to all thy commandments. And make us to look carefully to all our ways, that we may never again do any thing whereby thy holy name may be blasphemed, or thine authority despised.

Give us the deepest humility, without which we can never be accepted of thee : our infinitely condescending God, make us continually to tread in the steps of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; being of a meek and quiet spirit, always influenced by the highest love of thee our God, and by the most charitable disposition towards all men.

Vouchsafe to endue us with the saving knowledge of spiritual things, that we may receive all thy truths in the love of them, in all patience, purity, justice, temperance, godliness, and brotherly kindness ; that we may adorn our holy profession, and resemble the divine goodness of thee our heavenly Father. And since we are not only weak and frail, but corrupt and sinful, vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us by the power of thy holy Spirit, that we fall not from our avowed steadfastness in all christian duty. Preserve us from all the sin and vanity to which our age, condition, and na-

ture are prone, and to which the devil and this world may at any time tempt us.

Glorify, good God, thy strength in our weakness, thy grace in our pollution, and thy mercy in our salvation.— May our holy religion be grounded and settled in our hearts, that, out of the good treasure of a gracious heart, our speech may be savoury, and our conversation exemplary; that we may be fruitful in all good works, even to our old age, and to our last day.

Fit us, we pray thee, for every state of life into which thy providence shall cast us; prosper our lawful undertakings; preserve us night and day, and prepare us for an hopeful death and a blessed eternity.

Be pleased, we beseech thee, to bless all those societies, who in truth apply their hearts to thy service and glory; we pray thee be pleased to strengthen, establish, and settle both them and us in thy holy faith, fear, and love. Let nothing in this world discourage us from the pursuit of those holy purposes which thy Spirit hath at any time put into our hearts and minds. But make us all faithful to thee, our avowed God and desired portion even unto death, that we at last (with thy whole church) may be partakers of that eternal life and perfect bliss which thou hast promised through Jesus Christ, thy only begotten Son, our Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

‘Almighty and ever-living God, who, by thy holy apostle, hast taught us to make prayers,’ &c.

*Then all standing up, a psalm shall be sung, and\* a sermon read, or a charge given by the director. After which, some suitable prayers shall be used, as he shall judge fit.*

*Then all standing up, this exhortation to humility shall be read:*

My brethren, since the great God has often assured us in his holy word, “that he will resist the proud, and give grace unto the humble,” James iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 5. let us consider that all our undertakings, though ever so good, will fail and come to nought, unless we be truly and deeply humble, Luke xiv. 11. Indeed it cannot be otherwise; because the proud

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\* The director, when abroad or indisposed, is to appoint what sermon shall be read, and by whom.

person quits his reliance on God to rest in himself, which is to exchange a rock for a reed.

Alas! what are we, poor empty things! Gen. xxii. 10. Yea, what is worse, we are condemned, perishing sinners! We have, perhaps, understanding now, but God can soon turn it into madness, Dan. iv. 42. We may have some attainments in grace, but spiritual pride will wither all, and soon reduce us to a very profligate and wretched estate; Isa. lxvi. 2. such as we have seen others fall into, who have begun in the Spirit, and ended in the flesh! What have we that we have not received? 1 Cor. iv. 7. and even that, he who gave it may as soon take away.

Ye that are young in years, and younger in grace, 1 Tim. iii. 6. are in danger of self-conceit, and of being puffed up, which is a quick-sand in which thousands have been swallowed up and perished. It is not in vain that the apostle requires, "that young men be exhorted to be sober-minded," Tit. ii. 6. Prov. xvi. 18. which he elsewhere explains, when he says, "Let no man think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly," Rom. xii. 3. Isa. xiv. 12, 13.

By pride the angels fell from heaven, 1 Tim. iii. 6. and if ever we climb up to those blessed seats from which they are fallen, it must be by the gracious steps of humility and lowliness of mind, Luke xviii. 14. "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall," 1 Cor. x. 12.—"Let us walk humbly with our God," and ever have lowly thoughts of our vile selves, Rom. xi. 20. and of our poor attainments, and of our defective performances: and with St. Paul (who was nothing behind the very chiefest apostles) let us always say, I am nothing, 2 Cor. xii. 11.

Let us therefore now sing to the praise and glory of God, to whom alone praise is due.

*A psalm being sung, the director shall say,*

'It is very meet and right,' &c.

*All shall join.*

'Therefore will angels and archangels,' &c.

*The director alone.*

'May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,' &c.

*Amen.*

*Considerations laid before the Members of the Society ;  
being the substance of the first charge or exhortation  
spoke at its opening by the director.*

**BRETHREN,**

**YOU** expect that I lay before you the design of this society, and give you some cautions concerning it. The design is threefold; 1. To glorify God. 2. To be quickened and confirmed ourselves. 3. To render us more useful among our neighbours.

**I.**

As a society, we shall be better able to glorify God; for hereby we bear a more evident testimony to the cause of Christ, and make a more avowed confession of him and his words, in these evil days, than we could do when separate.

Every one of you desires that the kingdom of Jesus Christ was more established, and more honourable in the world than it is, and you join your hand, with others, to promote so desirable an end.

Take these cautions for this purpose.

1. Look upon yourself as one associated with others in vindication of your Master's honour.

2. Never be ashamed of him, or his doctrine, or of this society.

3. Demean yourself to every one as his disciple, by walking in humility, meekness, heavenly-mindedness, charity, after Christ's example.

4. Keep yourself heedfully from all things which may disgrace your Master and this society; such as, pride in a conceit of your knowledge or attainments, or that you are a member of this society. Valuing yourself upon any distinction in station or wealth. Sinking into a worldly frame, or declining into sloth and idleness. Practising the least dishonesty, or conniving at the dishonesty of others. Making compliances to avoid shame, or promote worldly interest. Falling into lukewarmness, and forgetting your first love. Slighting public ordinances.

5. Often (especially before and after great trials) reflect that you belong to a religious society for promoting the glory of Christ.

## II.

The second design of this society is, to be quickened and confirmed ourselves. For hereby we shall be better able to maintain the war against our enemies (especially the world) and to grow in grace; seeing, by this association, we have the Spirit to bless our\* exercises; shall have the benefit of mutual advice and reproof; shall be more hardy to oppose the temptations besetting us in this wicked world; shall walk under a peculiar restraint, as being members of a religious society; and shall be assisted by the prayers, as of one another, so of all good men in the whole christian church. To this end,

1. Watch over one another in love.
2. Be willing to hear of your faults, and of the fears and suspicions of these your friends concerning you.
3. Be watchful against any disgust to one another; and if any arise in you, without delay tell the party, and if that avail not, tell the director.
4. Desire the prayers one of another, and pray for one another.
5. Be sure you rest not on your being a member of this society; seeking continually to cast off all self-dependence.
6. Watch the least decay of love to Christ, or zeal for his honour, and the good of souls.
7. Confirm continually upon your heart the obligations you lie under as a member of a religious society.

## III.

The third design of this society is, to render us more useful among our neighbours. Hereby we are more observable. People will not be so easily quiet in their sins. Good examples carry a brighter and more convincing light, confounding the works of darkness. To this end,

1. Be careful to set a christian example before the world.
2. Think not to gain any by making compliances.
3. Discountenance all such things as you see prejudicial to others, such as taverns, ale-houses, gaming, and many sports which are destructive to souls.
4. Show all love to men's souls and bodies.

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\* There is a most useful little piece for these purposes, entitled, 'Regulations and helps for promoting religious conversation among Christians.'







## V.

Make it a constant rule to pray for all who affront or injure you. Christ enjoins us to pray for all who despitefully use us, see *Matth. v. 44*. Disregard all opprobrious names. Christ himself (as will every one who strives against the corrupt prejudices and vices of mankind) was abused as a wine-bibber, and even a blasphemer.

## VI.

Be accustomed to a regular, daily, but moderate course of devout retirement; and recommend intercession for others, both in the family and in private, as likewise frequent attendance on the sacrament.

## VII.

Frequent public worship every day in the week, if your business permit, and if you live in a place where it is performed.

## VIII.

Secret ejaculations, too, may be used as you are walking or riding, or in whatever company you may happen to be;—and, on some particular hour, remember (as, for instance, at morning, noon, afternoon, or evening, when your town-clock strikes, which will be a loud and never-failing memorandum) to set yourself as in the presence of God\* for a few minutes.

\* This method is thus recommended by the late Bishop of Durham (Dr. Butler, in his charge to the clergy, 1751.) ‘ Secret prayer, as expressly as it is commanded by our Saviour, and as evidently as it is implied in the notion of piety, will yet, I fear, be grievously forgotten by the generality, till they can be brought to fix for themselves certain times of the day for it. Secret prayer comprehends not only devotions before men begin, and after they have ended the business of the day, but also such as may be performed while they are employed in it, or even in company.

‘ And truly, if, besides our more set devotions, morning and evening, all of us would fix upon certain times of the day, so that the return of the hour should remind us to say short prayers, or exercise our thoughts in a way equivalent to this, perhaps there are few persons in so high and habitual a state of piety, as not to find the benefit of it. If it took up no more than a minute or two, or even less time than that, it would serve the end I am proposing: It would be a recollection that we are in the divine presence, and contribute to our “being in the fear of the Lord all the day long.”

‘ A duty of the like kind, and serving to the same purpose, is the

## IX.

Use frequent meditation, than which nothing can be more profitable: nor can any thing so much awaken and dispose us for that, and for all that is good, as a strong faith in Providence, and a constant cheerfulness\* of spirit.

## X.

Entertain the highest regard for the word of God, and furnish yourself with a few of the best writers, but particularly with Henry on meekness, and Worthington on resignation. Study them thoroughly, and endeavour to make their sentiments your own. Meekness and resignation are the two principal duties of a Christian. Disperse good books occasionally, if your circumstances will permit;—and be very careful in the choice of them, and in adapting them to the circumstances of the person to whom they are given.

## XI.

Encourage by your influence, and purse too (if able) societies for promoting the gospel, both at home and in foreign parts; and, in order to be well acquainted with these, read the celebrated Dr. Woodward's Rise and Progress of the Religious Societies in London and Westminster.

particular acknowledgment of God, when we are partaking of his bounty at our meals. The neglect of this is said to have been scandalous to a proverb in the Heathen world; [See Casaubon in Athenæum, lib. i. cap. ii. page 22 ] but it is frequently, and without shame, laid aside at the tables of the highest and the lowest ranks among us.'

\* In order to obtain a proper confidence in Providence, and a settled cheerfulness of mind, the reader, especially the gloomy and dispirited, would be much assisted by Bishop Patrick's Advice to a Friend, which is a most inestimable little piece. It was first wrote (as the preface tells us) to preserve a pious friend in peace and cheerfulness; but if the advice be good, the more public it is made, the better. It was contracted into little room, that it might be as easy to carry in the mind as in the pocket; and is a most excellent guide to peace, cheerfulness, and whatsoever is graceful, amiable, and desirable in a Christian. They who are offended at the uncomfotableness of a religious life, never yet knew the true way of religion, into which this author will lead them. "Her ways," says Solomon, "are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." See likewise Henry's Pleasantness of a Religious Life.

## XII.

Whenever you reprove, let it be tenderly, privately, and with all due humility.

## XIII.

For the reformation of swearing,\* lying, slandering, Sabbath-breaking, passionate,† or unchaste‡ persons, you may write out (or keep by you some printed) hints on slips of paper, against either of these vices, and place them in the way of such persons, either by putting them into their books, windows, or other places, provided you do not care to give

\* Hints for the reformation of, or conversation with a swearer.—1. None are so ignorant as not to know it is a breach of the third commandment. 2. He who lives in the fear of God is so far from being capable of it, that it shocks him to hear others offending this way. 3. We are taught by Christ daily to pray, "Hallowed be thy name." Angels praise it, and devils tremble at it. 4. Christ enjoins us to swear not at all. Matth. v. 34. and also James v. 12. 5. Give to a swearer Dr. Woodward's Kind Caution to Profane Swearers, or the late Bishop of London's (Dr. Gibson) Admonition against profane and common Swearing.

† Hints for the reformation of a passionate man. 1. Causeless and immoderate anger proceeds from a proud and haughty temper, and is contrary to gospel-meekness—that meekness and quietness of spirit, which St. Peter assures us, 1 Peter iii. 4. is of great price in the sight of God. 2. Christ bids us learn of him who was lowly and meek, Matth. xi. 9. 3. Every passionate tongue, is set on fire by hell, see James iii. 6. 4. He who says the Lord's prayer with an unforgiving temper curses himself. 5. No one has offended us so often as we have offended God, therefore our anger should be against our own sins. 6. Let all bitterness (says the apostle) and wrath, and anger be put away. In patience possess ye your souls, Luke xxi. 19. No passion in heaven, therefore no passion in a heavenly mind. Give to a passionate man Henry on Meekness.

‡ Hints for the reformation of an unchaste person. 1. Contrary to the seventh commandment of the great God. 2. A sin which defiles the soul, and brings it under the dominion of the fleshly appetites. No spiritual life in such a one, see Romans xiii. 6. 3. A partaker of other people's sins—making them partakers of yours—thus doubly guilty. 4. All adulterers, fornicators, and unclean persons, are declared to have no inheritance in the kingdom of God, see 1 Cor. vi. 9. 5. You are a servant of sin, and in bondage to the deepest corruption. 6. If you sin in any of these ways, you sin against your own body, and pollute the

them to the person yourself;—or they may be sent by the post\* from or to the metropolis.

## XIV.

Make it a rule to have at least one religious sentence in the letters you write to your relations or friends, when it can be conveniently introduced; as such a sentence, properly interwoven, often strikes a person, and is productive of more real good, perhaps, than a laboured discourse from the pulpit, or formal advice at home.

## XV.

Guard people, as much as in you lies, against enthusiasm, and excessive rigours, either as to abstinence, retirement, or conversation; and advise them to take all the comfort that the situation in which God has placed them will conveniently admit of; reminding them at the same time, to acknowledge

temple of the Holy Ghost. Being jointed to an harlot, the Holy Spirit dwells not there. 7. We must glorify God both in body and spirit, presenting ourselves a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, see Romans xii. 1. 8. Purity and chastity required in the gospel; even impure and lustful desires are there condemned, see Matth. v. 28. Give to an unchaste person Jenks' glorious Victory of Chastity, or Dr. Woodward's Exhortation to Chastity.

\*\*\* These hints may be very much improved, and are extracted (merely as specimens) from Mr. Richard's Hints for religious Conversation; where likewise may be found such hints for conversation on most other vices, as will assist persons of weak memories who are desirous of conversing religiously with the vicious, or reproving them either by letter or personally, as opportunity may offer.

\* The following letter was sent by the post to a Deist, and had a very good effect.

Sir, though you disbelieve Christianity, I cannot suppose that you disbelieve a future state of rewards and punishments; please, therefore, to take it into serious consideration, whether you think your actions are such as will, upon your own principles, stand the test at the great day of account.

As it highly becomes us to do what good we can, while we live in this world, and as I am truly concerned for you, I take the liberty of giving you this friendly hint, and hope you will receive it as a proof, that the writer, tho' unknown, is your very sincere well-wisher, A. Z.

him in all their ways, and to be discreetly\* zealous for the honour of Christ. Reposing an entire confidence in the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, and assuring themselves of the extent of his providence (of which we know not either the value or power) to all his creatures, and to all their actions.

### XVI.

But, above all, write down the reasons which at any time make you afraid to die, and then endeavour, by faith, by prayer, and by conversation with experienced Christians, to remove the causes; and thus be properly preparing for death: And if your time and capacity will admit, keep a diary; particularly note your sins of omission, and, by this method, you will see your progress or declension in religion.

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\* A certain zealot being warned against injuring the cause of Christ by his imprudences, despised the caution, and alleged, that prudence was 'at best but a rascally virtue.'

# PREFACE

TO

## JENKS' MEDITATIONS.\*



WHEN I consider the practice of recommending books, as implying some respectable regard to a man's own judgment; I undertake it with reluctance. But when I consider it as exercising an act of friendship to my fellow-students in the school of Christ, I execute it with pleasure.

There are those, I am informed, who blame me for commending the works of others, or, which is much the same thing, for commending them with any degree of zeal and affection, since cold commendation, or faint applause, is justly reputed an artful slight. To these persons I shall only reply, that if their own actions, or their own compositions, were concerned, I verily believe they, even they, would *forgive me this wrong*, 2 Cor. xii. 13.

Far from obtruding myself into the chair of Moses, Matth. xxiii. 2. far from presuming to dictate, to prescribe, or so much as to direct, I would only imitate the four *leprous men at the entering in of the gate of Samaria*, 2 Kings vii. 3, 8, 9. Having found silver, and gold, and raiment, they could not forbear proclaiming the news, and communicating the spoil to their fellow-citizens. When I find a treasure incomparably more precious, when I find a teacher of wisdom, and a guide to glory, why should I hold my peace? why should I enjoy these benefits myself alone? why should I not, like those honest, though calamitous exiles, tell the glad tidings in the city, and invite my neighbours to partake of the blessings?

These blessings, through the divine goodness, I have found in JENKS' MEDITATIONS; which are, I think, the most distinguished among all his valuable writings.† Level to an

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\* Referred to in Mr. Hervey's life.

† Mr. Jenks' writings, as far as I am able to collect, are as follows: Those marked \* are at present out of print, but it is to be hoped they will not long continue so.

ordinary capacity, yet capable of entertaining a refined taste. Not void of beauty and delicacy, yet more especially adapted to enlighten the understanding, to impress the conscience, and build up the soul in faith, in holiness and joy.

\* The liberty of prayer asserted, and guarded from licentiousness, octavo, third edition. Price 2s.

\* Two letters written to a gentleman of distinction, guilty of common swearing. To which is added, a third letter to another gentleman in the commission of the peace, exciting him to the performance of his part, in executing the act against cursing and swearing. Price 1s.

\* A sermon preached at Henley in Shropshire, Dec. 2. 1697. being the day of public thanksgiving for the peace, and for his Majesty's return. Quarto.

\* The bell rung to prayers, being an earnest persuasion to the daily worship of God in every family, calling upon all houses to be houses of prayer. Price 1s.

Prayers and offices of devotion for families, and for particular persons upon most occasions. Twelves. Thirteenth edition, corrected and amended. Price 3s.

Every man's ready companion, twelves. Price 1s.—As I have taken the liberty to speak my sentiments concerning the Meditations, let my friend and physician, Dr. Stonhouse, be permitted to speak the merit of this performance. His testimony, I question not, will give pleasure to the reader, as it has done justice to the author. See the Supplement to Dr. Stonhouse's advice to a patient, page 67. of the seventh edition.

'Jenks' every man's ready companion consists of reflections on some of the most important texts of scripture, with suitable prayers. I would earnestly recommend this little piece, not only on account of its being so cheap in proportion to the variety of excellent instruction it contains, and the strain of rational and lively devotion, for which the author was so eminently (I had almost said singularly) remarkable, but also as I hope the example there given might lead the reader to a method of turning into prayer many passages of scripture in something of a like manner; and thus perused, thus improved, the scriptures would be made doubly profitable. There are likewise in this book several interesting considerations suggested on the birth of Christ, on the sacrament, on the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension; and, to render the whole still more extensively useful, the author has added a short, affecting, and judicious explanation of the creed, Lord's prayer, and ten commandments.'

Submission to the righteousness of God, or the necessity of trusting to a better righteousness than our own, opened and defended in a plain and practical manner. Third edition, twelves. Price 10d.



The method in which our author proceeds is to me peculiarly pleasing. First, he collects the most weighty and sublime truths. He then forms them into a close and animated address to the soul; and concludes all with a short but fervent supplication to God; which very much heightens the tenderness and solemnity of the whole. It is somewhat like pointing the arrow, not with polished steel, but with celestial fire. Perhaps the reader will recollect, on this occasion, the story of the angel appearing to Moniah. When the sacrifice was laid on the rock, and kindled into a burnt-offering, the seraph mingled himself with the sacred oblation, and ascended to heaven in the flame, Judges xiii. 20.

In the language, we have a noble plainness, and a happy perspicuity; in the sentiments, we have the force of persuasion, quickened by the glow of devotion. If, in some few sentences, we meet with an obsolete expression or inelegant phrase, methinks it is only like a hair adhering to a fine suit of velvet, or like a mote dropped upon a globe of crystal. It will not offer such an affront to the discernment and generosity of the reader, as to suppose him requiring an apology for so small a blemish, which, when magnified by the severest censure, is no more than a speck; when viewed with the allowances of candour and benevolence, is a mere nothing.

The several meditations may be regarded as so many striking sermons on the most interesting subjects of our holy religion; or rather as a judicious abridgment of various excellent sermons on almost every branch of Christianity: in each of which we have the spirit and energy of a copious discourse, contracted within the small compass of two or three pages. For which reason I cannot but apprehend they may be particularly serviceable in the family, as well as in the closet. That one of these short family essays, distinctly or repeated read amongst our domestics, may be more advantageous than the hasty perusal of a much larger composition.

There is scarce any circumstance of the Christian life, which solicits the assistance of a spiritual physician, but may

\* Heaven opened, translated from the Latin, with various improvements, twelves. Price 2s.

Serious thoughts on the wonderful God.

The glorious victory of chastity, exemplified in Joseph's hard conflict, and happy escape. Price 1s.

be accommodated with seasonable and suitable relief from this ample dispensatory of edification, exhortation, and comfort, 1 Cor. xiv. 3. Here are, (if I may pursue the medicinal allusion) cordials to cheer the drooping, restoratives to heal the backsliding, stimulatives to quicken the supine, with lenitives to ease the anguish of conscience, and make the bones, which sin has broken, to rejoice, Psalm li. 8. Neither are we clogged with a tedious multiplicity of remedies in any case of distress, nor wearied with a dry detail of all that can be said upon any point of enquiry. On the contrary, the most spirited doctrines, and the most sovereign consolations, are both skilfully selected, and pertinently applied, with this well-judged design, of improving and exhilarating the mind, without overcharging or burdening the memory.

I would submit it with the utmost deference to the consideration of my younger brethren in the ministry, whether it might not be a very profitable exercise to pursue the hints, and enlarge the plan, of these compendious treatises; whether by digesting them into proper divisions, and introducing, under each division, a more full and circumstantial display of the subject, we might not form popular and useful discourses for the pulpit. Such a practice, I persuade myself, might considerably facilitate our preparations for the public service, would stock our own minds with a set of the most important and affecting truths, and render our ministrations more acceptable to others, yet in no respect dishonourable to ourselves; as such a transformation is very different from a theft; and the most likely way to commence originals, is to work upon such excellent models.

Let me only add, that I know one person to whom these books have been highly delightful, and eminently beneficial; have very much contributed to exalt his apprehensions of divine grace, and to establish his faith in the divine Jesus.—That they may be equally, or rather more abundantly, beneficial and delightful to the public, is the wish, the hope, the prayer of their obliged servant,

JAMES HERVEY.

Oct. 30, 1756.

# PIOUS REFLECTIONS

ON A

## LAWFUL JOURNEY ON SUNDAY

EXEMPLIFIED.



ONE Sabbath I was called out by Providence from my own flock, to preach at two strange churches. They lay at a considerable distance from each other, and from Dummer; so that in passing to them, and repairing again to my own parish, I travelled a good many miles. All the way I went along, I was entertained in the finest manner imaginable; far more finely than mine, or I may venture to say, than any words can describe. I wish I had the glowing colours, the accurate pencil; and the masterly genius of some first-rate painter, that I might draw out, with as little injustice as possible, the lovely landscape, and make a present, in some degree, worthy of your acceptance.

The air was in its best temperament; neither so hot as to enfeeble or dispirit, nor so cold as to cause an uneasy chillness. It was fit to recommend and set off the most agreeable objects, and to be the vehicle of perfumes, not much inferior to myrrh, aloes, and cassia. I was in company with a gentleman of a clear understanding, and a tolerable share of reading; he had seen much of the world, and had a very deep piercing insight into things; he could talk judiciously upon most topics, and would sometimes bestow hints upon religious ones. So that, when I was disposed for conversation, I could have immediate recourse to one, that would refine my taste, and improve my judgment, if not minister grace to my heart. The face of the skies also conspired to render every prospect completely pleasant; it was decked and diversified with silver-like clouds; not such as were charged with heavy rains, but such as prevented the annoyance of one continual glare, and changed the sunshine frequently for a welcome shade; such as served for a foil to the unsullied ethereal blue. Thus did God order all circumstances, so as to render our ride exceedingly delightful.

At our first setting out, we went over strong ground, where no seed was sown, and so no fruit could grow. Its uselessness was not owing to any defect in point of fertility,

bat to want of being measured. Is not this the case of many immortal souls, who are born with blessed dispositions, and bid fair for becoming eminent saints, but are lost and spoiled for want of care and instruction? O for faithful shepherds to seek them, for industrious husbandmen to cultivate them! Send, Lord, a plenty of such to work in thy vineyard, and to watch over thy sheep! This coarse beginning, though it had no form nor comeliness in itself, yet tended to give an additional verdure to the succeeding scenes. So the bottomless pit, and unquenchable fire, though infinitely formidable, will create in the elect a more tasteful relish and enjoyment of their heavenly felicity. We made more haste than ordinary to get away from this barren spot. For why should any one tarry in such a place, or frequent such acquaintance, where all that occurs is vain and unprofitable? where nothing truly beneficial can either be imparted or acquired? The sooner we are delivered from such a situation, the better; no departure can be abrupt, no flight precipitate.

When we were advanced a little farther, we entered upon a large enclosure. Here were all the footsteps of a commendable and successful industry. The wheat was in the blade, and sprang up with a plenteous increase, and in goodly array. It was not choked with weeds, nor embarrassed with thistles, but, like a clean and even mantle, covered the plain; a present credit, and likely to be a future comfort to its owner. This suggested to me the value of a diligent hand, that portion which it is in every one's power to bequeath to himself. All the affairs of the slothful are like the mountains of Gilboa, on which there was no dew, neither rain, nor fields of offerings. But where there is prudence and discretion to contrive, and a steady fervour to execute, there whatsoever is undertaken will, in all probability, prosper. By a spirit of management, even the wilderness may be brought to bud and blossom as a rose: and was there such a spirit in the professors of religion, it would prompt them to be, like Dorcas, full of good works; or, like the great apostle, continually aspiring after fresh and higher measures of perfection. We should be frugal of our time, careful of all our talents, and most laudably covetous of every grain of improvement in piety.

We held on our course, admiring still as we went the teeming earth, the infant corn, and the pregnant promises of a prodigious harvest. This led me to muse upon one of the

most distinguishing doctrines of christianity, I mean the general resurrection. It convinced me how perfectly possible it is with God to raise the dead ; it gave me also a glimpse of that perfection of beauty to which the bodies of the just shall rise. For a little while ago I beheld, and lo ! the whole vegetable world was naked and bare, without any ornaments, or so much as one amiable feature, like some withered, wrinkled, deformed hag. But now, how charmingly it appears, and smiles, and shines ! No virgin is more gay and blooming, no bride is better arrayed, or more sparkling. And if God so enlivens and clothes the grass of the earth, and the tenants of the field, how much more shall he quicken and ennoble our mortal bodies, which, we hope, are the temples of the Holy Ghost ? Several of our dear friends we have accompanied to the grave ; we saw, with weeping eyes, their poor bones deposited in the dust. But henceforth let us dry up our sorrows, they are not to perish, but to be purified in these gloomy chambers. The hour is coming, when the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God. Then shall they hear the almighty summons, and spring from their confinement *like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices*, Song viii. 14. Then will they look from their dark abodes as the morning, *fair as the moon, clear as the sun*, Song vi. 10. never more to return to corruption, but to flourish in immortal vigour and youth. This is a pleasing meditation, and deserves to be indulged ; but at this time it must give place to others.

Our next remove was to a lane, set on either side with lofty trees and humble shrubs. Here the prospect was contracted, and we had nothing left to contemplate but our branching and leafy mound. The little boughs clad with a cheering green were refreshing to the eyes ; and it was curious to observe how every different plant was decked with a different livery. Here the twigs were gemmed with buds just ready to open and unfold ; there they were already opened into blossoms, and garnished the pointed thorns ; so that they were very delicate to look upon, though dangerous to touch. O ! the adorable efficacy of the divine voice ! how powerfully and lastingly it operates ! God said once, ' Let the earth bring forth ; ' he spake not twice, and yet how punctual does nature obey this single command ! Several thousand years are gone about, nor is its force evacuated,

impaired, or at all diminished. It endureth in full authority to this day, and is still a most binding law to all the material world. O that men would lay this to heart, and learn a lesson of obedience from the inanimate creation! All other things continue according to their Maker's ordinance; and shall man be the only rebel in the kingdom of nature? Shall man alone make the word of Omnipotence to be of none effect?

While our sight was regaled in this manner, a set of chiming bells saluted our ears with a solemn and serene harmony. It had no great diversity of stops, nor artful mixture of notes; but sure it was most gladdening music, and spoke a heavenly meaning. It was calculated to inspire such a joy as the royal psalmist felt, when he heard the acceptable invitation of going up to the house of the Lord. On a sudden, when we were least apprehensive of it, the wind wheeled about, and bore away the silver sounds. But it was only to bring them back again as unexpectedly, with the fresh pleasure of a grateful surprise. Here I thought of the sweet influences of grace, and wished for that happy time, when the visits of the blessed Spirit will be uninterrupted.

Quickly the lawns and plains disappeared again, and we dived into a wood. Numbers of sprightly birds, hopping and singing among the branches, solaced us as we passed. We thanked the pretty songsters, and bid them go on to supply our lack of praise. But what most of all affected us, being altogether new, was the warbling of the nightingale. What a tuneful throat has that charming creature! and what an unwearied use does she make of it! I myself heard her melody in the day-time, and am told in the night-season she also takes no rest. How sovereign and undeserved is the goodness of the Lord to the children of men! the pipe of this wakeful chorister, though now so incessant in thanksgiving, must soon be sealed up in endless silence: while the mouth of dull and ungrateful mortals will be filled with everlasting anthems. The air was impregnated with sweets; and, without money, or without price, we breathed in such a delicious fragrance, as far excelled *the powders of the merchant*, Song iii. 6. This put me in mind of some beautiful lines of the great Milton:

————— Now gentle gales,  
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense  
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole  
Those balmy spoils. —————

The other recalled to my memory part of a divine description, vastly superior to Milton's: 'Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land,' Song ii. 11, 12.

Two of our senses being so exquisitely gratified, we were in no haste to leave the place, though it was narrow, and afforded no other prospect but the shining canopy over our heads. But as soon as we were emerged from this sylvan path, what wonders presented themselves to our view! I think I was scarce ever more agreeably startled in my life. We stood on the brow of a hill, and underneath were tracts of level ground of an immense circumference. The labouring eye could hardly discern its utmost bounds. The whole scene being parcelled out among a variety of tillers, and producing variety of fruits, was like a noble piece of chequer-work. The nearer parts, and those distinctly discernable, were replenished with rural riches. The folds were full of sheep, and of lambs, frisking by the side of their fleecy dams. The vallies stood so thick with corn, that they even laughed and sung. One spot was not sprinkled, but seemed to be overlaid with a profusion of flowers, as the roof of the temple was with gold; another was, as it were, enamelled, like an embroidered carpet, with a well-proportioned distribution; some of them yellow as oranges, some white as snow, some tinged with a border as red as blood. The towns and villages, interspersed here and there; looked like the tiny tents of the fabled fairies. Numberless other beauties glanced upon my sight; but as I had not then leisure to examine them, so neither have I now room to relate them. O that these, and all the charms of the delightful season, may lead up every spectator's thoughts to the inimitable glories of heaven! And while the eye feasts upon them, let every tongue acknowledge to the honour of the all-creating God:

These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,  
Almighty! thine this universal frame,  
Thus wondrous fair: Thyself! how glorious then!

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**COLLECTION OF LETTERS,**

**WRITTEN BY MR. HERVEY,**

**FROM 1733 TO 1758.**

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**Vol. V.**

**Z**





## PREFACE.



IT has been already observed, in the account of Mr. Hervey's life prefixed to vol. i. that he frequently wrote religious letters to his acquaintance, according to their different circumstances, in the most amiable and convincing manner; and that he seemed to make it almost an invariable rule not to write a letter on any occasion, without at least one pious sentence in it; and that not introduced in a forced and awkward manner, but interwoven so as to appear naturally to arise from the subject.

The reasons for publishing this collection of Mr. Hervey's letters were the strong solicitations of those who knew and valued the author and his writings; a desire of contributing to the interests of religion, which was the great scope of all his labours; and a persuasion that such a collection would give a peculiar satisfaction to every intelligent and pious person;—especially as to be thus introduced to partake of the entertaining and instructive intercourses of his friendship may possibly be the means of encouraging others to go and do likewise. Nor will it be, it is presumed, necessary to bespeak the candour of the reader, or deprecate the petulance of criticism, whatever defects or inaccuracies may be found in a work of this kind, not intended for, though well worthy of the public eye.

As the following letter to the editor is so truly characteristic of Mr. Hervey, it is to be hoped that it will not be altogether unacceptable to the reader. When writers like him, of distinguished superiority, have gained our admiration and applause, we are fond of penetrating into their more retired apartments, and associating with them in the sequestered

walks of private life ; for here these great geniuses appear in an undress, the intrinsic excellence of their characters shines out with genuine lustre ; and although, as authors, their talents are beyond our imitation, yet the several milder graces and virtues of their more common and ordinary behaviour are in some measure attainable by every one.

SIR,

It was with no small satisfaction I saw an advertisement in the public papers, desiring the correspondents of the late Mr. Hervey to furnish the editor with some of his letters for publication, and glad I am it is in my power to send you so large a number ; since in many of them will be found such *traces of an upright heart*, as no stranger can otherwise be made acquainted with. *There will be seen the deepest humility.* Ever unconscious of his own shining abilities, he was always desirous of improving by the meanest in the church ; in lowliness of mind, he would prefer others to himself : He would frequently be the humble querist, and make his friend the respondent. *There will be seen the greatest love to mankind ; a love which he has strongly expressed on every occasion, not only in words, but in the most important acts of benevolence, both temporal and spiritual.* *There will be seen the most zealous attachments to truth.* He was extremely desirous, that every sentiment of his should be strictly examined ; and wherever he found any thing capable of the least improvement, he immediately acquiesced with the greatest thankfulness. In a word, *there will be seen the utmost serenity of mind* under the pressure of very grievous afflictions. As his joy was not of this world, no worldly calamities could take it from him ; nothing could ruffle ; nothing could discompose him. He was indeed, what his Master says of the Baptist, a burning and a shining light ; and as such he was a guide for our feet. As a burning light, he warmed many by his example ; he had received the grace of God in abundance, which he had long and most earnestly implored ; and the fruits of which, in his life and conversation, the world have seen, and his friends will tell with pleasure. As a shining light he instructed many by his doctrine. He was a most strenuous assertor of the free grace of God. He taught men to be rich in good works, without placing the least dependence on them. Christ was all to him, and it

was his whole business to publish his Redeemer's unsearchable riches. It was St. Paul's faithful saying, viz. That "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;" and it was Mr. Hervey's constant employment to bring sinners to him empty-handed, "to buy wine and milk without money, and without price."

He was also a most strenuous assertor of evangelical holiness. While he published the free grace of God, he was solicitous that none should abuse it to licentiousness. Herein also he imitated St. Paul in another faithful saying, viz. That "they who believe in God, should be careful to maintain good works."

Such was the friend I have lost. God grant we may all "be the followers of him who, through faith and patience, now inherits the promises." He rests from his labours, and my correspondence with him is for ever at an end; but, by the letters I here send, he will, though dead, yet speak, and spread wide that valuable instruction, and those ingenious remarks, which were originally designed only for the private inspection of, Sir your humble servant, &c. &c.

P. S. Mr. Hervey's zeal for his great Master, and his eminent abilities to advance the interests of religion, will it is hoped, secure the good opinion of the community in behalf of the publication of his private letters and life; especially when it is considered, that it was in some measure necessary to be done; not only as they exhibit in their purport, composition, and various tendencies, a striking, amiable, and true picture of the ingenuity, learning, candour, and piety of this excellent man, but as his character has been injured by some through misrepresentation, and as his writings have been censured by others through misapprehension;—all such will now see how far Mr. Hervey is deserving of blame or of applause, since there is nothing that expresses a man's particular character more fully than his letters to intimate friends.

In this edition, care has been taken to arrange the letters in the same order in which they were wrote, as far as was practicable. But there is no possibility of doing it exactly, for this plain reason, that in many letters written to those with whom he kept a frequent correspondence, Mr. Hervey was accustomed to express neither month nor year, but only to write Monday morning, Tuesday night, &c. and that se-

veral letters were transmitted to the editor, with the dates as well as names erased.

There are a few things inserted in this collection, such as the cottager's letter,\* Mr. Boyse's,† the letter to Dr. T—,‡ which were introduced, not only for the great propriety of such an introduction, but at the particular desire of some of Mr. Hervey's friends, in order to fulfil his intentions, and render him, though dead, as extensively useful as possible.

'I would by all means,' says one of his most judicious and favourite correspondents " have that letter of mine, addressed to Dr. T—, printed in the collection ; as I think this may in some measure be fulfilling the will of my deceased friend, who appears, by his own§ letter to me, to have judged something of that nature highly necessary ; and he would certainly have attempted it himself, as he declared, had not a certain church preferment brought him very unexpectedly into connexion, which made such a publication at that juncture ineligible. Mr. Hervey is now dead, and that reason is no longer in force ; and, therefore, now seems to me the fittest time for such purpose. I wrote that letter to Dr. T— at Mr. Hervey's express desire, and gave him full power to make what use of it he pleased ; hoping, that after correcting it to his mind, he would have sent it to Dr. T— himself, or else that he would have wrote it in another form (perhaps in an introduction to his fast-sermons) something far more valuable, extracting from my letter what best answered his ends. But that not being done, the publication of my letter in this collection, immediately after what Mr. Hervey says in his to me|| about Dr. T—'s sermon, may, with the same divine blessing, be of use ; and, though of little worth, yet, like the widow's mite, when it was her all, it may be acceptable. There are thousands of preachers who think in the same way with Dr. T—, and very likely many of these may be the readers of Mr. Hervey's letters ; and if some of them reflect and reform, the unjust anger of the rest is very little to be regarded. Therefore, upon the most serious consideration, it is my earnest request, that the letter to Dr. T— should be printed just as I sent it to Mr. Hervey."

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\* Letter 83. † Annexed to letter 166. ‡ Letter 158.

§ Letter 157.

|| It is so printed as here desired. See letter 158.

It must be acknowledged, that some of his first letters, written from college, when he was not more than twenty years of age, either speak a language different from free grace, for which we find he was afterwards so powerful an advocate, or at least they treat very confusedly of it; and perhaps some may say, why then were they printed? For these two plain reasons, that the reader may see and know what early and strong impressions he had of piety! what love to God! and to his fellow-creatures! Though we say not, that, like John Baptist, he was sanctified from his mother's womb, yet his early labours for his Saviour, when too many others of his age standing captivated by their passions, and swallowed up by their lusts, prove to a demonstration the doctrine he afterwards taught, viz. the power of redeeming love; they show how early the seeds of grace were soon in his heart, and when they look forward, they may observe from what small sparks of light and grace the Holy Spirit hath gradually taught him, Isaiah liv. 13. John vi. 45, and led him, as it were by the hand, into the full and holy liberty of the children of God. When but twenty-one years of age, we find him afraid of, and flying from praise, when others would be courting it; for, having wrote some verses to a relation, which were greatly commended, he heartily wished\* he never had wrote a line of poetry in his life; and he wrote upon another occasion,† expressly blaming a friend for praising him; and again,‡ he says, 'You have paid me an obliging compliment; beg of the blessed Gbd, dear Sir, that I may not be puffed up with vain conceit of myself or my writings.'

From the reading of these familiar letters, which is in a manner listening to, and hearing the thoughts of the writer, we may learn, that by nature 'his heart was hard as the flint, and his hands tenacious even to avarice: these are his words.'§ Yet (see the power of that free grace, which living and dying he adored) he became a bright example of universal charity.||

His great humility and diffidence of his own judgment and learning appear in many of his letters; in one, which is far from being contemptible either for style or argument, he enjoins his friend to return his letter immediately to him, that

\* Letter 3.

† Letter 52.

‡ Letter 60.

§ Letter 53.

|| See his life, and letter 51, 60, &amp;c.

it might never appear; yet his friend got the better of that modesty, and obtained leave to keep it; to which is owing the publication of that now, which Mr. Hervey, at the time of writing it, desired might never see the light.\*

Another instance, and a striking one, we may meet with, letter 53, where, answering the objections of a lady to the miracle which Christ wrought at the marriage of Cana in Galilee, he says, 'I have neither strength of mind, nor solidity of judgment, sufficient to conduct the procedure of an argument,' &c.

As the love of God was shed abroad in his heart, it produced an ardent desire to promote the cause of Christ Jesus and of his religion. And when he found himself bowed down with the spirit of weakness and infirmity, he was apt to fear lest he should disgrace the gospel in his languishing moments; † he earnestly prayed to God, and desired others to unite in the same petition, that he might not thus dishonour the cause of Christ. And his and their prayers were heard; for, notwithstanding his lingering weakness and depressed spirits which at length gave him up into the hands of death, yet he triumphed over his fears, he triumphed over the grand tempter and adversary of souls.

His willingness to have his writings corrected by every judicious friend, and his thankfulness in receiving their criticisms, appear throughout all his letters written to his learned correspondents; a specimen of it you may see in let. 61, 101, 181. His earnest desire to prefer his friends' opinion to his own, or in other words, his humble opinion of his own judgment and powers in argumentation, makes him ever requesting, 'Pray use freely the pruning-hook,' &c. It may seem a wonder, therefore, that he should ever, under these discouraging thoughts of himself, write at all, especially so much as he has done; considering he was no more than five and forty when he died, and that the first of his works was published when he was thirty-three. Perhaps the reader might be almost tempted to suspect that his humility was affected, and that pride lurked under that fair garment; but hypocrisy dwelt not in him; he wrote under all that weakness, and under all those fears, because he dared not be silent; the cause of God and truth was publicly attacked; the cause of his

\* Letter 24.

† Letter 60.

Master was opposed ; and he, as a faithful watchman, was compelled, however weak in body, however unequal he thought himself to the task, he was compelled to cry aloud, and spare not ; and therefore he wrote, not from pride or from avarice, but from conscience and a sense of duty ; and this the intelligent and candid reader will easily perceive from many of his letters.

At a time when infidelity and depravity prevailed, and when it was become almost fashionable to slander and speak evil of persons, depreciating another's reputation, in order to raise and establish our own, we find Mr. Hervey making it a rule to single out the best things he had heard of his neighbour, and carefully avoiding even to hint any thing which might be the cause of propagating a rumour to his detriment, or to disclose a secret which might be injurious to him : thus careful was he to carry into his own practice the doctrine he taught, the religion he professed ; and thus far was he from espousing either the principles or practices of Antinomians. Some of his pretended friends of that stamp, as well as his adversaries, have taken much pains to make the world believe that he in all things agreed with them, that, if possible, they might be thought not to differ from him ; but they will find it as impracticable to raise their reputation upon his, as it will be to reduce his character to a level with their own, so long as his works shall live to proclaim his principles, and a friend shall remain to declare his truly christian practices, his holy life and conversation.

It cannot but be observed that Mr. Hervey, in two of his letters,\* has repeated the same argument, in pretty near the same words, and perhaps this repetition may disgust the delicate and curious reader, especially as it returns so soon as within the compass of thirty pages ; but it is to be considered that they were written at different times, the one, to a clergyman at Bath, in 1743, and the other, for the satisfaction of a lady, five years afterwards ; and as the objections were the same from both, Mr. Hervey had a right to return each of them the same answer.

I must once more trespass on my reader's patience, as I cannot conclude without expressing my hopes that every per-

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\* Letter 17. and 53.



son of candour and judgment will make the necessary allowances for those different states both of body and mind, which one of Mr. Hervey's weak constitution must have undergone in the space of five and twenty years, during which these letters were wrote. A manifest inequality of judgment, of accuracy, and of style, in familiar letters wrote at such distances, with more or less attention and care, according to the variety of circumstances which occur, and without the least thought of their publication, will appear; nor can it be otherwise expected indeed from any one. Some of the greatest geniuses of the age, such as Pope and Swift, have made their apology in the same case: and no one, I am sure, is more justly entitled to the indulgence of the public than he whose letters are here collected.



of that rich variety of curious dyes which surpassed even Solomon in all his glory. Not a single flower appears to gladden the sight, to bespangle the ground, or enamel the barren landscape. The clouds that ere long distilled in dews of honey, or poured themselves forth in showers of fatness, now combine in torrents to overflow the lifeless earth, to bury or sweep away all the faint footsteps of ancient beauty. The hills that were crowned with corn, the vallies that laughed and sung under loads of golden grain, in a word, the whole face of nature, that so lately rejoiced for the abundance of her plenty, is become bare, naked and disconsolate. As I was continuing my walk, and musing on this joyless scene, methought the sudden change exhibited a lively picture of our frail and transitory state; methought every object that occurred seemed silently to forewarn me of my own future condition.

I dwelt on these considerations till they fermented in my fancy, and worked themselves out in such like expressions: 'What! must we undergo so grievous an alteration? we, whose sprightly blood circulates in brightest tides? we, who are the favourites of time, on whom youth, and health, and strength, shed their selectest influence! we who are so apt to look upon ourselves as exempt from cares, or pains, or troubles, and privileged to drink in the sweets of life without restraint, without alloy! Must we forego the sunshine of our enjoyments for any thing resembling this melancholy gloom! Must the sparkling eye set in haggard dimness? the lovely features and glowing cheeks be obscured by pale deformity? Must soft and gay desires be banished from our breasts, or mirth and jollity from our conversation? Must the vigour of our age fall away like water that runneth apace, and the blissful minutes of the prime of our years vanish like a dream? If this be our case, in vain, sure, do we boast of our superior felicity, in vain do we glory in being the darlings of heaven. The inanimate creation droop indeed, sicken and languish, for a time, but quickly revive, rejoice, and again shine forth in their brightest lustre: It is true they relinquish, at the approach of winter, their verdant honours, but rest fully assured of receiving them with interest from the succeeding spring. But man, when he has passed the autumn of his maturity, when he has once resigned himself into the cold embraces of age, bids a long, an eternal

adieu to all that is entertaining, amiable, or endearing; no pleasing expectations refresh his mind; not the least dawns of hope glimmer in to qualify the darksome looking-for-of death.'

I had not long indulged these bitter reflections before I espied a remedy for those sore evils which occasioned them. Though I perceived all our passionate delights to be vanity, and the issue of them vexation of spirit, yet I saw likewise that virtue was substantial, and her fruits joy and peace; that, though all things came to an end, the ways of wisdom were exceeding broad. The seeds of piety, if implanted in our tender breasts, duly cherished, and constantly cultivated, will bud and blossom even in the winter of our days; and when white and red shall be no more, when all the outward embellishments of our little fabric shall disappear, this will still flourish in immortal bloom. To walk humbly with our God, dutifully with our parents, and charitably with all, will be an inexhaustible source of never-ceasing comforts. What though we shall sometimes be unable to hear the voice of singing men and singing women; though all the senses prove false to their trust, and refuse to be any longer inlets of pleasure; it is now, dear sister, it is now in our power to make such happy provisions as even then, in those forlorn circumstances, may charm our memories with ravishing recollections, and regale all our faculties with the continual feast of an applauding conscience. What sweet complacency, what unspeakable satisfaction shall we reap from the contemplations of an uninterrupted series of spotless actions! No present uneasiness will prompt us impatiently to wish for dissolution, nor anxious fears for futurity make us immoderately dread the impending stroke; all will be calm, easy, and serene; all will be soothed by this precious, this invaluable thought, that, by reason of the meekness, the innocence, the purity, and other christian graces which adorned the several stages of our progress through the world, our names and our ashes will be embalmed, the chambers of our tomb consecrated into a paradise of rest, and our souls, white as our locks, by an easy transition, become angels of light. I am, with love to my brother,

Dear Sister,

Your most affectionate brother,

JAMES HERVEY.

## LETTER II.

[TO HIS SISTER.]

*Lincoln College, Oxon. March 28, 1734.*

DEAR SISTER,

IT is now a considerable time since I enjoyed the true and real pleasure of your company. I say true and real, because my fancy has often taken its flight to Hardington, and delighted itself with the imaginary conversation of you and my other dear relations: I have frequently recollected, and, as it were, acted over again in my mind the many pleasing hours we have spent together in reading holy and edifying books, or discoursing on pious and useful subjects.— And methinks I should have been exceeding glad to have had the satisfaction yet more improved by receiving a letter from you; which, I am sure, would have been full of the most tender endearments of love and affection, and, I hope, would not have wanted expressions of true religion and virtue; and could I but once see that, could I but observe ourselves not only dwelling together in unity, but travelling hand and hand towards the heavenly Jerusalem, mutually encouraging and assisting one another to fight the good fight, to lay hold on eternal life, then should I greatly rejoice, then should I begin to live.

I hope I may now congratulate your perfect recovery; however, I am certain there is great reason for congratulation, on account of your being so choice a favourite of heaven, as your frequent sicknesses, and often infirmities, speak you to be. Our gracious Father, though an indulgent lover of all mankind, seems to watch over you with more than ordinary care and concern, to be extremely desirous, nay, even solicitous, for your salvation. How does his goodness endeavour, by the repeated, though lightest strokes of his rod, to cure whatever is disordered, to rectify whatever is amiss in you? How studiously does he seek, by laying you on a sick bed, to make you see yourself, and all things else, in a true and proper light; to point out to you your frailties and follies, your darling lusts, and the sins that do most easily beset you; to convince you that you are only a sojourner

here upon earth, your body a poor frail and corruptible house of clay, your soul a bright, glorious, and immortal being, that is hastening to the fruition of God, and to mansions of eternal rest; to discover to you the vanity, meanness and contemptible littleness of this world, and the worth, the importance, and amazing greatness of the next! Do not then hold out against these kind calls to repentance and amendment: do not resist such earnest importunities, such sweet solicitations: but suffer yourself, by this loving correction, to be made great; great in humility, holiness, and happiness. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and, by a hearty sorrow for your past faults, and a firm resolution of obedience for the future, let this fatherly chastisement bring forth in you the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Oh! let us dread, let us tremble, to reject any longer the tenders of grace, lest we awake at length his justice, and draw down vengeance upon ourselves; lest our visitation be not in love and with kindness, but in heavy displeasure, and with fury poured out; lest his next dispensation, be not a merciful severity, but indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish.

Sure I cannot but admire that adorable wisdom which has contrived all things so evidently and so directly to your advantage! Your late illness has, I doubt not, begot in you serious thoughts and holy dispositions; and these, I flatter myself, will be nourished by the reception of the blessed sacrament the following Easter. Let us, dear sister, break off our sins by repentance; let us amend our lives, and begin, from this very instant, to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world. So shall we answer the good ends of our sickness—so shall we be meet partakers of those holy mysteries here, and enjoy an inheritance amongst the saints in light hereafter. And now I cannot but acquaint you how earnestly I wished that you and others of my neighbours (with whom I have discoursed upon this subject) were giving devout attendance to the prayers and praises that were offered up last Monday in your church, as likewise, how I should rejoice, with exceeding great joy, to hear that both you and they continue steadfast, or rather abound more and more in the practice of this and such other religious duties. And if you think the desire of my heart, and the longings of

my soul, are of any weight with any of them, pray let them know how I hope, desire, and pray that we may be worthy communicants, by an immediate forsaking of all wicked ways, and a thorough amendment, as well as an unshaken resolution, to persevere and advance in that amendment.

My kind respects to all that you shall shew or read this letter to: desire them not to forget me in their prayers: let — and — know that I often think of them, and hope they sometimes remember me, and the words that I have often spoke to them. I am, &c.

JAMES HERVEY.



### LETTER III.

*Lincoln College, Oxon. May 2, 1734.*

DEAR SISTER,

FINDING myself in a writing humour, and remembering that I had formerly promised you an entertaining present, and being sensible of the decency of introducing it with an epistle; upon these accounts I again set pen to paper, and address you, notwithstanding you have so very lately received a letter from me. By an usefully entertaining present, I mean such an one as will improve and edify, at the same time that it diverts and delights; as will not only make you easy to yourself, and agreeable to others, but also good, and holy, and wise unto salvation. Now I scarce know any human composition more likely to promote these excellent purposes than this poem on the last day.\* For, being in verse, and set off with all the graces of speech and thought, it cannot fail of charming as well the nice ear as the sound judgment. And as for the subject, sure nothing can be more prodigiously pleasing than to read of that happy time which shall be the beginning of a blissful eternity; when our Redeemer, by his mighty power, shall change our

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\* By Dr. Young.

vile bodies, that they may be like unto his glorious body, and translate us from a state of corruption in the grave, to shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father. And every one must own, that the most engaging persuasions to piety and holiness of conversation are drawn from the recompense of a future invaluable reward; and that the most sovereign preservative against all ungodliness and worldly lusts, is the terrors, the insupportable terrors, of the Lord. If, therefore, you would please yourself, refine your taste, or have the practice of religion pleasing, instead of plays, ballads, and other corrupt writings, read this almost divine piece of poetry; read it (as I have done) over and over; think upon it, endeavour to digest it thoroughly, and even to get by heart the most moving passages: and then, I trust, you will find it answer the ends I purpose in sending it.

You will excuse me from exercising my political talent, since there are already two copies of recommendatory verses, and because I perceive such an attempt will be either very absurd or very dangerous. For should I tack together a few doggerel rhymes, this would be an affront to you;—whereas, should I succeed so well as to gain the applause of my reader, this, I am sure, would portend very great harm, if not to you, yet most certainly to me. For what can portend greater harm than the words of praise, which, though smoother than oil, yet be they very swords? What can be more destructive of that humble mind which was in Christ Jesus, that meek and lowly spirit which is in the sight of God of great price! I am so far from carrying on my versifying designs, that I heartily wish I had never conceived any; that those lines I sent to my cousin — had either never been made, or that I had never heard them commended. Pride and vanity are foolish and unreasonable in dust and ashes, and, which is worse, odious and detestable before infinite perfection, and infinite power. Oh! let you and me then dread whatever may administer fuel to these worst of tempers, more than the poison of asps, or the pestilence that walketh in darkness. Let us pray against seeking, desiring, or taking pleasure in the honour that cometh of men. And if at any time the flattering tongue, that snare of death, shall overtake us, let us instantly fly unto our Saviour, and complain unto our God; then let us remember, and remembering, let us acknowledge, that we are nothing, have no-





infinitely more dreadful will it be to appear before a more strict and awful tribunal? The good Lord grant, that you and I may not be cast in that tremendous trial! A trial that will be undergone before angels and God; upon the issue of which our eternal life will depend. Was I to wish a wish for the dearest friend in the world, it should not be for gold, or jewels, or apparel; these things are fading; and the fashion of them passeth away; but it should be for a favourable sentence in that last and great day. Will not the archangel shortly sound the trump? Will not all the dead come forth of their graves, and the Ancient of days sit? How valuable then will an humble and holy life be! If you and I be found with the wedding-garment on, we shall doubtless enter into the joy of our Lord, never to die, never to grieve, never to be parted more. But if we should either of us be negligent in this matter; if we should be surprised without oil in our lamps; oh! the fearfulness and trembling that will come upon us! the horrible dread that will overwhelm us! to think that we must be for ever shut out of heaven, banished eternally from the presence of God, the society of saints, and the fulness of joy! if you or I were to be torn from our kindred, and our father's house, and hurried away captive into a foreign country, there to be chained to the galleys, or condemned to the mines; how would this grieve both us and our dear relations; how would it pierce our souls as a sword! If this be sad, (as certainly it is) alas! what will it be to be everlastingly separated by the impassable gulph? for one to be caught up to heaven, and there to be ever with the Lord; and for the other to be thrust down into torments, and dwell with wailing and gnashing of teeth? Dear sister, let us consider this, and give all diligence to make our calling and election sure; that when the changes and chances of this mortal life are over, we may meet and live together in glory everlasting. Which is, and shall be, the hearty prayer of,

Your, &c.

JAMES HERVEY.

## LETTER V.

*Dummer, May 7, 1737.*

GOOD MADAM,

**PRAY** be pleased to cast your eye to the bottom, and observe who it is that desires to bespeak you. It is one who knows himself to have been guilty of the most slighting behaviour, and to have deserved, in return, your greatest disdain. If, after you perceive his name to be Hervey—that Hervey who was so lately and so long in London, without ever waiting upon Mrs. —; without paying his respects to her who merits so much the esteem of every christian; without any thankful acknowledgment for her kind wishes so often conceived, and her prevailing prayers so often put up in his behalf: if, Madam, after you are informed of all this, you can bear to give the remainder of the paper a favourable reading, I shall not only account myself highly obliged to your good nature, but when I have an occasion to put up with an affront, and to exercise forgiveness, I will think upon it as a pattern.

On Sunday I was called out by Providence from my own flock, to preach at two strange churches. They lay at a considerable distance from each other, and from Dummer; so that in passing to them, and repairing again to my own parish, I travelled a good many miles. All the way I went along, I was entertained in the finest manner imaginable; far more finely than mine, or I may venture to say, than any words can describe. I wish I had the glowing colours, the accurate pencil, and the masterly genius of some first-rate painter, that I might draw out, with as little injustice as possible, the lovely landscape, and make a present, in some degree, worthy your acceptance.

The air was in its best temperament; neither so hot as to enfeeble or dispirit, nor so cold as to cause an uneasy chillness. It was fit to recommend and set off the most agreeable objects, and to be the vehicle of perfumes, not much inferior to myrrh, aloes, and cassia. I was in company with a gentleman of a clear understanding, and a tolerable share of reading; he had seen much of the world, and had a very deep piercing insight into things; he could talk judiciously

upon most topics, and would sometimes bestow hints upon religious ones. So that, when I was disposed for conversation, I could have immediate recourse to one, that would refine my taste, and improve my judgment, if not minister grace to my heart. The face of the skies also conspired to render every prospect completely pleasant; it was decked and diversified with silver-like clouds; not such as were charged with heavy rains, but such as prevented the annoyance of one continual glare, and changed the sunshine frequently for a welcome shade; such as served for a foil to the unsullied ethereal blue. Thus did God order all circumstances, so as to render our ride exceedingly delightful.

At our first setting out, we went over strong ground, where no seed was sown, and so no fruit could grow. Its uselessness was not owing to any defect in point of fertility, but to want of being manured. Is not this the case of many immortal souls, who are born with blessed dispositions, and bid fair for becoming eminent saints, but are lost and spoiled for want of care and instruction? O for faithful shepherds to seek them, for industrious husbandmen to cultivate them! Send, Lord, a plenty of such to work in thy vineyard, and to watch over thy sheep! This coarse beginning, though it had no form nor comeliness in itself, yet tended to give an additional verdure to the succeeding scenes. So the bottomless pit, and unquenchable fire, though infinitely formidable, will create in the elect a more tasteful relish and enjoyment of their heavenly felicity. We made more haste than ordinary to get away from this barren spot. For why should any one tarry in such a place, or frequent such acquaintance, where all that occurs is vain and unprofitable? where nothing truly beneficial can either be imparted or acquired? The sooner we are delivered from such a situation, the better; no departure can be abrupt, no flight precipitate.

When we were advanced a little farther, we entered upon a large enclosure. Here were all the footsteps of a commendable and successful industry. The wheat was in the blade, and sprang up with a plenteous increase, and in goodly array. It was not choked with weeds, nor embarrassed with thistles, but, like a clean and even mantle, covered the plain; a present credit, and likely to be a future comfort to its owner. This suggested to me the value of a diligent hand, that portion which it is in every one's power to be-

queath to himself. All the affairs of the slothful are like the mountains of Gilboa, on which there was no dew, neither rain, nor fields of offerings. But where there is prudence and discretion to contrive, and a steady fervour to execute, there whatsoever is undertaken will, in all probability, prosper. By a spirit of management, even the wilderness may be brought to bud and blossom as a rose: and was there such a spirit in the professors of religion, it would prompt them to be, like Dorcas, full of good works; or, like the great apostle, continually aspiring after fresh and higher measures of perfection. We should be frugal of our time, careful of all our talents, and most laudably covetous of every grain of improvement in piety.

We held on our course, admiring still as we went the teeming earth, the infant corn, and the pregnant promises of a prodigious harvest. This led me to muse upon one of the most distinguishing doctrines of christianity, I mean the general resurrection. It convinced me how perfectly possible it is with God to raise the dead; it gave me also a glimpse of that perfection of beauty to which the bodies of the just shall rise. For a little while ago I beheld, and lo! the whole vegetable world was naked and bare, without any ornaments, or so much as one amiable feature, like some withered, wrinkled, deformed hag. But now, how charmingly it appears, and smiles, and shines! No virgin is more gay and blooming, no bride is better arrayed, or more sparkling. And if God so enlivens and clothes the grass of the earth, and the tenants of the field, how much more shall he quicken and ennoble our mortal bodies, which, we hope, are the temples of the Holy Ghost? Several of our dear friends we have accompanied to the grave; we saw, with weeping eyes, their poor bones deposited in the dust. But henceforth let us dry up our sorrows, they are not to perish, but to be purified in these gloomy chambers. The hour is coming, when the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God. Then shall they hear the almighty summons, and spring from their confinement *like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices*, Song viii. 14. Then will they look from their dark abodes as the morning, *fair as the moon, clear as the sun*, Song vi. 10. never more to return to corruption, but to flourish in immortal vigour and youth. This

is a pleasing meditation, and deserves to be indulged ; but at this time it must give place to others.

Our next remove was to a lane, set on either side with lofty trees and humble shrubs. Here the prospect was contracted, and we had nothing left to contemplate but our branching and leafy mound. The little boughs clad with a sheering green were refreshing to the eyes ; and it was curious to observe how every different plant was decked with a different livery. Here the twigs were gemmed with buds just ready to open and unfold ; there they were already opened into blossoms, and garnished the pointed thorns ; so that they were very delicate to look upon, though dangerous to touch. O ! the adorable efficacy of the divine voice ! how powerfully and lastingly it operates ! God said once, ' Let the earth bring forth ; ' he spake not twice, and yet how punctual does nature obey this single command ! Several thousand years are gone about, nor is its force evacuated, impaired, or at all diminished. It endureth in full authority to this day, and is still a most binding law to all the material world. O that men would lay this to heart, and learn a lesson of obedience from the inanimate creation ! All other things continue according to their Maker's ordinance ; and shall man be the only rebel in the kingdom of nature ? Shall man alone make the word of Omnipotence to be of none effect ?

While our sight was regaled in this manner, a set of chiming bells saluted our ears with a solemn and serene harmony. It had no great diversity of stops, nor artful mixture of notes ; but sure it was most gladdening music, and spoke a heavenly meaning. It was calculated to inspire such a joy as the royal psalmist felt, when he heard the acceptable invitation of going up to the house of the Lord. On a sudden, when we were least apprehensive of it, the wind wheeled about, and bore away the silver sounds. But it was only to bring them back again as unexpectedly, with the fresh pleasure of a grateful surprise. Here I thought of the sweet influences of grace, and wished for that happy time, when the visits of the blessed Spirit will be uninterrupted.

Quickly the lawns and plains disappeared again, and we dived into a wood. Numbers of sprightly birds, hopping and singing among the branches, solaced us as we passed. We thanked the pretty songsters, and bid them go on to supply our lack of praise. But what most of all affected us, being

altogether new, was the warbling of the nightingale. What a tuneful throat has that charming creature! and what an unwearied use does she make of it! I myself heard her melody in the day-time, and am told in the night-season she also takes no rest. How sovereign and undeserved is the goodness of the Lord to the children of men! the pipe of this wakeful chorister, though now so incessant in thanksgiving, must soon be sealed up in endless silence: while the mouth of dull and ungrateful mortals will be filled with everlasting anthems. The air was impregnated with sweets; and, without money, or without price, we breathed in such a delicious fragrance, as far excelled *the powders of the merchant*, Song iii. 6. This put me in mind of some beautiful lines of the great Milton:

—————Now gentle gales,  
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense  
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole  
Those balmy spoils.—————

The other recalled to my memory part of a divine description, vastly superior to Milton's: 'Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land,' Song ii. 11, 12.

Two of our senses being so exquisitely gratified, we were in no haste to leave the place, though it was narrow, and afforded no other prospect but the shining canopy over our heads. But as soon as we were emerged from this sylvan path, what wonders presented themselves to our view! I think I was scarce ever more agreeably startled in my life. We stood on the brow of a hill, and underneath were tracts of level ground of an immense circumference. The labouring eye could hardly discern its utmost bounds. The whole scene being parcelled out among a variety of tillers, and producing variety of fruits, was like a noble piece of chequer-work. The nearer parts, and those distinctly discernable, were replenished with rural riches. The folds were full of sheep, and of lambs, frisking by the side of their fleecy dams. The vallies stood so thick with corn, that they even laughed and sung. One spot was not sprinkled, but seemed to be overlaid with a profusion of flowers, as the roof of the temple was with gold; another was, as it were, enamelled, like an embroidered carpet, with a well-proportioned distri-





regard to soul, and the things that make for its welfare in putting you out. Let it be inquired, not only whether such a tradesman be a man of substance and credit, but whether he be also a man of religion and godliness? whether he be a lover of good people, a careful frequenter of the church? whether his children be well nurtured and educated in the fear of the Lord? whether family-prayer be daily offered up in his house? whether he believes that the souls of his servants are committed to his trust, and that he will be answerable for the neglect of them at the judgment-seat: It will be sadly hazardous to venture yourself under the roof of any person who is not furnished with these principles, or is a stranger to these practices. But if he be quite contrary to all these, a despiser of God and goodness, wholly devoted to carnal pleasure, and worldly gain; if he not only omit the religious care and oversight of his household, but also set them a wicked and corrupt example; let nothing induce you to enter into his service. A lewd, drinking, swearing, cheating master, will be sure to disregard the sobriety and purity of your behaviour, and very likely to corrupt it. To have his disorderly carriage daily before your eyes, will be as dangerous as to lodge in a plague-house. Wherefore, let no consideration of profit or advantage, or of any other sort, prevail with you to become an apprentice to such a one. If you do, depend on it, you breathe tainted air, and it is much but you catch the deadly infection. After you are bound to a master, you must be as diligent in doing your duty to him, as you should be of examining into his character before you are bound. As I have given you my advice concerning the latter of these particulars, I fancy you will not take it amiss if I give you some directions concerning the former. As soon as you are bound, you are at your master's and not at your own disposal; he has then a right to your hands, your strength, and all that you can do. He becomes a sort of parent to you; and though not a natural, yet a civil father. You are also obliged, not only by the laws of your country, and the tenure of your indentures, but by the fifth commandment of God, to pay him all due submission and honour. To do this is a most material part of your duty as a christian, as well as your undeniable debt as an apprentice. It is required of you by God in holy scripture, and you must not once imagine that you do what is pleasing to him, unless you

consciously perform it. Now, that you may know what it is that your master shall expect from you, and what it is that the Lord has enjoined you with regard to him, remember it consists, first, in reverence of his person; secondly, in obedience to his commands; and thirdly, in faithfulness in his business.

First, in reverence of his person. You must esteem him very highly for his superiority's sake, and the resemblance he bears to God. For God who made you, and has an uncontrollable power over you, has communicated some of that power to your master; so that you are to look upon him as the representative, in some sort, of the divine Majesty, and invested with some of his authority. Accordingly St. Paul says, 1 Tim. vi. 1. You must count him worthy of all honour; all, *i. e.* internal and external, that of the actions and words, as well as that of the heart. It is not enough to maintain a worthy estimation inwardly, but you must let it appear on all occasions outwardly, by behaving yourself very obligingly to him before his face, and by speaking very respectfully of him behind his back. Suppose you should discern failings and infirmities in him, you must by no means divulge them, or make yourself merry with them, much less must you dare to set light by any of his orders. Whatever you have reason to think will grieve or displease him, will be prejudicial or offensive to him, that you must cautiously forbear.

Secondly, Obedience to his commands. See how full the apostle speaks to this purpose, Col. iii. 22. "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh." Observe likewise, from this passage, not only the necessity, but also the compass and latitude of your obedience, how large and extensive it is. It reaches not barely to a few, but to all and every instance. If you should receive orders that are ever so much against the grain of your own inclination, you must force yourself to comply with them: receive them as you used to do nauseous physic; though they may be unpleasant at first, they will do you good, and be comfortable to you afterwards; your own pleasure must always stoop, and give way to your master's. If he sets you such a task as is mean and ignoble, and such as (according to the expression of the world) is beneath a gentleman's son, do not scruple it, dear brother, but dispatch it cheerfully. Remember who hath said, Servants, obey your masters in all things. And oh!

remember, that be as well born and bred as we will, yet he that was higher than the highest of us all, even the most excellent and illustrious person that ever lived, condescended to the lowest and (such as our fine folks would account the) shamefullest offices. The Lord Jesus Christ, though the brightness of his Father's glory, disdained not to wash his disciples' feet. Neither be dejected because you are treated in an unworthy manner, or set to do some mean and low office for him, or his family; but rejoice rather in that you are made like unto your Redeemer, and in the happy prospect you will have of becoming great in heaven, by being so little on earth. I am aware this piece of advice is not so unexceptionable as the rest; it may possibly be adjudged the mark of too yielding and sneaking a spirit; but never forget, that the things which are most highly esteemed by God are held in least repute by men. I know, and am sure, that if any apprentice would make such a compliance for the sake of preserving peace, and out of conscience to the command of God, and with an eye to the example of Christ, there is a day coming when he will not repent of it; when it will not be deemed a blot in his character; but be an ornament of grace to his head, and more comely than chains about his neck, Prov. i. 9. Well, you see your obedience must be universal; you must come when he calls you, and go where he bids you; do all that he commands you, and let alone all that he forbids you. This must moreover be done not grudgingly, or of necessity, but readily and gladly: for hear what the scripture saith, Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, Col. iii. 23; and again, With good-will do service, Eph. vi. 7; so that we must not creep, but be quick and expeditious in our business, howsoever disagreeable. You must not go about it with grumbling words, and muttering in your mouth, but with so satisfied an air, as may show that you are pleased with whatever pleases your master.

Thirdly, In faithfulness in his business. This is the last branch of your duty to your master; and since Moses has obtained an honourable testimony on this account, be you also faithful in all his house, Heb. iii. 5. You may find this, as indeed all the qualifications of a good servant, described by St. Paul, (Tit. ii. 10.) Not purloining, says he, but showing all fidelity. You are charged not to purloin, *i. e.* not to keep back from your master, not to put into your own

pocket, nor convert to your own use, any of that money, which, in the way of trade, passes through your hands. You were taught from your childhood to keep your hands from picking and stealing, and I hope you abhor such abominable practices from the bottom of your heart. You must not sell at a cheaper, and by at a dearer rate, in order to have some valuable consideration made you privily in your own person. These differ from robbing on the highway; (they are flagrant acts of dishonesty, and will cry to heaven for vengeance,) only in being less open and notorious. Such tricks and villainous devices do the same thing by craft and treachery, as house-breakers do by force and violence. Therefore, dear brother, renounce, detest, and fly from them as much as from fire, arrows, and death. Besides, you are not only to abstain from such clandestine knavery; but also to show all good fidelity. What is meant by this you may understand by reading how Joseph conducted himself in Potiphar's service. Your master, it is likely, will commit the management of some of his affairs to you; and you must endeavour, by a discreet behaviour, and a pious life, to bring the blessing of the Lord upon all that you take in hand. You must lay out your time and your labour, and give all diligence to answer the trust reposed in you. You must not delay the business which is urgent, nor do your work by halves, nor transfer that to others which is expected you should do yourself. The slothful man, says Solomon, is brother to him that is a great waster; therefore you must avoid idleness and carelessness. In a word, you must do nothing knowingly and wilfully that is likely to impoverish your master, but seek by all lawful and laudable means to increase his substance. All this you must observe, not only when he stands by you, and inspects you, but when his back is turned, and you are removed from his view; otherwise your service is nothing but eye-service, such as will prove odious to man, and is already condemned by God. For if you appear to be industrious, and in earnest, before your master, but to loiter and trifle when out of sight, you will be chargeable with hypocrisy; a sin extremely hateful to Christ, and grievously pernicious to the soul. But I am afraid I tire you; this one sentence, therefore, and I have done. You must carry yourself, throughout the whole course of your apprenticeship, so respectfully, so obediently, so faithfully, that at

the end of it you may truly say with Jacob, with all my power I have served your father. I had more to write, but will send you (if you care to accept it) the remainder some other time. May God bless you all, and your affectionate brother, &c.



## LETTER VII.

Dummer, June 29, 1737.

*My dear FRIENDS, the inhabitants of Collingtree, near Northampton.*

I received the letter wrote in your name, and signed with your hands, and was very well pleased with its contents.— I am glad that you are all in good health, and am obliged to you for retaining so honourable a remembrance of an unworthy youth. Your desire to have a careful clergyman settled among you is perfectly right and laudable. But I fear you make an over-favourable and mistaken judgment, when you imagine me to be such a one, and pitch upon me for that purpose. However, letting this pass, it is, I say, well and wisely done of you, to be solicitous in this matter. For a minister is a person of the greatest importance imaginable; his office is of the most universal concernment; and his demeanor therein of the most beneficial or prejudicial tendency. Beneficial, if he be able, faithful, and watches for his people's souls, as one that must give account. Prejudicial, if he be unskilful, inactive, and unconcerned about the spiritual welfare of his people. The things that pertain to salvation, and the means of obtaining everlasting life, are lodged in his hands. He is the steward of the mysteries of Christ, and so the guardian (under divine grace) of your best and most abiding interests. If through ignorance he mismanage, or through idleness neglect this weighty trust, it may be the ruin of immortal souls. Whereas, if he be both discreet and diligent in his holy vocation, he may be the instrument of the richest benefits to those committed to his

charge. His praying to God, and his preaching to them, may be attended with such a blessing from on high, as will fill them with heavenly wisdom, form them to true holiness, and fit them for the future glory. Benefits these, not inconsiderable or momentary, but such as are great beyond expression, and lasting to eternity. For these reasons, it will be your wisdom and your happiness to procure a pastor whose life is exemplary; whose doctrine is sound; whose heart is warm with zeal for God; and whose bowels yearn with compassion for men. If your bones were broken, or if you were brought to death's door by the force of some violent disease, you would not be content with the prescription of a quack, but seek out for the best advice. If your wives were in hard labour: if the children were come to the birth, and there was not strength to bring forth, you would not spare to ride for the most experienced midwife. Oh! be as prudent and careful for the salvation of your souls, which endure for ever, as you are for the life of your bodies, which is but a vapour. Remember that you are sick of sin, sadly disordered by sundry corruptions, and must necessarily be cured before you go hence, and are no more seen. Remember that you must be regenerated and born again, or you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. And be not willing to trust such matters, which are of infinite and everlasting moment, to the management of any that comes next.

Now, that you may be the better able to make a right choice in this important particular, I will lay before you two or three of the distinguishing characters of a true minister. First, he has a tolerable stock of knowledge. Though not enough to explain all mysteries, or to answer every perplexing question, yet enough to make himself and his hearers wise unto salvation. He may be ignorant of many things, without much disparagement to himself, or prejudice to his people; but he must be acquainted with, and able to teach others, all that is necessary for them to know. Secondly, he has not only some understanding, but some experience also in the way of godliness. He has learned to subdue, in some measure, the pride of his nature, and to be humble in his own eyes, and not fond of applause from others. He has broke the impetuosity of his passion, and generally possesses his soul in patience; or if upon some very ungrateful and provoking usage, he cannot calm his temper, yet he can curb his

tongue; and though his spirit be ruffled, yet his words will be gentle. He is most commonly meek, after the manner of his blessed Master, and will always return blessing for cursing, according to his holy command. He has often looked into the shortness of time, and the length of eternity; he has weighed the greatness and richness of heaven, with the insignificant and despicable meanness of earth; and discovers such a mighty difference, as helps him to live above the world even while he is in it. So that he is no lover of filthy lucre, no hunter of carnal pleasure, but his hopes, his desires, and all his views of happiness, are hid with Christ in God. He is courteous and condescending, and will stoop with the utmost cheerfulness to the lowest person in his parish. He will be affable and kind, and seek to please, not himself, but his neighbours, for their good to edification.— But you must not expect to find him trifling or ludicrous; he will not preach to you on the Sunday, and play with you on the week-days, but carry the spirit of his sermons into his ordinary conversation. He will maintain an uniform gravity of behaviour, without suffering it to be frozen into moroseness, or thawed into levity. He will love his parishioners, not for their agreeable persons or amiable qualities, but because they are redeemed by the blood of Christ. It will be his business and constant endeavour, I had almost said his meat and drink, to set forward their salvation; that by their being made meet for the inheritance of saints in light, his crucified Lord might see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. He will never forget the importunate request of his Saviour, but those winning and commanding words, Feed my sheep, feed my lambs, will be engraven upon the tables of his heart. To fulfil this earnest request, and execute this last charge of his dearest Redeemer, will be the fixed and invariable scope of all his designs. If at any time he hits this desirable mark, by bringing home to the fold any that have gone astray, he will be as glad as one that findeth spoils. To see the people of his care persisting in profaneness, sensuality, and an unconverted state, will be the greatest grief that he feels; but to see his children walking in the truth, mortifying their evil affections, and growing up in goodness as the calves of the stall, this will be his joy and crown of rejoicing; better to him than thousands of silver and gold. It is his work to win souls; and, by the former of these

qualifications he is fitted for it, by the latter he is wholly devoted to it. And, in order to prosecute it with the greater success, he will first take heed to himself that his life be a fair and beautiful transcript of his doctrine, such as may remind men of, and be daily reinforcing his instructions. He will not bind the yoke upon their shoulders, till he has wore it himself; and should the paths of religion prove never so thorny, he will go first, and beat the way. As far as human infirmities permit, he will strive to be unblameable and irreproveable, that he may renew the apostle's challenge, Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ. Secondly, his preaching will be plain: full of such useful sense as may be edifying to the better learned, and yet delivered in so easy a manner as may be intelligible to the ignorant. It will not only be plain, but powerful also, if preceding prayers and tears, if words coming warm from the heart, and accompanied with an ardent desire of being attended to; if to feel himself what he speaks, and so long that it may be felt by others, can make it such, he will declare the whole will of God, without withholding or mincing any. Be the truth never so disagreeable, contrary to your profits, or contrary to your pleasures, you will be sure to hear it. He will indeed show it in as lovely a light, and make it as palatable as he can, but nothing will prevail upon him to disguise it.— Thirdly, he will not confine his teaching to God's day or house, but will exercise his care of you every day, and will bring it home to your own houses, whether you invite him or no. He will frequently visit you, and for the same end as he meets you at church. Now, shall you like this part of his duty, or bid him welcome when he comes on such an errand? Nay, he will think himself bound to proceed farther, and to inquire into the state of your souls, and your proceedings in your families; whether you are competently furnished with saving knowledge, and are careful to increase it daily, by allowing a daily portion of your time for reading the scriptures? what virtues you are deficient in, what vices you are subject to? what evil tempers, what vile affections, what unruly passions are predominant in you, and want to be suppressed! whether your children are catechised, and your servants instructed? whether you are constant in family-worship, and at your closet-devotions? how you spend the Sabbath, whether you squander it away in impertinent visits, idle,



chat, or foolish jesting; or whether you consecrate it to the better exercises of prayer, praise, holy discourse, reading, and meditation? These, and other points of the like nature, he will examine into, and exhort you to amend what is amiss, no less than encourage you to persevere in that which is good. Nor will he exhort you once or twice only, but again and again, and hardly leave off till he has won your consent. In things that relate to himself, he will be easily said nay; but when the great God insists upon obedience, and a blessed immortality will be lost by disobedience, he will be instant in season, and out of season, he will solicit with unwearied applications the important cause, and press you to perform your duty; as the poor widow importuned the unjust judge to avenge her of her adversary, he will add to his exhortations reproofs. His eye will be open, and his ears attentive to what passes in his parish; and when any one walks disorderly, he will meet him as *Elijah did Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 20.* with a rebuke in his mouth. 'This I can promise that he will not rail at, nor accost you with reproachful words; but he will certainly set before you the things that you have done. He will not defame you behind your backs; but whether you be rich or poor, whether you be pleased with it or not, he will bear in mind the commandment of the Lord, and show his people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins, *Isa. lviii. 1.* He will tell you with tenderness, but yet with plainness, that such courses are a sad and too sure a proof, that grace has not had its proper work on your souls, that ye are carnal, and have not the Spirit of Christ. So that a true minister of the gospel will be a constant inspector of your actions, a faithful monitor of your duty, and an impartial reprove of your offences. He will guide you by his counsel, and animate you by his example, and bless you by his prayers. If you be willing and obedient, he will conduct you safely through a troublesome and naughty world, and bring you to the land of everlasting felicity; but if you be perverse and obstinate, he will be a standing terror to your consciences here, and a swift witness against you hereafter; he will be the unhappy means of increasing your present guilt, and aggravating your future account, and of making it more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, in the day of judgment, than for you.

And now, my kind and dear friends, are you, upon se-

cond thoughts, desirous of having such a pastor placed amongst you? shall you be glad to have the aforementioned vigilance and diligence exerted in the holy function? Can you willingly submit to an oversight so narrow, to admonitions so incessant, to corrections so close and particular? If, after due consideration, you are willing, give me leave to inform you how you may procure such a man of God to come unto you, and take up his abode with you. He is an exceeding great and precious blessing to any people; too precious to be purchased with money, and is the free gift of God; so that the way to obtain him is to address yourselves to Heaven, and make supplication to the Almighty. What cannot prayer, fervent and believing prayer, do? I scarcely know any thing that is above its power, or beyond its reach. Prayer has locked up the clouds, and opened them again, made the earth as iron, and the heavens as brass; prayer has arrested the sun in his race, and made the moon stand still in her march, and reversed the perpetual decree; prayer has fetched down angels from above, and raised up the dead from beneath, and done many wonderful works. In like manner, prayer will get for you an useful and worthy teacher; if he be ever so far off, this will bring him near; if he be never so averse, this will over-rule his inclination. Do you doubt of this? I own you would have good reason if you had nothing but my word to support it; but what if God, who cannot lie, has testified, and given you assurance of the same? Why, then, I hope ye will be no longer faithless, but believing. Hear, therefore, what he himself hath said by his own beloved Son: "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find," Matth. vii. 7. Again he saith, "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it," John xiv. 14. Here you see the Almighty has passed his word, and he, to whom all things are possible, has pawned his veracity, that he will not deny you the request of your lips. And dare you not trust the All-powerful? Can you have a better security than his, whose title is faithful and true? The divine promises are all immutable, stronger than the strong mountains, and heaven and earth shall pass away, sooner than one jot or tittle of them shall pass unfulfilled. When you desire a pious and able minister, ye desire a good thing, such as will be for the honour and glory of God to grant. Therefore, encouraged by this, and confiding on his most sure promise, beg of the

Most High to give you a true pastor and shepherd for your souls; one that may love you like St. Paul, rule you like David, teach you like Samuel, and lead you like Joshua to the heavenly Canaan, that blessed and joyful country, where we all would be!

O God, great and glorious, infinite in thy wisdom, and uncontrollable in thy power! thy providence is over all thy works; thine eyes run to and fro through the earth, to behold the condition, and supply the wants of thy servants: Thou sentest Moses to deliver thy children out of Egypt, Philip to instruct the ignorant eunuch, and Peter to preach to the devout centurion. O blessed Lord, who art the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever, vouchsafe the same mercy to us of this parish, that we also may have a teacher come from God; grant us, O thou Giver of every good gift, a faithful shepherd for our souls, who may feed us in a green pasture, and lead us forth beside the waters of comfort; one that may be wholly devoted to thy service, and intent upon nothing but the due discharge of his important office, who may be a light to our paths by his godly directions, and as salt to our corrupting souls by his unblameable conversation. Let such a minister, we beseech thee, be placed over us, as will watch for our spiritual welfare, that will love us with an affectionate and parental tenderness, that will cherish us as a hen cherisheth her chickens under her wings; one that may be able, as well as willing, to instruct us in our duty, to whom thou hast revealed the wondrous things of thy law, and the glorious mysteries of thy gospel, whose lips may preserve knowledge, whose tongue may be continually dealing it out, and whose mouth may be unto us a well of life; whose discourses may be milk to the babes, meat to the strong, and medicine to the sick; who may have a skilful as well as a compassionate zeal, and know how to divide rightly the word of truth; who may be an example, as well as an exhorter, a pattern, as well as a preacher, of every charitable action, and every devout temper: under whose guidance we may walk in the ways of peace and piety, of meekness and humility, of righteousness and salvation; till we all come to the city of the living God, to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. O grant us such a priest, and clothe him with such qualifications, and make thy chosen people joyful. Hear us, most merciful



enlightening and purifying influences of his Spirit. Sure then, we who have such urgent and immediate need of them, shall not be backward to go, and with an humble earnestness seek them. I say immediate; for since our life is so uncertain, and we know not what a day may bring forth, we ought to get our work dispatched, and our accounts ready without delay. It is evening now I write this, and I cannot tell, whether this may not be the night, in which I am to hear that amazing cry, Behold the Bridegroom cometh. I intend to direct my letter to my dear sister —, and hope she will receive it safe; but have no certainty whether she be yet alive or no. For ought I know, her soul may be standing before the judgment-seat of Christ, and going to be fixed, if not already fixed, in an unchangeable eternal state; her body may be pale and cold, and stretched out in the coffin; my dear mamma and my brothers taking their last farewell, and giving her the parting kiss; the joiner just about to nail on the lid, and hide her face for ever from mortal view; nay, she may already have been carried upon men's shoulders, and committed to the dust, so that what I am inditing may find her in the grave: She may be sleeping in some church-yard that I know nothing of, among thousands of dead bodies, never to awake, never to rise, till the archangel's trumpet sounds, and the heavens are no more. The very imagination of this sudden change strikes a damp upon my heart; I hope it is not a presage of what has really happened; if it be, and if my dear sister is a departed spirit, I will henceforth labour to dress my soul with holiness, and that it may be ready to go forth at a minute's warning, and give her the meeting in another world. There, if my sister and I shall be found to have minded, above all things, the one thing needful, and to be full of heavenly, spiritual, and divine tempers, she will be to me better than a sister, and I shall be to her better than a loving and affectionate brother, &c.

## LETTER IX.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I RECEIVED your kind letter, and thank you for your affectionate wishes. I endeavour not to be behind-hand with my people in this exercise of love. You are always on my heart, and often, often mentioned in my prayers: Especially, that you may be partaker of the Holy Ghost, and feel all those saving convictions, which are described by our Lord, John xvi. 8, 9, 10, 11. That you be interested in the new covenant, and enjoy all these precious privileges which were purchased for us by our dying Saviour, and are recorded by his apostle, Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12.

Yesterday, in the evening, two gentlemen of the city came to visit me. Our conversation was such as I would have yours be; such as was suited (if God vouchsafe his blessing) to edify one another, and minister grace to the hearers. We talked of that infinitely condescending and gracious friend of sinners, who came from heaven on purpose to be crucified for us, and is returned unto heaven on purpose to intercede for us. The intercession of our blessed Lord was the chief subject of our discourse, and is a most comfortable article of our faith. Because

His intercession never ceases—He sitteth at the right hand of his Father in an abiding posture. Other high priests are removed by death; but he ever liveth to make intercession for us. We resign part of our time to sleep, and then lose all attention to our own interests; but he is the Keeper of Israel, who never slumbereth nor sleepeth. We too frequently forget our God, and neglect to carry on communion with him; but Christ has written our names, (worthless as they are) upon the palms of his hands; and a mother may forget her sucking child much sooner than he will discontinue his kind concern for the weakest believer.

His intercession always prevails. If Moses was heard, when he made supplication in behalf of Israel; if Job was not denied, when he petitioned for the pardon of his three friends; if Elijah's prayer entered into the ear of the Lord God of hosts, when he requested for rain upon the parched earth; surely God's dearly beloved Son will not be rejected

when he maketh intercession for the saints. The Father loves him, infinitely loves him, and therefore hears him. He has purchased whatever he asks, purchased it by his obedience and death, and therefore cannot but obtain his suit.

Perhaps you will inquire, What it is that Christ prays for? We are informed of this in John xvii. He prays that we may be kept from the evil that is in the world, verse 15. That we may be sanctified through the truth; sanctified through the word of scripture, verse 17. That we may be united to Christ, and have fellowship with the Father by faith, fellowship with one another by brotherly love, verse 21. That we may be made perfect in his righteousness, presented without spot through his blood, and, at last, be with him where he is, to behold his glory, and partake of his joy, verses 23, 24.

Should you be desirous of knowing whether you are in the number of those for whom Christ intercedes? You may determine this important point by the following questions. Do you value above all things the blessings for which Christ intercedes? Do you join your own repeated and earnest supplications to his intercession? And do you rely wholly upon Christ's unspeakable merits for the acceptance of all your prayers? If so, be not discouraged; Christ is your Advocate with the Father. He died for you on the cross, and pleads his meritorious oblations for you on his throne.

Is not this an inestimable blessing? If Hezekiah desired the prayers of Isaiah; if Darius desired the prayers of the godly Jews for himself and his sons, how should we rejoice in having the prayers of the exalted Jesus! If we are tempted, let this be our security, 1 John ii. 1. 2. If under apprehensions of death, or eternal judgment, let this be our consolation, Rom. viii. 33, 34.

I do not write out the scriptures, because I would have you look them out, or even write them out with your own hand. And may the blessed Spirit of God write them upon all our hearts! This will come to you, I hope, on Christmas eve. You will talk of this letter, and its contents, to your harvest-men. I should be glad to be with you, and converse, as we used to do, on Christ and the kingdom of heaven. None of my flock, I hope, will be filled with liquor, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. My kind love to your family, and all your neighbours; particularly to your brother William, whose letter I shall answer by the first opportunity.—Yours, &c.

## LETTER X.

*Stoke-Abbey, June 19, 1738.*

DEAR SISTER,

**WILL** you accept of another letter from your loving brother, who loves your better part, and would fain be helpful to your immortal interests? I think I wrote to you when at London; I know not what acceptance that letter found, but I can assure you it meant nothing but good, spiritual benefit, and everlasting advantage to you.

I hope my — and — are more easy with regard to me and my welfare. My disorder is a languour and faintness, a feebleness, and inability for action, which is increased or lessened according to the various temperature of the weather. I bless God Almighty I am not deprived of my appetite to food, neither are my bones chastened with pain; so that many impute all my complaints to a hippish and over-timorous turn of mind, to a distempered imagination, rather than a disordered body.

I write this in a pleasure-house of Mr. —, situate upon a high cliff, on the very edge of the sea. On one side a vast tract of land extends itself, finely diversified by stately trees, floating corn, and pasturage for cattle. On the other side rolls the great and wide sea, where go the ships, and where is that leviathan, whom the Almighty Creator has made to take his pastime therein. Which way soever I look, I meet with footsteps of the divine immensity: I view thy great and marvellous works, O Lord God omnipotent: I am encountered with ten thousand arguments to fear thy tremendous power, and love thy diffusive goodness. O! how safe are they who have so infinite and mighty a Being for their guard! how happy are they who have so inexhaustibly rich a God for their portion! But how wretched, dear sister, how miserably and emphatically wretched, who have such a one for their enemy and avenger! Oh! how can our feeble frame, that shrinks at a little light affliction, that is but for a moment—how can it bear the never-ending vengeance of that prodigious arm which stretched out the heavens, laid the foundations of the earth, and poured out the waters of the mighty deep!



I have been about twenty or twenty-six miles into Cornwall, and seen wondrous workmanship of the all-creating God; ragged rocks, roaring seas, frightful precipices, and dreadfully-steep hills. At Biddeford, a market-town, about fourteen miles off, I am pretty well known, and am a little esteemed. It is strange to tell, but let it be to the glory of God's free and undeserved goodness, though I am worthy of shame and universal contempt, yet I find favour and good understanding almost wherever I go.

M——'s house is situate in a fine vale. It is an ancient structure, built for the use of religious recluses, and has an antique, grave, and solemn aspect: before it is a neat spot of ground, set apart for the use of a garden, enriched with fruits, and beautified with flowers. This leads into a curious sort of artificial wilderness, made of elms and limes, planted in rows, cut into form, and uniting their branches. In the midst is a fountain large enough to swim in, and a little engine playing the waters. On each side are arbours for shade, in various parts seats for rest; on the right hand runs parallel to it a clear purling brook replenished with trout; on the left a thick grove hanging from the side of a hill: the one serves for a watery mound, the other is a leafy shelter from the north wind; and both, I think, greatly ornamental. This, you will say, is pleasant; but how unworthy to be compared with those blissful mansions fitting up for the righteous in the heaven of heavens! This, and if there be any other spot a thousand times more delicate, is no better than a howling wilderness, if compared with the regions of paradise. I wish my dear sister would earnestly seek for God's grace to draw off her affections from earthly delights, and fix them there, where real, substantial, and eternal joys are to be found, viz. on the blissful vision of God, and the fulness of joy that is in his presence for evermore. Your, &c.

## LETTER XI.

*Biddeford, Dec. 10, 1740.*

DEAR SISTER,

THOUGH I am so backward in my compliments, I am most hearty in my wishes, that your spouse and yourself may enjoy abundance of happiness in the married state. I congratulate late, but I shall ever pray that you may find blessings twisted with the matrimonial bands; and not only live lovingly together as one flesh, but live holily together, as fellow-heirs of the grace of life.

I hope you will both remember the eternal world which must very shortly receive you: That, ere long, the nuptial bed must be resigned for a lodging in the grave; and the ornaments of a sparkling bride be exchanged for the dressings of death. And if, under the frequent view of these serious truth, you study to further each other in faith and holiness—then will you be true help-meets one to the other; then will you come together, not for the worse, but for the better; then may you trust, that when death shall dissolve the union below, Christ Jesus will bid it commence again above, and continue to endless ages in the midst of unspeakable delight.

Please to present my humble service to the several Mr. —, and Mrs. —, that still remain in your town; to Mrs. —, and her daughter; Mr. —, and his spouse, and Mr. —. Remember me also in the kindest manner to your poor neighbours, particularly those who have Mr. —'s books. May God Almighty give them grace to make a proper and practical use of them! May he sanctify the attentive and diligent reading of them, to increase in godliness, and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

When you see my Collingtree relations and acquaintance, salute them affectionately in my name. I suppose you will soon see my — and —; present my duty to them. I should rejoice to see them again in the flesh, before any of us go hence, and are no more seen. May the Father of our spirits, and the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, our righteousness, prepare us for a happy meeting in the regions of glory, and for the blissful vision of his own adorable self.

There is at Biddeford, and has been for a considerable

time, a townsman of mine, a middle-aged man, born at —; his name is —. I little thought to find such a person in these remote parts. It puts me in mind of heaven, where people of every kindred and tongue, of all nations and languages, will form one general and glorious assembly. May you and I, dear sister, one day be numbered with those children of God, and have our lot, our delightful and everlasting lot, among the saints.—I am, &c.



## LETTER XII.

June 2, 1747.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

CAN you accept the will for the deed? It was in my heart, long before this, to have made you my best acknowledgments; and not in my heart only, but actually attempted. In Buckinghamshire I remembered my kind and obliging friend, and was with delight set down to give vent to my grateful thoughts. But company on a sudden coming in arrested my pen, and, engaging me till I returned from that place, prevented the execution of my design. Now, Sir, my heartiest thanks for your welcome assistance, desire your acceptance: And if the utmost sincerity can atone for the delay, my conscious heart assures me they will not be rejected. My father is wonderfully recovered. Had he lived in the times of superstition, for ought I know, his uncommon disorder might have been ascribed to witchcraft, and his speedy recovery passed current for a miracle. The grave seemed to have opened her mouth for him. We thought him to be on the very brink of death.

*Quam pæne sùrvæ regna Proserpinæ,  
Et judicantem viderit Æacum,  
Sedesque descriptas piorum!—*

But now God has turned, and refreshed him; yea, and brought him from the deep of the earth again. He lives, and

regains his strength daily. Last Sunday he read prayers in his church, and intends next Sunday to fill the pulpit.

Mrs. —, I hope, is very well; to whom I beg my humble service may be acceptable. Your dear little ones too, the olive-plants about your table, I trust, are in a flourishing state. May the good Lord fulfil his precious promise to them, and the children of your honoured neighbour. May he pour his Spirit into your seed, and his blessing upon your offspring, that they may grow up (in knowledge and grace) as willows by the watercourses. I am just now going to our visitation, held at Northampton. I shall appear as a stranger in our Jerusalem! knowing few, and known by fewer. Methinks there is something august and venerable in a meeting of the clergy; especially if one looks upon them as so many agents for the invisible God, and envoys from the court of heaven. I hope to be put in mind of that awful day, when the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and Bishop of souls, will make his entrance in the clouds of heaven. Then, at that great, final, and decisive entrance, may my dear friend receive the approbation of his Judge. May he then be rewarded, for his kind offices to myself and others, in everlasting honour and joy.—I am, &c.



### LETTER XIII.

*Biddesford, July 7, 1741.*

DEAR SISTER,

AFTER a very sultry journey, I arrived safe at Biddesford. Here I have been one whole week. At Bath and Bridgewater I made a considerable stay. I tarried at each place a couple of nights; was entertained with abundance of civility.

There is a general prospect of a plenteous harvest: The valleys stand so thick with corn, as makes the traveller rejoice, and the husbandman sing. There is great want and scarcity of many things, but there is plenty of fish. Now

the dry land is so barren, the waters yield the larger increase. It is observed, to the glory of God's good providence, that now flesh is so dear, fish is uncommonly cheap. Thus graciously does the Almighty, when he locks up one, open another fountain of his beneficence. During my absence from Biddeford, a lusty man, in the prime and vigour of life, was carried off by my father's disorder. It is therefore a distinguished mercy that our father has enjoyed, such as has been withheld from others, while it has been vouchsafed to him.

I am now far from my dear relations. Friends I have indeed, but not one of my kindred near me. O! that God may be my guide, my protector and my portion here and for ever. If the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, be my Shepherd, I shall lack nothing. Unworthy, altogether unworthy of such an inestimable favour, I desire to lie at the feet of his free unmerited grace; seeking what he is ready to give, though I, alas! am most undeserving. And surely we have good reason to hope, and the very best encouragement to seek. For if he gave his life, and spilt his blood for us, will he not much rather give us pardon for our sins, and justification through his righteousness?

I hope my brother — is in perfect health. I wish him a seasonable and kindly harvest; and wish you both abundance of happiness;—and am, dear sister,

His and yours, &c.



## LETTER XIV.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I FIND you have had Mr. M—— among you lately. Many, I hope, have found abundant benefit from his preaching, and you in particular. He is a shining light, a choice and illustrious ambassador of Jesus Christ. What a savour of his divine Master does he shed abroad whenever he preaches! such a savour, as many corruptions cannot overcome,

nor all the world suppress. Biddeford, I hope has experienced this favour. Methinks I now see him in the pulpit, and hear him lifting up his compassionate voice like a trumpet, and proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord. Methinks I see him displaying the gospel-standard, and his tongue touched from the heavenly altar, inviting sinners to flock under his shadow; crying, Come, ye simple ones, whom Satan has beguiled, and Christ shall give you light; come ye wicked ones, whom Satan has enslaved, and the gracious Redeemer shall set you free; come, ye that have been righteous in your own eyes, forsake this refuge of lies, and enter into the ark before the rains descend, and the floods come, which will sweep away every false hope: O! lean not upon a broken reed; build not upon the sinking sand; but upon the Rock of ages, the foundation laid in Zion by the hand of heaven itself. Come unto Jesus, ye ruined and undone sinners, for he has a tender heart that is ever open to receive you, and an arm that is omnipotent to save you. Indeed, my friends, those that know Christ's name will seek no other Saviour, nor desire any other good; all their bones will cry out, Lord, unto whom shall we go, but unto thee? thou only hast the words of eternal life. They that know Christ's free goodness will put their whole trust in him, and seek no other way to the Father of mercy but through his merit.— This is the only claim they have to make for their acceptance, Christ died; but for whom did he die, my dear friends? He gave himself a ransom for all; he was lifted up upon the cursed tree, and out of his side came a fountain of blood and water, wherein every sinner may bathe, and be made clean. The awakened sons of Adam, that feel their miseries, see a fulness of merit in one drop of that blood, sufficient to atone for the guilt of ten thousand worlds. This fills them with great comfort, although they are vile sinners. What though they are loathsome beggars, taken from the dunghill of uncleanness, that are but now returning from the highways and hedges of every abominable practice? What though they are as beasts before God, very dogs, like that poor Syrophenician woman? yet Christ's saving kindness is so great and unbounded, that he casteth out none who come to him. Here is consolation for the trembling sinner; though he has not a grain of worthiness in himself, yet his Lord has infinite treasures of unmerited grace. They who believe that Christ

shed his precious blood for guilty sinners, will cheerfully put their trust in this atonement for pardon. They will say, O! they will often say, with gratitude glowing in their breasts, and tears in their eyes. Be it that my sins are of the deepest crimson dye, and more in number than the hairs of my head, yet the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, and washeth a filthy polluted conscience whiter than snow. With him there is no scanty, but plenteous redemption. Be my debts ever so great, ten thousand times ten thousand talents, yet the agonies of the once slaughtered Lamb has paid it to the very uttermost farthing. They who know his righteousness will put their trust in it alone for justification. If I had the righteousness of a saint, says one, O how happy should I be? If I had the righteousness of an angel, says another, I should fear no evil. But I am bold to say, that the poorest sinner that believes in Christ has a righteousness infinitely more excellent than either saints or angels. For if the law asks for sinless perfection, it is to be found in my divine Surety. If the law requires an obedience that may stand before the burning eye of God, behold it is in Jesus my Mediator. Should the strictest justice arraign me, I remit them to my dying and obedient Immanuel; with him the Father is always well pleased; in him the believer is complete.— They who know Christ's power will put their trust in him for sanctification of heart, and newness of life. Though sin is rooted in my soul, and rivetted in my constitution, yet Christ can purge it out. Though it were twisted with every nerve of my flesh, yet he can make the rough tempers smooth, and the crooked dispositions straight; the vile affections, like legions of devils, he can root out, and fill every heart with the pure love of God. To which happy state of soul may both you and I be brought while here below; that we may be made meet to ascend to the habitation of God, where nothing unclean can enter. I am yours sincerely, &c.

## LETTER XV.

[TO HIS FATHER.]

*Biddesford, October 1, 1742.*

REV. AND HON. SIR,

**YOUR** last, containing the melancholy account of the death of both my aunts, I received. I hope they died in the Lord, and sleep in the bosom of Jesus; and then, truly, they are the happy persons, and we the objects of pity.— They rest, and have cast anchor in the harbour; whereas we are still beating on the ocean, and tossed in the storm. If we consider things impartially, this world is our grave; nor do we really live, till we burst the fleshy prison, and get beyond the visible skies.

In the grave is darkness. It is called the shadow of death. And what else is this wretched world? what but a state of gloominess? a valley of the thickest darkness? where poor mortals grope in spiritual ignorance; and wander up and down, not seeing the things that belong to their peace.

In the grave, and among the tombs, we look for phantoms and apparitions. And what else do we meet with here below? A thousand sorts of happiness present themselves to our wishes, but are unsubstantial and fantastical all. They are a gay delusion, and mock our expectations, as one of those vanishing forms would baulk our embraces.

The grave is the land where all things are forgotten. The ideas of friendship are obliterated, and the dearest relatives are remembered no more. And is not this too true a description of our present state? Do we not unaccountably forget Jesus Christ, our Almighty friend, and everlasting glory, our invaluable heritage? Where is the man that remembers his bleeding Saviour on his bed, and thinks upon him when he is waking? No; the Redeemer's inconceivable love, and the precious benefits of his passion, are buried in a deep oblivion. This world then of darkness, apparitions, and forgetfulness, is the grand dormitory; flesh and blood the tomb of our immortal minds,

Nascentes morimur.

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My mother tells me, you have been much indisposed ; I shall rejoice to hear that you are better. Sickness and afflictions are God's call, they are divine admonitions, and warn us not to be fond of the world, but set our affections on things above. May the blessed Jesus make them effectual to our souls !

I wish I had any news to write, that you can understand or relish. The small-pox is marking many, and carrying off some among us ; it is a privilege of no small value to be past that infectious disorder ; I have often thought that it is too lively an emblem of the condition of our souls, by corrupt nature and evil practice. So polluted, so loathsome is our better part in the eye of uncreated parity, till we are washed, till we are cleansed in redeeming blood. May we earnestly long to be washed in that fountain, opened in our Saviour's side, for sin and for uncleanness.

See how our judgments and inclinations alter in process of time ! I once thought I should make less use of the Spectators than you ; but now I believe the reverse of this is true, for we read out or more of those elegant and instructive papers every morning at breakfast ; they are served up with our tea, according to their original design. We reckon our repast imperfect without a little of Mr. Addison's or Mr. Steele's company. I wish Miss Becky K—— an increase of happiness in the change of her state ; marriage should augment our joys, and diminish our sorrows. My humble service attends Mrs. K——, Mr. C——'s family, and Mr. V——. My love to my brother, and to yourself, concludes all at present to be communicated by,

Dear Sister,

Your affectionate brother,

JAMES HERVEY.

## LETTER XVII.

*Bath, August 27, 1743.*

REV. SIR,

**SUNDAY** last I happened not to be at the Abbey-church in the afternoon. But conversing with a gentleman who was one of your auditors, I desired to have a summary account of your sermon. And truly he gave me such an account as both astonished and grieved me. You dignified worldly prosperity at so extraordinary a rate, and almost canonized the prosperous man. On the other hand, you villified the glorious Jesus in so scandalous a manner, and set the incarnate Godhead to one of the most ignoble and abominable offices. This made me encourage my friend to draw his pen, and send you a word of admonition. And when he declined the task, I could not forbear undertaking it myself. For it would be unkind to you, Sir, to perceive you under such grievous mistakes, and not to warn you of the error of your ways. Nor would it be less unfaithful to your Master, and my Master, to be informed of such preaching, and suffer it to pass current without any animadversion.

If I misrepresent you in any particular, I am ready to retract. And if I have truth on my side, and you, Reverend Sir, have spoken unworthy of your sacred office, have dishonoured the divine Redeemer, and perverted his everlasting gospel, I trust you will also be so ingenuous as to condemn that offensive sermon to the flames, and such doctrines to silence and darkness. For I assure you, it is from no ill-natured spirit of criticism, no moroseness of temper, or fondness for contradiction, but from a sincere concern for the interest of true religion, and the honours of our common Lord, that I take leave to suggest the following hints.

I think you first exhorted people to rejoice, when their circumstances were affluent, and their worldly affairs prosperous; you enforced this palatable advice by the precepts of scripture; and lest it should not be received with a proper welcome, you further urged it upon your hearers by the example of our blessed Saviour. In opposition to this strain of teaching, permit me to observe,

1. That worldly prosperity is no sufficient cause for a Christian to rejoice.
2. That it is often one of the sorest evils that can befall a person.
3. To sketch out the true nature of spiritual prosperity ; or discover what is that solid ground for rejoicing, which the oracles of God recommend.

First, worldly prosperity is no sufficient cause for rejoicing, because worldly things are empty and unsatisfactory. That which is lighter than vanity itself cannot possibly give substantial joy. If we build for contentment on sublunary things, we rear our edifice upon the sinking sand. You can no more bring satisfaction out of any thing created, than you can carve an image out of the rising smoke, or fill your belly with the east wind. Those that rejoice only (and you, dear Sir, assigned no other cause for rejoicing,) because they have abundance of earthly things richly to enjoy, are like some bewildered and benighted traveller pierced with cold, dripping with wet, that leaps for joy because he finds a glow-worm under the hedge. Alas ! this is nowise able to direct his wandering feet, to light him through the dismal gloom, or to warm his benumbed limbs ; no more than it is able to supply the place of the sun, and dart its faint glimmer through the universe. The pleasures which a superior fortune furnish out, O ! how soon do they become stale, and pall upon the appetite ! How easily may a thousand accidents snatch them from our embrace, or dash them to pieces in our arms ! How certainly must we forsake them in a very little time ; and when we have taken a few more pleasant morsels, a few delicious draughts, eat and drink again no more for ever ! And what a wretched disproportionate delight is this for an immortal mind, that is to survive the dissolution of the globe ; that is to live unnumbered ages, when all that our eyes have seen is passed away and gone ?

Again, worldly prosperity is no sufficient cause for rejoicing, because a person may possess this, and have neither faith nor grace. There is no manner of connexion between faith and wealth. The poor frequently receive the gospel, while numbers of the rich reject their own happiness. And without faith it is impossible to please God ; it is unreason-

ble and unwarrantable to rejoice. The believer, indeed, has a permission, has a privilege, yea, has a patent for rejoicing. The Christian has all joy and peace in believing. All you see here is a monopoly, faith has engrossed this precious commodity. None is to be procured but from her. And as for grace, talents of gold may be in the coffers, and not one grain of grace in the heart. Those that call whole lordships their own cannot, perhaps, say that they have received the Holy Ghost. And, while they are destitute of this divine principle, I can call them nothing but wretches. You may add Illustrious, Right Honourable, and Worshipful if you please; but still they are miserable wretches, unless Christ, the hope of glory, be formed in their souls. The Holy Ghost, you know, Sir, is called the Comforter, because it is his amiable office to administer consolation to his people.— He giveth joy, and who can make sadness? But alas! if he withdraw his benign influences, who or what can create satisfaction? Silver shoes may as well charm away the racking pains of a goutified foot, or golden dust quench the thirst of a parched throat, as any worldly abundance, as all worldly plenty, beget real joy, without the communications of the comforting Spirit. You forget, Sir, the prayers which you daily offer up in the congregation. In them you acknowledge that the world cannot give peace: and if not peace, surely not joy: if not the fruit, surely not the blossom.— There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. And all are wicked, who are void of faith, and unrenewed by grace. All run counter to the divine declaration, who bid such persons rejoice, though they should have every kind of prosperity that a carnal heart can wish.

Once more, worldly prosperity is no sufficient cause for rejoicing, because a man may possess this, and be a child of wrath notwithstanding. Providence often scatters temporary things among the tents of his enemies. They have children at their desire, and leave the rest of their substance for their babes. These are husks which the swine are permitted to eat. God's dearest servants, those who are heirs of glory, are frequently seen to be without any share of them, while the most abandoned sinners have them to the full. Lazarus has not a house to lay his head in, while the voluptuary dwells in apartments ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion. Lazarus has not enough to purchase one morsel

of meat, must be beholden to charity for the least crumb of provision, while his hard-hearted neighbour drinks wine in bowls, and eats the choicest of the flock; is clothed in purple and fine linen, and fareth sumptuously every day. Who then can rationally rejoice in that which is no pledge of the divine acceptance, which carries with it no proof of our reconciliation to that eternal Majesty, whose smile is inconceivable bliss, whose frown is insupportable woe? A wealthy and successful person, if he be considerate as well as fortunate, must go home from such a sermon, arguing in this manner: 'The preacher solicits me to rejoice in my worldly goods: but how can I find complacency in such perishing possessions, when perhaps, I may be an outcast from heaven, and have no place in that kingdom which endureth for ever? how can I take pleasure in these dainties which replenish my table, when perhaps the heavy wrath of God may fall upon me, while the meat is yet in my mouth? This sumptuous furniture, this glittering equipage, these delicious treats, how can I take real satisfaction in them, when, for ought I know, a hand-writing upon the wall may be denouncing my doom? If God would lift up the light of his countenance upon me, if I was sweetly ascertained of his good-will, then I could rejoice unfeignedly. But as for these large revenues, and tides of success, that are so much extolled by the preacher, they may prove like the rich pastures that fatten the ox for the knife.'

Will you have patience with me, Sir, if I proceed to prove,

2. That worldly prosperity is so far from being an adequate cause for our rejoicing, that it is frequently one of the sorest and most mischievous evils? This, I am sure, was the opinion of Archbishop Usher. That most renowned and excellent prelate, in his younger days, had a continued series of prosperity; health impaired by no attacks of sickness; credit sullied by no breath of scandal; and success interrupted by no disappointment or disastrous turn. And what emotion did this occasion in that devout and judicious person's mind? did his heart dance within him for joy; did he bless himself on this behalf? No—but he was under sad apprehensions, lest God had forsaken him, and given him over to a reprobate course. He feared, that his heavenly Father, because he spared the rod, hated the child; that not being

brought under the discipline of providential correction, he was a bastard, and not a son of the Lord Almighty. How diametrically opposite was this way of thinking to your way of preaching! And, whether it was not a very sober and just method of thinking, let the following considerations determine.

Worldly prosperity is apt to attach men to earthly things. When success swells their sails, and all proceeds according to their wish, O! how prone are we to disregard Jesus, and everlasting ages! Many are immoderately fond of the world, because they have swam sweetly down the stream of prosperity, who probably would have been weaned from its delights, and indifferent to its goods, in case they had toiled upon the craggy cliffs of some intervening adversity. When they walk always upon roses, and meet with no thorns in their paths, the consequence is an acquiescence in their present station, and remissness in seeking the joys of an invisible world; a contentment in the things that are seen, without any aspiration after the things that are not seen, is the most unhappy condition imaginable, and is generally the offspring of worldly prosperity; and when this worldly prosperity is so highly rated in the calculations of the pulpit, what other effect can possibly attend such lectures, but to glue our affections more closely, and rivet them more inseparably to these trifles of a day?

Again, worldly prosperity is frequently a mischievous evil, because it is apt to make men proud. They come in no misfortune like other folks, says the psalmist, and this is the cause that they are so holden with pride. Prosperity is often a luscious poison. It blots and puffs men up with an over-weening opinion of themselves. It intoxicates the mind, and makes it drunk with self-conceit. It prompts people to idolize themselves, and contemn others. The intolerable arrogance of the Babylonish monarch, what was it owing to but his vast and uninterrupted successes? He measured his merit by the length of his purse, and challenged a veneration proportionable to the extent of his dominions. This vile, rank weed thrives in the hot-beds of honour, wealth and carnal pleasure; whereas it might never reared its head in the colder climate of tribulation or scantiness of circumstances.

Once more, worldly prosperity is frequently a pernicious evil, because it renders men carnally secure. It case-hardens

the mind against all the threatenings, and makes it deaf to the invitations of heavenly wisdom. It is a stupifying potion, and lulls the soul into a fatal forgetfulness of everlasting things. Those that were lusty and strong in our Saviour's days joined with the impious multitude in despising the veiled Divinity. But those who were diseased in their bodies, or disordered in their minds, with eagerness fell prostrate at his sacred feet, and implored his healing hand. *Periissent nisi periissent.* You cannot but have observed various proofs of this remark in the course of your ministry; you must have seen many persons that rejected all your counsel, and would none of your reproof, while they washed their steps in butter, and the rock poured them out rivers of oil. But how teachable were these once refractory worldlings—how willing to hear the consolations of the gospel, when their sensible delights were perished and gone? How desirous to be informed of a happiness in the heavens, which fadeth not, when their carnal pleasures had made themselves wings, and were flown away? In the gayety of their health, and abundance of their plenty, they were settled upon the lees of supineness. But when the scene was shifted, they cried out with vehemence, What must we do to be saved? This I myself have frequently remarked in the short compass of my experience. Men who were like an iron sinew in their flourishing condition have been impressible as melting wax in a reverse of fortune.

We see, then, that the prosperity of this world is always dangerous, often pernicious, and too frequently destructive. It yields pleasures that infatuate—sweets that are impoisoned—delights that stupify; insomuch that a Heathen could say, *Nihil infelicius illo, cui nihil infelix contigit.*

Here it may be asked, Are we to take no comfort in our portion on earth? must we become gloomy and melancholy, and go mourning all our days? Far, far from it. Religion allows us, religion enables us, religion requires us to be joyful: Yea, it gives its faithful adherents to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. But then it is founded on a principle vastly superior to that which you, Sir, thought fit to single out and display. It springs from a source, and rests on a basis, that has no manner of dependence on worldly circumstances. Which reminds me of another point I am engaged to clear up, viz. . . .



The true nature of scriptural prosperity. The scripture is a spiritual scheme. Spiritual goods are what it chiefly recommends, and from spiritual evils it chiefly deters. Christ's words are spiritual; tending to make men not carnally minded, but spiritually minded; to render them spiritual in their understandings, their affections, their conduct. Inasmuch that one need not scruple to affirm constantly, That the holy scripture never calls that state a state of prosperity, which is not grounded on the favour of God; nor ever encourages people to rejoice in any thing till they are—reconciled to God—interested in Christ—and renewed by the Holy Ghost; which, I think, constitute the scriptural prosperity; I am sure are the ground-work of all happiness.—First, for reconciliation to God. His favour is better than life. Life itself is worthless, and consequently all its enjoyments, without this prime fundamental blessing. For this cause the Prince of peace bled to death, that the hand-writing of guilt might be blotted out; that the wrath of God might be appeased, and that we, who were enemies, might be brought near through his blood. This is the door to all good. Enter in by this gate, O ye sons of men, or else you will inevitably miscarry in your search after felicity. If you seek for bliss, and bottom not your expectations on this rock, you are sure to be disappointed of your hope. I can no more have true comfort in my possession, till I have redemption through my Redeemer's passion, than the unfortunate captive could rejoice in the royal banquet that was before him, when a ponderous sword, edged and unsheathed, was hanging by a slender thread, and shaking every moment over his head.—An interest in Christ. This is another pillar to support our felicity. Therefore our blessed Lord, directing us in the way of our true good, says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." The everlasting kingdom of heaven as the end, and the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ as the way. Till the one is our actual possession, and the other our certain reversion, we may look for real satisfaction, but shall find none. Apply to all the creatures, rifle all their charms, taste all their sweets, you will perceive them to be altogether lighter than vanity itself, without an union with Christ, and an establishment in his merits. Renovation of mind is another ingredient of the prosperity delineated in scripture. Till the soul be sanctified, it is in a state of grie-

vous disorder ; like a body, all whose bones are out of joint. And oh ! what joy can be tasted in such a condition ? Till divine grace have the ascendant within us, till the kingdom of God be set up in our hearts, we are in bondage to corruption. Vile affections domineer over us. The devil and our own lusts play the tyrant in our breasts. We are like slaves under a galling yoke, and like lepers under a noisome distemper. Therefore the Psalmist says, When I awake up after thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it. Till thy image be reinstamped upon my heart, I never expect to see good. While we are in the bond of iniquity, we must infallibly be in the gall of bitterness.

This is the prosperity celebrated in the scriptures. Of this every believer is a partaker ; and you will please to remember, that every exhortation to rejoicing, which we meet with in those inspired books, are addressed to such persons only. They give not the least invitation to any one, no, nor the least licence to rest satisfied, much less to rejoice, till they are brought into such circumstances of reconciliation with heaven, and renovation of mind. Nor have you, Sir, any warrant to say to yourself, or your people, Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry, because thou hast much good laid up for many years. This is the epicure's creed. The lively oracles bear their testimony against such conclusions. They style all the unregenerate, fools : and to such, worldly abundance is not matter for mirth, but matter of ruin. For the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. Be they grand as Nebuchadnezzar, in as much affluence as Ahasuerus, honoured as Herod was by the applauding multitude, yet every page of scripture says to them, as Jehu to Joram's messenger, What hast thou to do with peace ? And however some smooth-tongued preachers may flatter and cajole them in their pomp, however they may prophecy smooth things, and solicit them to rejoice on such a footing as the Lord has not made a ground for rejoicing, yet an apostle bespeaks them in very different language : Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl. The teacher sent from God has other tidings to tell them, Wo unto you that are rich, that are full, for ye have your consolation, ye shall hunger hereafter. And, in another world, they may hear this awful admonition sounding in their ears, Son remember that thou, in thy lifetime, receivedst thy good things ; thy good things, those which thou accountedst

good, not that really were good, but only appeared so to thy distempered judgment and vitiated taste.

Surely, Sir, it must have been perfectly prudent, or rather absolutely necessary, to caution your audience against so fatal a mistake; especially since they consist of the gay, the grand, the pleasurable. A vigilant minister would certainly give them to understand that wealth and plenty is by no means the prosperity which the Spirit of God commends; that joy, without the loving-kindness of the Lord, is a mere chimera; that none are entitled to this medicine of life but those who can lay their hand upon their hearts, and say, with a faith unfeigned, My sins are all forgiven through the atonement of the slaughtered Lamb; my peace is made with the eternal God, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ dwells in me. This is that which justifies, which produces joy. Then, indeed, not till then, the wise man's advice may be thy practice, Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth both thee and thy works. Then thou mayest take comfort in thy earthly accommodations, as so many little appendages of thy bliss; not as the essence which constitutes it, but as the cement which serves to fill up some little interstices, and renders the whole somewhat more compact. And even, in this case, our blessed Master (who bids his disciples not to rejoice because the devils were subject unto them, but because their names were written in heaven) would probably caution us not to rejoice because we have all worldly things copiously to enjoy, but because we are pardoned, we are justified, we are sanctified.

Upon the whole, suppose worldly prosperity was not oftentimes a most mischievous evil, which it undoubtedly is; suppose it was a substantial ground for Christian rejoicing, which it really is not; suppose this was the scriptural prosperity, which notion is, I trust, sufficiently disproved; in a word, suppose the whole tenour of your doctrine to be true, whereas it seems to be palpably false, yet what good, in the name of wonder, can you possibly propose by such preachments? You cannot but be sensible that we are all strongly addicted to inferior things. We are already too fond of worldly goods, too impetuous in our pursuit of sensual gratifications. We want, we extremely want a curb, to check our career, and you clap a spur on our sides. You employ

your eloquence as a provocative in a case that cries aloud for restrictives. Alas! Sir, you have no occasion to push the headlong torrent! But I have done with this point; have nothing more to add upon this head, unless it be to recommend to your serious consideration that alarming verdict pronounced by infinite wisdom, He that liveth in pleasure is dead while he liveth; dead to God, dead to grace; a dead Christian, though a living animal. Compare, reverend Sir, this declaration with the tendency of your doctrine. Then, I assure myself, you will not redden with indignation at these plain remonstrances; but rather (as I should in your case) turn pale with grief at your past teachings, and tremble with fear for the consequences of them.

Thus much for your divinity: Now, Sir, if you please for your logic. We have canvassed your doctrine; let us next consider the argument with which you establish it. This is, if possible, ten thousand times more exceptionable than the tenet itself. For, after having told your audience, that the carnal delight, which you so earnestly press to take, is agreeable to the reason of things, is consonant to the designs of Providence, you think proper to add, that it is also countenanced by our Saviour's example; since, at a certain marriage feast, when the wine fell short, he wrought a miracle, and furnished them with a fresh supply, on purpose, That the mirth might not die. This was your expression. And, surely, a more shocking one never came from a preacher's lips. Was ever so abject and scurvy a reason assigned for one of the most illustrious actions? Could any debauched libertine, at a drunken club, have derogated more contumeliously from the dignity of our Lord's behaviour? Jesus, the mirror of purity, the fountain of wisdom, of whom it is testified, that he did all things well;—this wise and glorious Being is represented, not by an abandoned sot, but by a minister of the gospel, as exerting his omnipotence to prolong a merry bout. O! that it might not be told in Gath, or published in the streets of Askelon! But, *fugit irrevocabile verbum*; you cannot revoke the words. The only reparation you can make to the injured Jesus, or the offended Christian, is to give us a sermon of recantation, and antidote the poison that has been propagated.

But I would hope, it is too gross to spread, That the mirth may not die, is an assertion that must startle every hearer.

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Why, this a common vintner might have prevented, as well as an Almighty Being; a few flasks from the tavern would have answered this end. Most ignoble purpose! unworthy, altogether unworthy so august, divine, and admirable a person. Oh! what a handle does this yield to infidels for profane banter! That Jesus should descend from the heaven of heavens, and come into the lower world, vested with incontrollable power, on so poor, grovelling, and sordid an errand! That a part of his business in the state of humanity should be to guard against the extinction of such idle mirth, as owes its birth to a bottle! The soldiers that stripped our Lord of his apparel, and mocked his sacred person; that spit upon his blessed face, buffeted his divine head, and loaded him with all manner of scurrilities and indignities, did not commit (in my opinion) so flagrant an abuse, as a modern preacher in one of his studied solemn harangues. They took him to be a mere man; they pronounced him a vile man; and therefore offered him such opprobrious affronts. But you, Sir, acknowledge him to be God; you know him to be infinitely wise, and yet make him a lacquey to the most errant trifles, a drudge to men's carnal indulgences. Suppose both our houses of parliament, after the maturest deliberation, should employ the whole army of the nation, to clear away all obstructions for a butterfly in her flowery range, or to see that a silly kitten goes on unmolested in her sportive gambols; would you extol the wisdom of our senators? would you not cry shame upon their conduct? Now, your assertion is full as depreciatory to the consummate prudence, and exemplary purity of our divine Master; since you set them both on work, joined with his irresistible might, only to furnish out a little more gayety, a little more laughter, to a set of carousers, whom you describe as pretty well in for it already.

That the mirth might not die! That is, That those who were already made merry with liquor might go on in their jovial delights, till they added drunkenness to their thirst. For when people are thus exhilarated, to take fresh draughts, and pour down more wine, must indeed make them, as a professed scorner profanely expresses himself, on this very occasion, more than half seas over. So that, when you give an evasive flourish or two, and would have your hearers to believe that you are no advocate for intemperance, it is plain

you are only complimenting the cause of sobriety. This interpretation, put upon our Lord's conduct, knocks all such sham pretences on the head. For if he wrought the miracle with such a view, and for such sort of people, all the world cannot clear him from being a promoter of excess; and if he did not, all the world cannot acquit you, Sir, from the most abusive misrepresentations of your Redeemer.

That the mirth might not die! What could a lewd rake have done, at his riotous table, worse than that which you ascribe to the pattern of all perfection? My blood grows chill; My thoughts recoil at so horrid a position. Any gentleman of tolerable seriousness, when he perceives his friends are got merry with his drink, would rather withdraw the glass than add fuel to the flame. For my part, I should think myself an abettor of excess, and little better than a pimp of debauchery, if when men are merry in their cups, I should supply them with the means of driving on the wanton humour. And yet—be amazed, O, ye heavens, and be horribly afraid, O earth!—A minister in the midst of a throoged congregation, charges this very practice upon the most immaculate Lamb of God! O! Sir, how could he, who came to be our sanctification, administer to our inordinate gratifications? how could he, who has enjoined us not to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof, be instrumental to continue a luxurious revel? O blessed Jesus, surely that is fulfilled which was spoken by thy prophet. "Thou art wounded in the house of thy friends." Thy character is debased, thy doctrines adulterated, by those who profess themselves adorers of the one, and expounders of the other. Oh! that ever the Christian pulpit should become a porch to the temple of Bacchus! and the Christian preacher act the part of a purveyor for the tipping-house!

Do you intend to please, Sir, or to profit your audience by these admonitions? You can please none but men of corrupt minds, whose god is their belly, who mind earthly things. You can profit none but those whose heaven is to be found in the juice of the grape. They can serve no other end but to give a sort of sanction to their extravagancies.—Your lectures, perhaps may be recollected with applause on an ale-bench, and pleaded among a circle of jolly toppers. But I assure you, Sir, they are heard by the serious and devout with the utmost sorrow, and with equal detestation.

Their ears are wounded, and their hearts bleed under the sound of such Bacchanalian doctrines.

May I now be permitted to declare my sentiments with regard to that passage of scripture which you have so unhappily perverted?

As to the mirth you seem so fond of, there is no mention of it in the sacred narrative. For Christ went not about to spread the laugh among his company, but to make them serious, sober, and wise unto salvation. If he vouchsafed his presence at entertainments, and sat at the tables of sinners, it was with a gracious design of instructing and converting them in their own houses. He came to feasts in the same spirit, and for the same purposes, as he came into the world; to turn poor mankind from darkness into light, and from the power of Satan unto God; so that none can imagine when he was in the room, that there could be any thing like that licentious diversion which too generally prevails in our merry meetings. If they did rejoice, they rejoiced, doubtless after a godly sort. They rejoiced in the precious and instructive words that dropped from Christ's lips, as sweets from an honey-comb. They rejoiced to have so divine a prophet raised up unto God's people, and to have the honour of so illustrious a personage amongst them. They rejoiced, without all peradventure, to see, and hear, and handle the word of life.

As for that expression, which we translate well drunk, METHYSTHOSIN—profane wits, I know, raise mighty triumphs upon it; but, in truth, they are Babel buildings, and proofs of nothing but their own folly. They thereby give us to understand that their want of sense is as unquestionable as their malignity to Christianity. For surely they must be full as arrant idiots, as they are shameless sots, who can offer to fetch the least shadow of a plea for riotous indulgences from this passage. Since, let the meaning of the word be ever so loose and exceptionable, yet nothing can be concluded from thence against the œconomy and decorum of that entertainment, because the governor speaks only of the usual custom at other treats. He says not a word, good or bad, of the guests that were present at that bridal festival. It must, therefore, be not only precarious, but ridiculous and absurd, to infer the disorderly proceeding of those people, from what the ruler observes concerning others. I once was acquainted

with a worthy gentleman, who frequently invited to his table the young persons of his neighbourhood, and would take a pleasure in instilling or cultivating in their minds the principles of sobriety, industry and piety. Now in case he had said, after supper was removed, 'I know very well my honest neighbours, it is customary with some persons of fortune both to please and pride themselves in making their visitants drunk. They push the glass briskly round, and press one bumper upon another, till they send their guests staggering to bed.' But now, would any one be so stupid, as to infer from this acknowledgment of the practice of others, that this was also the practice of my friend? Yet this they may do with as much justness and solidity of reasoning, as deduce any maxim in favour of excess from the speech of the Archtrichlinus (or master of the feast.):

Evident, I think, it is, that this expression, whatever be its exact import, is in no wise referable to the condition of those guests; so that we allow our adversaries too much advantage, by admitting any of their remarks upon its signification. We should wrest this weapon out of their hands, which they brandish so formidably, rather than guard against its strokes. But in case it was applicable to them, yet it is most monstrous to suppose it is significant of the least deviation from temperance. For had we not known the company to be of the most exemplary behaviour, and heavenly-minded spirit; had they been a parcel of irreligious and profane fellows, instead of the virgin-mother, and the Redeemer's disciples, yet it would be impossible to conceive, that any thing which had the least approach towards surfeiting and drunkenness should be tolerated, when Jesus himself was in the midst of them. Before so venerable and divine a person, they would not dare to allow themselves in any misbecoming indulgences, or indecencies of carriage. Besides, had their inclinations been ever so abandoned or impetuous, his eternal power and Godhead would have restrained them. He that intimidated the sacriligious rabble, when they profaned the temple, and drove them before his single scourge; he that struck prostrate to the ground a whole band of armed men, only with his word; he that had all hearts in his hand, and could manage them as he pleased, would doubtless have forbid, at this juncture, whatever bordered upon dissoluteness.

Should any one enquire, For what cause, then, did Christ



work this miracle, if not to revive the dying mirth I answer, several noble reasons are assignable and obvious.

One, to furnish a supply for fresh guests, which on those occasions were continually pouring in; that the feast might be prolonged to its usual period, and all that came might be moderately refreshed. For I can by no means imagine that this fresh supply was intended for those who had cheered themselves already with a sufficient quantity. This indeed is what your sermon takes for granted, or else your application of this fact is frivolous and impertinent. But I promise myself, when you give it a second consideration, you will wonder how so unworthy a thought could come into your mind, and be sorry that it should ever proceed from your lips, since it is so entirely repugnant to the whole character, conduct, and preaching of our Lord Jesus.

Another reason might be, to reward the married pair for their hospitality to himself and his followers: To give early notice to the world, that none should be losers by showing kindness to him or his: That every piece of respect paid to Jesus, and every kindness towards his family should meet with a full recompense of reward. Thus did he prepare an extensive fund for those who had forsaken houses, lands, relations, and their earthly all for his sake; prepare a fund for their subsistence, by disposing people to entertain and accommodate them, when they should be sent forth, without staff, or scrip, or money in their purses.

Another cause, and that which is remarked by the holy historian, was, to manifest forth his glory; to give a most conspicuous display of his Messiahship. He opened, as it were, his commission, and showed his divine credentials; which was done with perfect propriety, in a public manner, before more spectators than his own attendants: And, whatever effect it might have upon others, it confirmed the faith of his disciples. Seeing this incontestible proof of his mission, it is said, they believed on him; and were thenceforth inviolably attached to his person and ministry.

Other reasons may be suggested, and those exceeding sound and useful; such as point out a noble and deep significance in this miracle; make it rich with divine and spiritual meaning; and, upon this footing, a more delicious feast for our souls, than wines of the finest flavour, and most generous quality, are to our animal nature.

For instance ; it might signify the superior richness of those comforts which his gospel was introducing into the world : That they exceeded those broached by Moses and the law, as much as the pure blood of the grape excels the water of our common wells : That his flesh and blood would be a sovereign source of alacrity and consolation to his people ; gladden and revive their hearts, like some exquisite cordial ; strengthen and invigorate their minds like the best bodied wines.

This particular season of a marriage-ceremony, was probably chosen, in order to intimate the necessity of being espoused and united to Christ, before we can be partakers of these evangelical delights. Divorced we must be from our old husband the law ; divorced from the covenant of works ; and no longer wedded, by self-opinionativeness, to our own righteousness, but married by the bond of a lively faith, to that everlasting Bridegroom, in order to taste those comforts, and have our share in those joys.

A reason fixed upon by our church is, That Christ would hereby put an honour upon the matrimonial state, by gracing the solemnity with his sacred company, and performing his first public miracle on this occasion. A fine admonition this, to render us more than ordinarily solicitous to have the favourable concurrence of Jesus, both when we devise, and when to take so important a step. Because the tranquillity and happiness of our subsequent life depends very much on this alteration of our condition. That we should, by all means, marry in the Lord, and implore his spiritual gracious presence at the wedding, which will improve the advantages, and sanctify the enjoyments of that comfortable state, will, as it is delicately figured out in the metaphor, turn our water into wine.

It might also be intended to remind us, that the comforts, even of animal life, were recovered by the second Adam, as they were forfeited by the first Adam. When our first parents were guilty of rebellion against their Maker, they lost all right to the valuable productions of nature. This indeed was their dowry originally settled upon them ; but by their disloyalty it became confiscated. Justice seized upon their inheritance, and vengeance said, Cursed be the ground for your sakes. Christ, in this exigency, immediately interposed ; took off the attainder, and restored to poor Adam

and his posterity the precious fruits of the earth. These blessings, derived from Christ's mediation, were very properly recognized at a wedding; because, straightway after the marriage of the first couple, they were alienated and sequestered.

This, Sir, is a way of expounding our Redeemer's miracles, well worthy your consideration, if not your imitation. In this light they appear, not barely so many witnesses of his being the Messiah, but so many living mirrors of his mediatorial mercies, in which we discern a most expressive figure of those spiritual good things which we extremely want, and may fully enjoy through Jesus Christ. The marvellous things brought to pass by the agency of prophets, apostles, and holy men of old, were indisputable vouchers for their being sent of God. But our Redeemer's works had a farther excellency, and answered a diviner end. They held forth and presented even to the senses, a most striking pattern of those spiritual blessings which sinners may enjoy through their Saviour. Thus, when he cured the man born blind, what did this signify but his healing the blindness of our understandings, and pouring the day of his glorious gospel upon our internal sight? When he made the poor paralytic strong and vigorous, that was not able to turn himself on his bed, or to use his limbs, what a lively emblem was here, both of our disease, and of his sovereign help? of our disease, whereby we are utterly impotent to do a good work, or think a good thought; of his sovereign help, whereby we are enabled to do all things through Christ strengthening us; enabled to believe through his grace, and to mortify our corruptions through his Spirit. Was not the filthy leper a true picture of our loathsomeness, through original defilement, and actual transgressions? And when our Redeemer disdained not to touch this noisome creature, and make him perfectly clean, how appositely did this image point out the condescension of his goodness in the undertaking of redemption, and the efficacy of his blood in accomplishing our purification? I might go through the whole series of our Lord's miracles, and discover in them a most significant and complete portraiture of all manner of spiritual blessings; but the foregoing instances shall suffice. From these hints, we may discern an adorable depth of design; unsearchable treasures of contrivance, as well as beneficence, in those operations



lain a while under the clods, and seen corruption, they will then spring up incorruptible and immortal, an amazing multitude, like the blades of grass, or the ears of corn, innumerable.

The husbandman, in harvest, receives a reward for all his toil. The labours of the preceding year are amply recompensed by the rich fruits of increase. And the consummation of all things will be the great retribution-day; then the Christian receives the end of his faith, even the salvation of his soul; then the riches he has coveted will be bestowed in the favour of the seeing him who is immortal, invisible: whose loving kindness is better than life. He will see the desire of his soul, and the fruits of his Saviour's sufferings, and sit down everlastingly satisfied. The husbandman rejoices in harvest, this is his time of festivity and delight. They joy before thee, saith the scriptures, according to the joy of the righteous; they will look up, and rejoice to behold their Redeemer coming in the clouds of heaven, and all the holy angels with him; then will they look down, and rejoice to see the wicked world burning, in which they were tempted; rejoice to see all their enemies put under their feet; and when the doors of heaven are left open, then shall they enter triumphantly into the city of the living God, and everlasting joy will be upon their heads, and reign with Christ for evermore. Into this exceeding great and eternal bliss, I wish you, Madam, and your husband, an abundant entrance; and remain his and your, &c.



## LETTER XIX.

*Weston-Favel, 1744.*

DEAR ———,

I PROMISED ——— to send the remainder of her letter, in a few lines to you. Either she may transcribe from you, or you from her, in order to complete the little essay. I left off, I think, somewhere hereabouts: But spiritual interests

are infinitely more valuable. For those, therefore, Christ will provide more abundantly: If they want knowledge, he will not only give them his divine word, but his enlightening Spirit, to lead them into all truth. If they are poor, he will give them the fine gold of his obedience; he will say to them, as the father said in the parable, Son, all that I have is thine. Are they wounded? he will give them the healing balm of his precious blood; this will cure the wound which sin has made in the soul, and make the bones which have been broken to rejoice. Are they naked? he will clothe them with the robe of his own righteousness; they shall appear before the God of gods in the garments of this their elder brother. Are they weak? his strength shall be made perfect in their weakness; he will work in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure. When they die, he has provided for them a flight of angels to attend their departing souls, and conduct them to his own compassionate arms; he has provided mansions of glory, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, for their future reception. He has provided a fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore, for their final portion and inheritance.

Oh! what ample provision is here! this is indeed good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over. What can needy creatures want which Jesus does not supply? Justly was it once said by an eminent believer, Jehovah Jireh, The Lord will provide. Let this be the language of our hearts in all our needs.

The hen comforts her winter brood; she screens them from the inclemencies of the weather; she spreads out her wings, and forms a canopy over them; this affords them a house to lodge in, and a bed to sleep on; no velvet is softer, no blankets are warmer; here they are cherished and refreshed; here they find heat when they shiver with cold; are dried, when they come dropping with wet.

Jesus also comforts his poor people; he is called the consolation of Israel. Come unto me, says the merciful Redeemer, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; all ye that are weary, and I will refresh you. He is afflicted in all their afflictions, and is ready to succour them as a man is to allay the anguish of his own smarting flesh. He is the good, the inconceivably-good Shepherd, whose bowels yearn with the tenderest compassion when his

lamb are fatigued or distressed ; he even lays them in his bosom. Every thing but Jesus speaks terror, and creates dismay to his little flock. But this compassionate Shepherd leads them forth beside the water of comfort. The world lays many a snare for their feet ; the world persecutes and hates them. In the world, they must have tribulation ; but Christ says, Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, and will make you partakers of my victory ; because I have conquered, ye shall conquer also. The law lays dreadful things to their charge ; the law is the ministration of condemnation ; the law thunders out threatenings : They are rebels, says that righteous law ; they have transgressed my precepts ; they deserve to suffer all the curses denounced against the disobedient and ungodly. But Christ gently whispers, Be of good courage, my people, take sanctuary in your Mediator ; I have answered all the demands of the law : if it requires punishment, I sustained torments unutterable ; if it insists on blood, I satisfied it with divine blood ; with every drop of my heart's blood ; so that there is no condemnation to them that are interested in me. If it called for righteousness, I submitted to its authority ; I performed every jot and tittle of its commands, and thereby brought in a perfect and everlasting righteousness. Lay hold on my obedience, receive this from my free grace, and the law has nothing more to charge against you : for the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them that believe, though the devil tempts and distresses the children of Jesus. He not only tempts, but accuses them, aggravating and calling aloud for vengeance ; cries, Down with them, down with them, even to the dust. But Jesus graciously steps in, baffles the accusation, arrests the judgment, and says, I have died to save them from going into the pit ; for I have found a ransom : if they have sinned, I have taken them upon myself : if they have multiplied transgressions as the stars of the heaven, my Father hath laid on me the iniquities of them all. They are my redeemed ones ; they are bought with my blood ; I cannot lose my purchase ; if they are not saved, I am not glorified.

Such sweet truths, sent home upon the poor soul must be very comfortable and restorative to the drooping sinner ; more refreshing and gladdening to the conscience, than the feathers of the hen are to her feeble starving brood.

Upon the whole, let us imitate the chickens, by trusting in Jesus for all we want or wish ; let us lean upon our beloved in all our progress through this wilderness ; expect to be furnished entirely out of his fulness ; look for protection from his almighty arm, depend upon provision from his inexhaustible treasures ; and for comfort, from a growing sense of our interest in him.

Let this be the habitual language of our heart—Blessed Lord, I am weak and wretched, surrounded by a multitude of dangers, and defiled by a thousand corruptions ; O defend me by thy eternal power. Let thy almighty arm be over me ; let thy Holy Spirit be ever with me ; never leave me to my enemies ; never give me up to my own blindness and impotency, for I flee unto thee to hide me ; on thee I depend to break every snare of temptation that endangers me from without, to mortify every seed of corruption that pollutes me from within. I am poor and needy, blessed Jesus, do thou provide for me. Since I must one day give an account of myself to God, let thy blood wash away my guilt, and drown all my transgressions. Since I must, ere long, stand before him whose eyes are as a burning fire. O ! clothe me with the robes of thy righteousness, the garments of salvation, that I may be holy and blameless in his sight. Since I must quickly die out of this miserable world, provide me an entrance into thine own everlasting kingdom ; and while I continue in this world, provide me with grace sufficient for me, that I may live like thine elect, and adorn the gospel of God my Saviour.

I am often distressed ; misgiving thoughts, and anguish of mind, make me hang down my head like a bulrush ! Through fear of death, and dread of eternal judgment, my joints are sometimes ready to smite one against another ; but, O ! holy and most merciful Saviour, be thou my support. Pour the oil of gladness into my inner man ! give me the joy of thy salvation : the law condemns me, but do thou justify me ; my own conscience writes bitter things against me, but do thou whisper to my soul, Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee. The roaring lion often terrifies me ; but, O ! thou good and faithful Shepherd, let thyself comfort me. Let me know and feel, that I am thine, and then nothing shall pluck me out of thy hands.

This was wrote before my late illness. You see from



hence, that you my friends at Biddeford have been on my thoughts, though they have not of late been addressed by way of letter ; and I shall always pray, that whether we are sick or in health, the Lord Jesus Christ may be the strength of our hearts, and our portion for ever. I am, &c.



## LETTER XX.

DEAR —,

IT is our duty continually to sing hosanna to the king of Israel, who treadeth all enemies under his feet. He can tread them down like clay in the streets, or cast them out as lightning from heaven. Nothing is impossible to him ; they who know Christ's faithfulness and truth, will put their trust in him ; they will hang upon him every moment, as the feeble child in the arms of the indulgent mother, for grace to strengthen and enable them to withstand the devices of that enemy of souls, who is seeking every moment to destroy the weak believer, the babes in Christ. Satan says, with that wicked one in Exodus, I will pursue them with inconceivable malice and rage ; I will overtake and tear them in pieces like a lion ; I will lay ten thousand snares in their way, and, if it be possible, bring them under the dominion of sin, and after that into the damnation of hell. The believer replies, Thou wouldst effect this, O thou enemy of all godliness, I know thou wouldst effect this with as much ease as a feather is borne down by a sweeping whirlwind, was I left a moment to myself ; but my strength do I ascribe unto my incarnate God. The blessed Jesus has undertaken for my security ; he watches over me every moment, and nothing can pluck me out of his hand. He hath said (who shall disannul it ?) that sin shall not have dominion over me ; he will preserve me by his almighty power unto salvation. Let all my adversaries know assuredly, that my safety is not in myself. But as the hills stand round about Jerusalem, even so the Lord standeth round about his people, from this time forth for evermore.





bly have imagined any thing more agreeable to my inclination, than the proposal you are pleased to make of admitting me to your acquaintance and conversation. I accept your kind offer, Sir, with thankfulness, with joy; and shall most gladly cultivate a friendship, which is not only perfectly innocent, but remarkably elegant and improving: especially, since you are pleased to permit the discourse to turn upon those points, which it is my duty to study, and my delight to contemplate. Nor shall I forget how much I am indebted to your condescension for this favour; but shall always bear a respectful sense of the distinguished rank and superior abilities of my worthy friend.

Indeed, I am particularly delighted with such interviews as serve to enlarge our knowledge, and refine our affections; such as have an apparent tendency to render us more useful in our present stations, and to ripen us for future happiness; such was that which I lately enjoyed in your company. This is a feast of reason, a feast of truth; and I must own, has charms for me, infinitely superior to all the impertinent amusements of modish chat, or the mean gratifications of the bottle.

When I have been asked to spend an afternoon with a gentleman of a learned education, and unquestionable ingenuity, I have fancied myself invited to take a turn in some beautiful garden; where I expected to have been treated with a sight of the most delicate flowers, and most amiable forms of nature; when, to my great surprise, I have been shown nothing but the most worthless thistle, and contemptible weeds. To one who has been so often disappointed, it must be peculiarly pleasing to find the satisfaction which he has long sought in vain. This I make no doubt of obtaining, if I may be permitted to be a third person in the interview, when you and Mr. — sit together in social conference.

I beg leave to return my thanks for your ingenious remark upon a sentence in the essay towards a preface; and also to express my entire satisfaction in your motion for considering more attentively the spiritual interests of the poor patients in the hospital. At present, it is undeniably plain, that much more assiduous and effectual care is taken of their temporal than of their eternal welfare. With pleasure I shall join in concerting some proper method to rectify this misconduct; and with a real alacrity shall execute (as far as



nious truth, especially if we indulge a wanton curiosity, and inquire after the quomodeity of the doctrine; if nothing will content our busy minds but a clear comprehension of this particular, they will never be brought to acquiesce in this article. But if they dare venture to believe the express declarations of infinite Wisdom, and wait till a future state for a full evolution of the mystery, their assent will soon be determined.

I once thought a very striking proof of this scriptural doctrine might be derived from the known properties of a mortal child, considered in comparison with the parent. Is not the son as perfect a partaker of all the constituent parts of the human nature as the father? Are not the children of this age possessed of the same endowments of body and mind as their fathers in the preceding age? Whatever essential excellencies belong to the one, may, with equal truth be predicted of the other. And if the Son, in this our inferior world, be in all points equal to his progenitor, why should we not suppose that the glorious Son of God, is equal, in all respects, to his Almighty Father?

But I choose to forbear all such fond endeavours to explain what, to our very limited comprehensions, is altogether inexplicable. I rather receive scripture for my teacher, and give up my sentiments to be formed and conducted by that infallible guide. In scripture there are abundance of texts which, in the most explicit terms imaginable, assert the Son to be God. Now, if he be God, he cannot have any superior: inferiority evidently destroys divinity: inferiority, in any instance, is inconsistent with the notion of a supreme Being. So that every text in scripture, which ascribes a divine nature to the blessed Jesus, seems to speak all that Athanasius maintains concerning the absolute universal equality of the Son with the Father.

In what respects can the Son be supposed inferior? Are not the same honours given to the Son as are paid to the Father? The psalmist mentions two of the incommunicable honours which are due to the supreme Majesty. Both which he declares are, and shall be addressed to the Son: Prayer shall be made ever unto him, and daily shall he be praised. This adorable person is the object of our worship throughout the whole litany. In the doxologies of our liturgy, the same glory is ascribed to all the three infinitely-ex-

alted persons of the Trinity. I take notice of this, not as a conclusive argument, but only to hint at the uniform judgment of our reformers on this important head; and to point out their care to inculcate, with incessant assiduity, this belief upon the members of their communion. Are not the same works ascribed to the Son as are ascribed to the Father? God, the sovereign and supreme God (according to the periphrasis of a Heathen poet, *Cui nihil simile aut secundum*), often declares his matchless perfections, by referring mankind to his astonishing works of creation. And is not the Son the Creator of the universe? All things were made by him, is the testimony of one apostle; and, He upholdeth all things by the word of his power, the deposition of another. Is not the same incommunicable name applied to the Son? Jehovah is allowed to be a name never attributed, throughout the whole scripture, to any being but only to the one living and true God, who only hath immortality, who hath no superior, none like him in heaven or earth. But this title is the character of the incarnate Son. If we compare Moses and St. Paul, we shall find that Christ is Jehovah, Numb. xxi. 6. with 1 Cor. x. 9. This argument, I think, is not common, and, I must own, has had a great influence in settling my judgment ever since I was apprized of it. Another proof was suggested in the morning lesson for the day, Isa. xlv. 23. compared with Phil. ii. 10. It is the prophet, that infinitely-wise God, who manifesteth, even from ancient time, the dark and remote events of futurity; who pre-emptorily declares, that there is no God besides him, consequently none superior in any degree to him; yet this most sacred person, who, in the prophet's text, has the attributes of incomparable perfection, and unshared supremacy, is, in the apostle's comment, the Redeemer.

I fancy all those texts of scripture which seem to you, Sir, so diametrically opposite to this doctrine, will, upon a renewed examination, appear referable only to the humanity of our Saviour. If so, they cannot affect the point under debate, nor invalidate the arguments urged in its support.

After all, I believe, here lies the grand difficulty. Sonship, we take for granted, implies inferiority. Sonship implies the receiving of a being from another; and to receive a being is an instance of inferiority. But, dear Sir, let us repress every bold inquiry into this awful secret, lest that of the apos-

tle, *doubting the things which he did not see*, be the lightest censure we incur. What is light reasoning, when applied to the case of created existence, is little less than blasphemy, when applied to that divine person, who is, from everlasting to everlasting, the great I AM. The generation of the Son of God is an unfathomable mystery. A prophet cries out with amaze, Who can declare his generation? and if we cannot conceive it, how can we form any conclusions or determine what consequences follow from it? Here it becomes us not to examine, but to adore. If we know not how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, how shall we be able to state the nature; or explain the effects of a generation, inexpressibly more remote from our finite apprehensions?

Upon the whole, since the scripture has given us repeated and unquestionable assurance that Christ is God; since common sense cries aloud against the absurdity of supposing a God who has a superior, shall she reject such positive evidences of revelation, and be deaf to the strongest remonstrances of our reason, merely because we cannot conceive how the Sonship of the Redeemer can be compatible with an absolute equality, in all possible perfection, to the Father?

It need not be hinted to — that this doctrine of the divinity, consequently of the equality, of the sacred TRI-UNE, is not merely a speculative point, but has a most close connection with practice, and is admirably fitted to influence our lives in the most powerful and endearing manner. That it is no less inseparably connected with the grand blessings of acquittance from the guilt, and delivery from the bondage of sin; blessings of unutterable and infinite value, without which the children of men are of all creatures most miserable; which yet we cannot reasonably hope to enjoy, if any of those illustrious persons, concerned in accomplishing the great redemption, be supposed less than divine.

The 18th article, you add, is another objection to me, which begins thus: They also are to be had accursed, &c. This, as you observe, seems harsh. Yet the harshness is not ours, but the apostle's. I imagine this is no more than a transcript of St. Paul's awful and solemn declaration, transmitted to the Galatian converts, and denounced against their corrupting teachers. Be pleased, Sir, to peruse attentively that whole inspired letter, and especially to consider chap. 1.



verses 6, 7, 8, 9. Then permit me to appeal to yourself, whether our article professes any doctrine which is not clearly established in that most excellent epistle ; or whether our church uses more severe terms than the apostle thinks proper to thunder out in that memorable passage ? But might not this doctrine have been palliated a little, or the tremendous sanction somewhat softened ? No: we must not add to, or diminish from, our inviolable rule. A faithful steward of the divine mysteries must declare the whole will of God in its full extent and latitude, together with the fearful consequences of presumptuously opposing it, as well as the blessed effects of cordially receiving it.

I am not surprised that this procedure startles some, offends others. St. Paul seems to have foreseen this event, and therefore apologizes for himself, shall I say ? rather declares his unalterable resolution of persisting in this practice ; *q. d.* I am sensible that such teachings will be far from palatable to too many of my hearers ; I am aware also, that to threaten the divine anathema on every opposer of this doctrine will be still more offensive. But shall I desist on these considerations ? shall I accommodate the standard doctrines of heaven to the depraved taste of the age ; or be solicitous to make them square with the favourite schemes of human device, only to avoid creating disgust in some minds ? No, verily : I preach what unerring wisdom has revealed, not what capricious man has dreamed ; and therefore dare not vary one jot or tittle from my high orders. My business is principally to please God by a faithful discharge of my commission, not to ingratiate myself with men, by modelling my doctrine in conformity to their humours ; and therefore I must, I must deliver it, just as I received it.

But why do I offer to illustrate these texts ? Your own meditations, I persuade myself, will discern, much more clearly than I can represent, that the compilers of our articles are no other than the echo of St. Paul ; or rather, that they only set their seal to the doctrines of Christ which he taught ; and approve that verdict of heaven, which he has brought in. This consideration will acquit them from the charge of harshness of expression, or uncharitableness of sentiment.

Your objections thus proceed. I believe that every one will be saved, who acts up to the best of his knowledge. 1

almost durst venture to join issue with my friend upon this footing; and undertake to prove, from this very position, the universal necessity of believing in Christ for salvation.— Because, I think, it is indisputably certain, that there is no man living, who has in all points acted up to his knowledge; and if he has swerved, in any instance, from his known acknowledged duty, how shall he escape punishment, without an atonement? *Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*, is what the most vigilant and upright of mortals have, at some unhappy moments, felt to be true. If so, how shall they stand before that righteous God, who will not acquit the guilty without an interest in the great expiation! But, I presume, your proposition is to be taken in a more qualified sense: It means that those who sincerely, though not perfectly in the main course of their life, and as far as the infirmities of a frail nature admit, act up to their knowledge; that these shall be saved, even without their application to the merits of a Saviour. If this opinion be true, I own it must be very unsafe to subscribe our articles.

When this point is in dispute, I apprehend we are to confine it to those who live in a gospel land, where opportunities of knowing the good-will of God present themselves every day, every hour. As for the Heathens, who lie under unavoidable and irremediable ignorance of the blessed Jesus, they are out of the question. They, I think, should be remitted to God's unsearchable wisdom and goodness.— There may be uncovenanted mercies for them, which we know nothing of. It seems to be a daring and unjustifiable rashness for us to determine one way or other, with regard to their final state. This, however, is plain from the oracles of revelation, that it will be more tolerable for those poor Gentiles in the day of eternal judgment, than for those inexcusable infidels who heard and disobeyed the glorious gospel. The controversy then concerns those only who have the bible in their hands, or the voice of the preacher sounding in their religious assemblies every Sabbath-day. These, dear Sir, I cannot think will inherit salvation, though they act with ever so much sincerity, according to their knowledge, unless they add to their knowledge faith.

Perhaps, what we call their knowledge is no better than downright and wilful ignorance: the light that is in them is darkness. Perhaps they never took any pains to get them-

selves informed in the glorious peculiarities of the gospel.— If so, their conduct is one continued disobedience to the divine commands, which require us to seek for wisdom as for hid treasures; which charge us to search the scriptures as narrowly, as industriously, as the sportsman searches every spot of ground, beats every tuft of grass, in order to start the latent game. In this case, what we call their knowledge is really blindness itself; and their want of true knowledge cannot be their plea, because it is evidently their neglect and their sin.

But suppose these persons have searched the scriptures, and yet are persuaded that there is no such need of a Saviour's merits. Shall we condemn them in these circumstances?— We do not presume to sit as their judges, or to scatter at our pleasure the thunders of eternal vengeance, we only declare what sentence is passed upon them by the supreme Dispenser of life and death. He has made it an adjudged case, he has passed it into an irrevocable law, That whoso believeth not in the Son of God, whosoever perversely persists in seeking some other method of salvation, and will not fly to that Redeemer whom infinite Wisdom has set forth for a propitiation, this man is condemned already.

Will it be said, That a man cannot help assenting to what he is thoroughly persuaded to be right? And if a Deist, from his very soul, believes that morality alone is the way to life, and that the notion of a Redeemer, to make satisfaction, and procure justification, is a religious chimera, shall we blame such a one for following the general dictates of his mind? I answer, still I answer, That we must abide by the determination of that Sovereign God, whose judgment, we are sure, is according to truth. He has said, nor can all the cavils and sophistry in the world supersede the decree, He that believeth not shall be damned. Be not shocked, Sir, at the seeming severity of the doom. Rather let us be shocked, be greatly astonished, at the prodigious hardness of those more than steely hearts, which can attend to such terrors of the Lord, and not be persuaded to come to Christ; nay, what is enough to make heaven and earth horribly amazed, can hear of these terrors, and yet regard them no more than a puff of empty air.

Nor will it extenuate the crime of unbelief to allege, in behalf of the infidel, that he is actually convinced in his own

conscience, that his sentiments are right. He may be so, and yet be inexcusably guilty notwithstanding; for it is not owing to his own fault that he has imbibed such sentiments? It is not through his own criminal misconduct, that he has contracted such a perverse habit of thinking? Has he not indulged some darling vice, which has clouded his understanding? Or, instead of obeying the great mandate of heaven, This is my beloved Son, hear ye him, has he not attended solely to the arguings, deductions, and discernment of his own reason, as his only guide to heavenly truth? A drunkard verily thinks (if he thinks at all,) that he does nobly in committing insults on quiet harmless people. But will his bare thinking that he acts gallantly acquit him at the bar of equity? Perhaps, in his present condition, he cannot help fancying that his actions are becoming, and that he does well to be turbulent and outrageous; but though he cannot help the effect, might he not have avoided the cause of his phrenzy? Methinks this comparison will hold good, if applied to the case of many scorers of the gospel, who think contemptuously of Jesus Christ, and who really apprehend they do nothing amiss in depreciating his obedience and death. But I fear they have brought upon themselves this deplorable delirium, or intoxication of their understandings, either by voluptuousness and debauchery, or else by self-conceit, and the most odious arrogance of mind; which, in the estimate of the holy One of Israel, is no better than spiritual idolatry.

For my part, I am assured, that God has vouchsafed us the means of obtaining the knowledge of himself, and of Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent; it is equally certain that he has commanded us to acquaint ourselves with him, and be at peace; it is no less undeniable, that whosoever seeks this inestimable knowledge, by a diligent application to the scriptures, by a child-like dependence on the teachings of the divine Spirit, by humble prayers to be led into all truth, and by doing the will of God, so far as he is acquainted with it. Whosoever seeks, by using these means, shall find, shall come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved. If, therefore, persons are so negligent as not to use these methods, so audacious as to contemn them, so haughty as to imagine they have no need of them, they may justly be given over to their own delusions, and yet be most righteously punished as suicides of their souls.

But still it is pleaded, in vindication of the good natured, civilized infidel, That there is no turpitude in his life, that his behaviour is every way irreproachable. As to the turpitude of his life, when compared with the conversation of other men, I have nothing to say: but surely there is the highest iniquity in his principles and conduct, when compared with the revealed will of God; which is the only criterion of truth, the only standard of excellence. God has commanded all men to honour the Son, even as they honour the Father; But these people protest against the divine edict, and say, with those insolent subjects in the gospel, We will not have this Jesus to reign over us. God has solemnly declared, That all mankind are become guilty before him; that, by the works of the moral law, no flesh living shall be justified; that there is no Mediator between God and men, but the man Christ Jesus; but these people maintain, in defiance of this declaration, that they themselves are able to make up matters with their offended Creator, and can, by their own honest behaviour, secure a title to everlasting felicity. God, of his superabundant and inconceivably rich goodness, has given his Son, his only Son, to suffer agonies, to shed blood, to lay down an infinitely precious life for them; yet these people, like those impious wretches that crucified the Lord of glory, deride his agonies, trample upon his blood, and, though he has redeemed them, they speak lies against them, Hosea viii. 13. Let us see then a little part of the evidence summed up against the spirit of unbelief. It implies stubbornness, which is as the sin of witchcraft; rebellion, which is as iniquity and idolatry; it implies the most assuming pride, which is an abomination to the Lord: it implies the vilest ingratitude, even amidst the most unbounded beneficence; and the voice of nature has proclaimed, *Ingratum si dixeris, omnia dixeris.* Let the impartial considerer decide, whether the heart of these persons be right before God; or whether their conduct when brought to the test of that word which is to judge them at the last day, be so unblameable as is frequently pretended.

Enough has been said of the two first points; I fear, more than enough to fatigue your attention. However, I now draw in the reins, and promise not to put your patience upon doing such tedious penance any more.

There is another expression in the paragraph relating to

the 18th article, which, since you expect my undisguised opinion, I cannot dismiss without a remark. When the scriptures say, that men shall be saved through the name of Christ, you suppose, Sir, they mean that Christ made a general atonement for original sin. Whereas I apprehend that such texts import abundantly, I had almost said infinitely more. Thus much, I think, at least, they must amount to in their signification; that if we are saved from the guilt of our offences, it shall be only through the all-atoning blood of the Lamb of God. If we are made acceptable to that awful Majesty who dwelleth in light inaccessible, this our justification shall be in consideration of the obedience and righteousness of the beloved Son; if we obtain the Spirit of sanctification, are enabled to deny all ungodliness, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world, it shall be through the intercession of Jesus, our great High Priest, by whom alone the Holy Ghost is vouchsafed to unworthy polluted sinners. All this I take to be included in that word, of most rich and comprehensive meaning, salvation; and since it is affirmed that we are saved by Christ, I should think it must signify, that we obtain all these glorious and invaluable benefits through that all-sufficient Mediator.

As to Christ's making an atonement for original sin, that surely was but one single branch of his important undertaking: Wo, wo be to the inhabitants of the earth, if he did no more. Our actual sins, the sins of our heart, the sins of our life, our sins of omission and sins of commission, and all these sins which are more in number than the hairs of our head, heavier, with horrid aggravations, than the sand of the sea, he bore in his own body on the tree. He was wounded for our offences; he was bruised for our transgressions; and the Lord laid on him (not only the innate depravity, but) the actual iniquities of us all.

Your next objection lies against the 13th article, namely, Works done before the grace of Christ are not acceptable to God: Is the meaning of this tenet, you ask, that men are made with a natural incapacity of doing any thing but sinful actions? I answer, this is not so properly the meaning of the article, as a most cogent reason to establish it. Only let it be stated a little more clearly, and it is no inconsiderable argument in proof of the doctrine. Men were not made

by their Creator with this incapacity, but they have brought it upon themselves by their own fault. By their original sin they have contracted a most miserable depravity, and have made themselves "to every good work reprobate." Since, therefore, we can do no good work before we are renewed by the grace of Christ, it seems to follow, that we can do no work acceptable to God till this renovation take place. This, you observe, does not seem so agreeable to charity as one could wish. Worthy Sir, our notions of charity are not to be the rule of the divine acceptance, either of persons or things. If the doctrine be agreeable to the declarations of unerring Wisdom, we are to admit it with all readiness, and rather conclude that we mistake the nature of charity, than that the scripture mistakes the terms of the Almighty's acceptance and favour. You know, Sir, it is the express voice of scripture, that without faith it is impossible to please God, and, till the Spirit of Christ be shed abroad in the soul, it possesses no such sacred principle as true faith. It is a favourite apothegm of our divine Master's, That a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. And are not all that spring from the stock of fallen Adam corrupt trees, until they are ingrafted into the true olive-tree, and partake of his meliorating and generous juices? I shall only mention one more scriptural oracle, an oracle not delivered from Delphos, no, nor from mount Sinai, but immediately from heaven itself: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. I have always thought these words are to be taken in an exclusive sense, as though the everlasting Father had said, I am well pleased with the apostate race of Adam, only as they are reconciled through my beloved Son: uninterested in him, no persons are the objects of my complacency; unrecommended by him, no actions are the subject of my approbation. If this be the genuine sense of the passage, it will serve at once to confirm the article, and to obviate the objection derived from the deficiency, and remains of pollution, that cleave even to the performances of a believer.

I am glad you have satisfied yourself with relation to the article which touches upon predestination and election.—These are sublime points, far above the solution of our low capacities. But, for my part, I am no more surprised that some revealed truths should amaze my understanding, than that the blessing sun should dazzle my eyes. That such

things are mentioned in the inspired writings as real facts, is undeniable. I should renounce my very reason, if I did not believe what Omniscience attests, even though it should imply what is altogether inexplicable by my scanty conceptions. And why should the incaverned mole, whose dwelling is darkness, whose sight is but a small remove from blindness, why should such a poor animal wonder that it cannot dart its eye through unnumbered worlds, or take in at a glance the vast system of the universe?

Your sense of the 20th article is exactly mine. The authority you mention is, in my opinion, all the authority which the church, the rulers and governors of the church, can reasonably claim, or regularly exercise, in matters relating to faith. These rulers have power, as you justly observe, to settle, in conformity with what they conclude to be the meaning of scripture, the nature and extent of their own creed; and none, I think, can fairly deny them a right to determine what points of belief shall be the indispensable terms of enjoying communion with their society. But as for I know not what privilege of interpreting scripture in such a manner as that it shall be contumacy to examine before we credit, or heterodoxy and heresy to controvert their exposition, this is an authority which I cannot allow to any man, or body of men, now in the world. At this rate our faith would be built upon the decisions of the church, not on the determinations of the inspired word; and, consequently, be not of God, but of men.

Could I have imagined, when I set pen to paper, that it would have run such extravagant lengths? Bear with my prolixity, dear Sir, and excuse my freedom; or rather, if I have said any thing in too free a style, you must charge it upon your own condescension and candour, which have emboldened me to deliver my sentiments without the least cloke or reserve.

But I must not, I dare not close, without acting as becomes a minister of the gospel, without reminding my valuable friend, that the inspiration of the Almighty giveth wisdom; that a man can receive nothing, much less an acquaintance with the mysteries of the Redeemer's kingdom, unless it be given him from above. To this fountain of wisdom, and Father of lights, let us make humble, ear-





skill in mathematics, and at the same time neglect to inform himself of the first principles of that admired science.—When a divine person is the object of our consideration, then surely it becomes us, in a more special manner, not to lean to our own understanding, but, like little children, to rely on the teachings of that all-wise Spirit, whose nature, dignity, and attributes, we would devoutly contemplate. You will perhaps take notice, that I anticipate what is to be well proved, and take it for granted, that the Holy Ghost is indeed God. I would only observe from this remark, how naturally we wish, how almost unavoidably we conclude, that person to be really God, who is appointed to lead us into all truth.

Let us now, Sir, if you please, address ourselves to the inquiry, whether the Holy Spirit is a real person—whether that person is very God? and these particulars being discussed, it may be proper to examine briefly the most material of Mr. Thomkins's objections. But to whom, to what shall we apply, in order to find the satisfaction we seek? To reason, and her naked, unassisted dictates?—Hardly can reason guess aright with relation to the things that are before our eyes; much less can she determine, with any certainty, concerning the unsearchable depths of the divine nature, those *TA BATHE TÆ THE*. We have, in the word of revelation, an infallible oracle. To this let us direct our search. To the decision of this unerring standard, let us inviolably adhere, however it may surpass our comprehension, or run counter to our fond prepossessions.

Here we may possibly ask, is not the Spirit of God, by a common metonymy, put for God himself? I own I have sometimes been inclined to hesitate on this question. When it is said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, and, Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, I have never thought these passages a sufficient proof of the personality of the blessed Spirit, though (if I mistake not) commonly urged in support of the doctrine. These, I apprehend, might fairly be interpreted of grieving God himself, and resisting the tender, gracious overtures of his mercy. Conformably to that parallel form of speech, where it is said by the inspired writer, Paul's spirit was grieved, i. e. without all dispute, Paul himself was inwardly inflicted.

Again, perhaps, the Spirit of the Lord may be nothing

more than a particular modification or exercise of a divine power resident in the Deity. For instance, when it is said, in the prophetic language, Not by might, nor by force, but my Spirit, saith the Lord; or by the evangelical historian, The Holy Ghost was upon him. Are not these texts nearly equivalent, in point of signification, to those scriptural expressions, The right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass? The inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding? Is not this the meaning of the former passage, Not mortal strength, but God's omnipotent aid giveth victory in the battle, and success in every undertaking?— and this the import of the latter; The communication of infinite Wisdom enlightened his mind in an extraordinary manner?

Were there no other scriptures which concerned themselves in this debate, I should be ready to give up the point. But there are several, which most strongly imply the personality of the Holy Ghost, though they may not assert it in positive terms. It is true we meet with no such term as personality in sacred writ; but if we find the thing signified, it is in effect the same. No one can show me the word resurrection in the whole Pentateuch; but will any one presume to maintain, that this doctrine is not to be proved from the books of Moses? Our Lord's famous reply to the ensnaring interrogatory of the Sadducees must for ever silence such a suggestion. And this we may further learn from his method of arguing, that it is not only proper, but our duty, to deduce truths by fair consequences, which the text may not explicitly speak.

Be pleased, Sir, to consider the apostolical benediction, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. If we allow the apostle to understand the true import of language, must it not follow from this passage, that the Holy Spirit is a real person, and distinct from the Father and Son? Otherwise would not the sacred writer, ought not the sacred writer, to have expressed himself in a different manner; to have said, rather, The fellowship of his, or the fellowship of their spirit? The form of administering baptism is another text of this nature: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. It is evident, I believe it is allowed by all, that

the two first are real distinct persons; and is there not equal reason to conclude, that the last mentioned is a person also? Suppose you should endeavour to distinguish three persons in your discourse, what other language would you use than this? I dare say, Sir, you are sensible, that one scripture-proof, if plain in its signification, and incontestible in its evidence, is as valid, as decisive, as one thousand; because one such proof bears the stamp of infallible wisdom and infinite veracity. Therefore was there no other hint in all the inspired volumes, but these pregnant words which compose the form of baptism, this single proof would be sufficiently satisfactory to my judgment.

I shall take leave to refer you to a few more evidences, and transcribe only the following: There are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Logos, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. But this, we are told, is a surreptitious text, foisted by the bigotted espousers of a certain favourite set of doctrines. The only resource this of our opposers, when their case becomes desperate, when conviction flashes in their faces: when every other subterfuge fails, then the pretence of spurious and interpolated reading is trumped up. It is not to be found, they cry, in some very ancient copy; perhaps the Alexandrine MS. acknowledges no such passage. But this I must be allowed to question; I dare not take our adversaries' bare word, especially since some of the declared enemies of orthodoxy are not the most exemplary for truth and integrity. However, granting that there may be no such text in the Alexandrine MS. for my part, I should not scruple to abide by the universal testimony of all editions, in all countries, much rather than to give up myself implicitly to the authority of a single MS. I should think it much more reasonable to conclude, that the transcriber of that particular copy, had, through oversight, dropt some sentence, rather than to charge all the other copies with forgery, and the editions of all ages with a gross mistake. Consider, Sir, not only the apparent difficulty, but the moral impossibility of corrupting the sacred books in that palpable manner, which this objection would insinuate, at a time when every private Christian valued them more than life, and spent no day without a diligent contemplation of them; at a time when each particular sect read them constantly in their public assemblies, and watched over the ge-

nuineness of each text with a most jealous eye. Would it be an easy matter to introduce a suppositious clause into an ordinary will, after it had been solemnly proved at Doctors Commons, and one authentic copy preserved in the archives? If this is scarce possible, how much more unlikely is it, that any one should be able to practice so iniquitously upon the inspired writings, when not one only, but unnumbered copies were deposited in the most vigilant hands, and dispersed throughout the world?

I shall only desire you to consult those other scriptures, Rom. xv. 16. 30. John xvi. 13, 14, 15; which, without heaping together a multitude of other proofs, seem to put the matter beyond all rational doubt. In the last of those places, you will take particular notice that the writer speaks of the Holy Ghost in the masculine gender. How could this consist, with propriety of style; upon any other scheme than ours? The expression should have been *it*, not *he*, if the Holy Ghost were a divine energy alone, and not a real person. Nay it is remarkable, that though ΠΝΕΥΜΑ be a neuter, yet the historian varies the gender; and gives us a masculine relative, ΟΤΑΝ ΕΛΘΗ ΕΚΕΙΝΟΣ, ΕΚΕΙΝΟΣ ΕΜΕ ΔΟΞΑΣΕΙ; and on what principles can this construction be accounted for, or justified, but by allowing the Holy Spirit to be a person? This I think is an observation of some consequence; and therefore accurate writers should beware of using the word *it*, and rather choose the pronoun *him*, when speaking of this divine Being.

The mention of divine Being reminds me of our second subject of inquiry, viz. Whether the Holy Ghost is very God? Here I should be glad to know what kind or degree of evidence will satisfy the inquirers. If we are so far humble and impartial as to prefer the declarations of an unerring word to the preconceptions of our mind, I think there is most sufficient proof afforded by the scriptures: whereas, if we bring not these dispositions to the search, it will be no wonder if we are bewildered, if we are given up to our own delusions; nay, it will be no incredible, no unprecedented thing, for God to hide these mysteries from such (in their own opinion) wise and prudent ones, while he reveals them to (men endued with the simplicity and teachableness of) babes.

Is that Being truly God, who is possessed of divine attributes? This question, I imagine, every body will answer in

the affirmative. So that, if it appears that the Holy Ghost is invested with the incommunicable attributes of the Deity, our assent will be won, and our dispute at an end. Is it not the prerogative of the all-seeing God to search the heart, and try the reins? Jer. xvii. 10. and is not this the undoubted prerogative of the blessed Spirit? 1 Cor. ii. 10. Is eternity an attribute of God, and of God only? Deut. xxxiii. 27. 1 Tim. vi. 16. This is clearly the property of the Holy Ghost, who is styled, by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, the Eternal Spirit, Heb. ix. 14. Is wisdom, undeived, essential wisdom, a character of God, called by the apostle, Jude, verse 25? This is the illustrious character of the Holy Ghost; he is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, Eph. i. 17. In consequence of which sacred excellency, he is able to lead his people into all truth. Is omnipresence a necessary proof of divinity? If so, the Holy Ghost challenges it upon this claim; for thus saith the inspired poet, "Whether shall I go, then, from thy Spirit?" Psalm cxxxix. 7. Is Omnipotence a sufficient attestation of the Godhead of the Holy Ghost? He that enableth mortals to controul the powers, to alter the course, to supercede the fundamental laws of nature, can he be less than the Lord God Almighty? Yet St. Paul declares, that his ability to work all manner of astonishing miracles for the confirmation of his ministry was imparted to him by the Spirit, Rom. xv. 19. If any farther proof is demanded, be pleased to consider, with an unprejudiced attention, that very memorable passage, Matth. xii. 31, 32. Surely, from an attentive consideration of this text, we must be constrained to acknowledge, that the Holy Ghost is strictly and properly God. Otherwise, how could the sin against him be of so enormous a nature, so absolutely unpardonable, and the dreadful cause of inevitable ruin? St. Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians (vi. 19.) addresses his converts with this remarkable piece of instruction, 'Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.' The same apostle, writing to the same believers, in his second epistle (vi. 16.) has the following expression, "Ye are the temples of the living God." Who can compare these texts, and yet be so hardy as deliberately to deny, that the Holy Ghost, and the living God, are one and the same? Besides, if these two scriptures, viewed in conjunction with each other, did not ascertain the divinity of the blessed Spirit, the very purport

of the expression, *Ye are temples of the Holy Ghost*, sufficiently evinces it. It is certain, that the very essence of a temple, or, to speak in the terms of the logician, the *differentia constitutiva* of a temple, consists in the residence of a Deity. The inhabitation of the highest created Being cannot constitute a temple; nothing but the in-dwelling of the one infinite almighty Lord God. Since, therefore, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit renders the bodies of Christians temples, it seems to be a clear case, that he is truly God. Another text, a text never omitted, when this point is under debate, and a text in my opinion, singly sufficient to give a final decision to the doubt, is in Acts v. 3, 4. where the person styled *AGION PNEYMA* in one verse, is expressly declared to be *THEOS* in the next. Now, can we imagine that an evangelist, under the guidance of unerring Wisdom, could write with such unaaccountable inaccuracy as the deniers of this article must maintain? Were this supposition admitted, I should almost begin to question the inspiration of the sacred books. At this rate, they would seem calculated to confound the judgment, and elude the common sense of the readers. For, to speak so frequently of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,—to speak in such language as we always use in distinguishing various persons,—to ascribe to them severally such attributes as, by universal acknowledgment, comport only with the supreme God,—nay, to call each person by himself, distinctly, expressly to call each person God and Lord;—sure, if, after all these declarations, there be not three persons in the one incomprehensible Godhead; if each of these illustrious persons be not very God; what can we say, but that the scriptures are inconsistent and self-contradictory pieces? So that, upon the whole, we are reduced to this dilemma, either to admit this absurd and impious charge upon the scriptures, or else to acknowledge the personality and divinity of the three persons in the adorable Trinity.

But, perhaps, a curious genius, that has been accustomed to enter deep into the rationale of things, that thinks it beneath a sagacious inquirer to credit, unless he can comprehend,—such a genius may ask, with a kind of amazement, How can these things be? Here I pretend to give no satisfaction. Here I confess myself at a loss. I cannot conceive how the principle of gravitation acts, or what constitutes the

power of attraction. If I cannot penetrate the hidden qualities of a thousand common objects that daily present themselves to my senses, no wonder that I should be unable to unravel the awful secrets of the divine nature; no wonder that I should be incapable of finding out to perfection that infinite Majesty who dwells in light inaccessible. Since the *TO EINAI* is attested by a multitude of witnesses from scripture, let us be content to wait for the *TO POS* till this gross interposing cloud of flesh and mortality flee away; until that happy hour arrives, that desirable state commences, when we shall no longer see through a glass darkly, but shall know even as we are known.

I should now proceed, according to the ability which the great Source of wisdom may please to bestow, to examine Mr. Tomkins's *Calm Inquiry*; but this is what my time, claimed by a variety of other engagements, will not permit; and what, I presume, you yourself, tired already by a tedious epistle, will very readily excuse. Hereafter, if you insist upon my executing the plan laid down in the beginning of this paper, I will communicate my remarks (such as they are) relating to the fore-mentioned treatise, with all that cheerful compliance and unreserved openness, which may most emphatically bespeak me, dear Sir,

Yours, &c.



## LETTER XXV.

*Weston-Favel, Feb. 9, 1745-6.*

**THANKS** to you, dear Sir, for your kind wishes. Blessed be the divine providence, I am now able to inform you, that what you wish is accomplished. I have had one of the most agreeable losses I ever met with; I have lost my indisposition, and am, in a manner, well.

I send herewith the poem on Christianity. The other books, which you have been pleased to lend me, will follow by the first opportunity. I read Mr. Hobson's performance

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with eagerness and delight. What is wrote by a valuable friend, has a kind of secret unaccountable charm. It may not be preferable to other compositions, yet methinks it pleases more.

I congratulate you, Sir, and my country, on the good news received from the north. How do you like Stackhouse's History of the Bible? I am sure he has one advantage, superior to all the historians of the world; that the facts which he relates are more venerable for their antiquity, more admirable for their grandeur, and more important on account of their universal usefulness. I have often thought that the scripture is finely calculated to furnish out the most exquisite entertainment to the imagination, from those three principal sources, mentioned by Mr. Addison, the Great, the Beautiful, and the New. But what is this compared with that infinitely noble benefit, to impart which is the professed design; the benefit of making us wise to salvation, of making us partakers of a divine nature?—I am, &c.



## LETTER XXVI.

*Weston-Favel, Feb. 11, 1745-6.*

DEAR SIR,

I RECEIVED your ticket some time ago, in which you desire me to consider some particular passages of scripture. After an afflictive indisposition, which confined me to my room several days, I have examined the texts you allege. They relate, I find, to that grand question, which has lately been the subject of our debate, the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. I could have wished that the controversy had been brought to a satisfactory and happy issue. Very unwilling to engage in it a second time, I must beg leave to sue for my *bene decessit*, and resign the management of so important a dispute to incomparably more able hands. However, in obedience to your request, (*quid enim amicitia denegandum?*) I shall briefly lay before you my opinion

concerning those portions of inspired wisdom ; and then proceed, in pursuance of my promise, to weigh, with calmness and impartiality, the most material of Mr. Tomkins's objections.

You observe, That the Father is never represented yielding obedience to Christ, or praying to Christ. I acknowledge the truth of the remark, and assign this clear and obvious reason, because it was the peculiar office of the second person of the Trinity to humble himself, to unite himself to flesh and blood, and to be made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted. Had not the blessed Jesus been clothed with our nature, and partook of our innocent infirmities, we should never have heard any such thing as his yielding obedience, or praying to another greater than himself. This results not from his essential, but his assumed nature ; nor is it at all repugnant to reason, to be inferior in one character, and at the same time absolutely equal in another. His Majesty King George may be inferior to the Emperor, in the capacity of Elector of Hanover ; he may be subject to the Imperial authority, as he is a prince of the Germanic body ; and yet equal to the most illustrious monarchs, obnoxious to no earthly jurisdiction, in his nobler quality of King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland. This seems to be a very easy and natural solution of the difficulty : whereas, I think, I may venture to defy the nicest metaphysician, or the most acute casuist, to reconcile the notions of divinity and inferiority. As well may contradictions be made compatible. A God who is inferior, is, to my apprehension, a perfect paradox. It is necessarily implied in the idea of God, That he be, as our old translation of the Psalms very emphatically and beautifully styles him, *The Most Highest*. Therefore, our Saviour, who often asserts his claim to divinity, declares, as an inseparable consequent of this high prerogative, All things which the Father hath are mine. Is the Father's existence inconceivable and eternal? the same also is the Son's. Has the Father an unequalled absolute supremacy? such likewise hath the Son.

But I see you have ready at hand to object, John xiv. 28. *My Father is greater than I.* Who are we to understand by the person I? Doubtless that Being who is capable of going and coming, who was sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another ; now with the disciples on earth, anon

separated from them by translation into heaven: and who can this be but the man Christ Jesus, the human nature of our Redeemer? The attribute of limited locality determines this point with the utmost clearness; why then should any one apply that property to the Godhead of our blessed Master, which he himself so plainly appropriates to his manhood?

This text very opportunely furnishes us with a key to enter into the true meaning of your next quotation, 1 Cor. xi. 3. The head of Christ is God. Only let St. John be allowed to expound St. Paul. I ask this single concession from my worthy friend, (and sure it is no unreasonable one.) Let us agree to pay a greater deference to the beloved disciple's comment than to Mr. Pierce's paraphrase, or the interpretation of the Arian creed, then the sense will be as follows, The Deity is the head of the Mediator. As the members are conducted by the head, and subservient to the head, so Christ Jesus, in his human capacity, acted and acts in subordination to the Godhead; obeying the significations of his will, and referring all his administrations to his glory. This exposition, I imagine, the context corroborates, and the scope of the apostle's arguing requires.

As for Heb. i. 8, 9. this text affirms, in the most express terms that Christ is God. And what can be a stronger proof of his unrivalled supremacy and sovereignty? But perhaps this may be one of those places in which, we are informed by our objectors, the word GOD signifies no more than a king or ruler, consequently does not prove our Redeemer to be God in reality, and by nature, but only to be complimented with this appellation, in respect of his office and authority. I believe, Sir, you will find, upon a more attentive inquiry, that this subtle distinction is contrary to the perpetual sense of the scriptures. A very celebrated critic observes, that wherever the name ELOHIM is taken in an absolute sense, and restrained to one particular person (as it is in the passage before us,) it constantly denotes the true and only God. Magistrates are indeed said to be Elohim, in relation to their office, but no one magistrate was ever so called; nor can it be said without blasphemy to any one of them, Thou art Elohim, or God. It is also recorded of Moses, Thou shalt be Elohim; yet not absolutely, but relatively only, a God to Pharaoh, and to Aaron, *i. e.* in God's

stead, doing, in the name of God, what he commanded, and declaring what he revealed. Besides, does not the apostle, in this very chapter, ver. 10. address the following acknowledgment to Christ? Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. And is not the work of creation the unshared prerogative and honour of the supreme God?—This I am pretty sure of, it is the prerogative of that God, to whom the worship of the saints, under the Old Testament, is directed; of that God who has declared himself jealous of his honour, and resolves not to give his glory to another. Melchisedec made this illustrious Being the object of his adoration, Blessed be the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: The day is thine, and the night is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun; was judged by the psalmist one of the noblest ascriptions of praise which could be made to the Deity. Jonah has left us a confession of his faith, and an abstract of his devotion in the following words; I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who hath made the sea and the dry land. Yet St. Paul assures us, that this great Creator and Proprietor of heaven and earth, this object of divine worship in all ages of the ancient church, is he—*when he had by himself purged our sins*, ver. 3. Now, can we view the magnificent system of the universe, the immensity of its extent, the vast variety of its parts, the inimitable accuracy of its structure, the perfect harmony of its motions, together with the astonishing energy and effects of its mechanic powers—can we contemplate this world of wonders, and withhold ourselves a single moment from ascribing the glory of incomparable wisdom and matchless perfections to its Maker? Can we glance an eye, or start a thought, through that ample field of miracles, which nature in all her scenes regularly exhibits, and still conclude, that the Author of all takes too much upon him, when he advances the following claim?

—————None I know

Second to me, or like, equal much less.—MILT.

Possibly our sceptical gentlemen are ready to reply, We are far from denying that Christ made the world: but we suppose that he made it only as a ministerial being; not by any sufficiency of his own, but by a power delegated to him

from the infinite Godhead. But sure the abettors of this opinion never considered that emphatical passage, (Col. i. 16.) By whatever artful evasion they may think to elude the force of the former expression, I cannot see what possible escape they can contrive from the latter. It is plain, from the philosophical principles of an apostle, that the universe was formed by Christ as the Almighty Artificer, for Christ as its final end; and is not this a demonstration that Christ was not a mere instrument, but the grand, glorious, self-sufficient Agent; the Alpha and Omega of all things?

After all that has been said upon this text, will it be intimated, that I have been partial in my examination of it?—that the sentence which most particularly favours your opinion, and looks with the most frowning aspect upon mine, is passed over without notice? namely, where it is taught, That God anointed Christ with the oil of gladness above his fellows, Heb. i. 9. I reply, by owning, that these words most undeniably imply inferiority; they imply a state of indigence, which wants something it has not naturally; a state of impotence, which receives from another what it cannot convey to itself. Surely then, this clause must, according to all the laws of just interpretation, be referred to that nature which admitted of such wants, and was subject to such infirmities. To ascribe it to that nature which is characterized as God, would be almost as affronting to reason as it is to the Deity. It is farther observable, that the very expression limits the sense to that capacity of our Redeemer, in which others stood related to him as fellows: And can this be any other than the human? Let me add one word more before I dismiss this inquiry: Suppose I was to shift sides in the dispute, and turn the tables upon the disciples of Arius. Gentlemen, since you take so much pains to prove the inferiority of our Lord Jesus Christ, permit me to try if I cannot outshoot you in your own bow. I will undertake to show, on your own principles, that he was inferior to millions of created beings; for this I have the positive and sure evidence of scripture, We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, Heb. ii. 9. These gentlemen, I verily think, would have so much regard for the honour of a person on whom their everlasting all depends, as to answer, with some becoming spirit, You are to distinguish between what our Saviour was made occasionally, and what he was originally:

Though his human nature was taken from a class of beings lower in dignity than the angels, yet his nobler and more exalted nature was greatly superior to them all. Now, Sir, as we must have recourse sometimes to this distinction, our adversaries themselves being our judges and our precedent, why should we not carry it along with us continually?—Without it a multitude of texts appear perplexed in their meaning, and clash with other scriptures; with it they drop their obscurity, are disentangled from their intricacy, and harmonize entirely with the whole tenor of sacred writ.

1 Cor. xv. 28. Is another scripture pointed out for consideration. This, I confess, is a difficult, and admitting it was (to me at least) an unintelligible passage, nay, directly repugnant to my hypothesis—what would be a rational procedure in this case? to renounce my faith, because I cannot reconcile it with one scripture, though it stands supported by a copious multiplicity of others? If, in debating on any question, there be five hundred ayes, and but one no, I appeal to the conduct of the Honourable House of Commons, whether it be reasonable that the point should be carried by the single negative, in opposition to so vast a majority of affirmatives? However, the state of our doctrine is not so bad, nor this text so diametrically opposite to it, as to destroy all hopes of establishing it with a *nemine contradicente*. The apostle affirms, that at the consummation of terrestrial things, when the state of human probation ends, and the number of the elect is completed, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all; i. e. according to my judgment, the Son, at the commencement of that grand revolution, will entirely resign the administration of his mediatorial kingdom; he will no longer act as an advocate or intercessor, because the reasons on which this office is founded, will cease for ever; he will no longer, as a high priest, plead his atoning blood in behalf of sinners, nor, as a king, dispense the succours of his sanctifying grace, because all guilt will be done away, and the actings of corruption be at an end: he will no longer be the medium of his people's access to the knowledge and enjoyment of the Father, because then they will stand perpetually in the beatific presence, and see face to face, know even as they are known. I may probably mistake the meaning of the words, but whatever shall ap-

pear to be their precise signification, this, I think, is so clear as not to admit of any doubt, that it relates to an incarnate person; relates to him who died for our sins, was buried and rose again; 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. And can the surrender of all authority made by the man Jesus Christ be any bar to his unlimited equality as God?

You refer me to Psalm viii. 5. and lxxxii. 1, 6. Exod. xxii. 28. and add, these texts prove that God signifies, in some places, king or ruler. I acknowledge that the word Elohim, in the afore-cited passages, signifies no more than angels, kings or rulers. But is this a demonstration that the word Jehovah, the incommunicable name, signifies no more than an angel, a king, or a ruler? This is the conclusion our adversaries are to infer; this the point they are to make good, otherwise their attempts drop short of the mark, fly wide from their purpose. Because it is plain from incontestable authorities, that Jesus is Jehovah. This was hinted in a former letter: and if you please to compare Isa. vi. 3. with John xii. 41. you will find another convincing evidence, that the Jehovah of the Jews is the Jesus of the Christians. Besides, in all those places where the term God is used to denote some created being, invested with considerable authority, or possessed of considerable dignity, the connexion is such, as absolutely to exclude the person so denominated from any title to a divine nature; whereas, when the name of God is applied to the second person of the Trinity, it is connected with such consequents or antecedents as necessarily include the idea of divinity and supremacy. For instance, when the apostle recognizes the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in those remarkable words, Rom. ix. 5. Who is God; lest this idle piece of sophistry should have any room for admittance, he adds a most determining clause—over all, blessed for ever. I have called it idle sophistry, for really it is nothing else. Only observe the process of the pretended argument, and you yourself will allow it no better appellation. What is designed for the argument runs thus: Because rulers of distinction have sometimes the title of Elohim, therefore Jesus, who has the title of Jehovah, is not very God, but only a ruler of distinction; or, the word of God, when necessarily determined by the context to some subordinate being, signifies a subordinate being; therefore the word God, when necessarily de-

terminated by the context to signify the supreme God; does not signify the supreme God, but only some subordinate being. These are the mighty reasonings, such the formidable artillery with which the adherents of Arius attack the divinity and equality of our Saviour. May the arms of our foreign enemies and intestine rebels be made, in their kind, of such metal, consist of such strength! and I may venture to address my countrymen in David's encouraging language, Let no man's heart fail because of them.

I hope it will not be objected that I have sometimes mistook the particular point to be discussed, and confounded the divinity of our Lord with his equality to the Father. I own I have not been scrupulously careful to preserve any such distinction, because I am persuaded it is perfectly chimerical. Whoever admits the former grants the latter; the one cannot subsist without the other; or rather they are one and the same thing. To be equal, with the Father is to be divine; and to be divine, is to be equal to the Father. An inferior Deity was a notion that passed current in the Heathen world; but we have not so learned the divine nature as to adopt it into our creed. It is a proposition that confutes itself. The predicate and subject are self-contradictory. God certainly means a being of incomparable, unparalleled glory and perfection. No one will dare to give a lower definition of the Godhead. Yet this the first term of the sentence affirms, the second denies. Whenever I hear the awful word God, I form an idea of a being possessed of absolute supremacy. Inferiority is altogether as inconsistent with my apprehension of the Godhead, as a limited extension is with immensity. The schoolman's maxim is strictly true when applied to the divine nature, that his properties and excellencies *non recipiunt magis aut minus*. Besides, Sir, is there not another apparent inconveniency, another inextricable difficulty, attending this superfine distinction? Does it not suppose, instead of distinct persons, distinct beings, distinct essences? That which is inferior cannot be the very same with its superior. Identity, in this case, consists not with inequality. The consequence of this tenet is a polytheism.

For my part, I lay it down as an incontestible principle, such as reason and scripture concur to establish, that whatever, whosoever is God, must be absolutely supreme. I





## LETTER XXVII.

*Weston-Favel, Nov. 22, 1746.*

DEAR SIR,

AS I cannot attend the infirmary this day, permit me to take this opportunity of acknowledging the favour of your last.

The sermon you was pleased to lend me I admire. Christ the great propitiation is, with me, a most favourite subject; and I think the author has been so happy as to treat it in a clear, nervous, pathetic manner. I am delighted with his reply, and rejoice to observe it has passed a second edition. I hope the antidote will operate, and spread as wide as the poison. This writer has another recommendation. His conciseness, added to perspicuity, renders his arguments easy to be apprehended, and not difficult to be remembered. I am so much charmed with his performance, that I beg leave to keep it a few days longer; and should take it as a favour, if, in the mean time, you will give the bookseller an order to send for one of the sermons for me.

I heartily applaud the zeal you shew for the spiritual welfare of the patients. The infirmary would be an inestimable blessing, if, by the grace of God, it might be productive of a reformation in the persons whom it admits and discharges. As distressed objects will, in all probability, resort to it from all parts of the country, a change wrought in their hearts, and a renewal begun in their lives, might be a happy means of diffusing religion far and near. I hope the clergy concerned in the management of the infirmary, will, with delight and assiduity, concur in the prosecution of so desirable an end. I can promise for one, so far as God shall give him ability, I wish some proper scheme was contrived for the execution of this design, in which I might bear some little part, without giving umbrage to my brethren, or alarming their jealousy. I have sometimes thought of offering to give the patients a kind of lecture or exhortation once-a-week, formed upon some or other of those scriptures, which are the standing mementos of their wards.\* But sometimes

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\* Texts of scripture in the Northampton, Winchester, and several other infirmaries, are written on the walls, and consequently are very useful, if seriously reflected on.

doubtful whether such a proposal would meet with acceptance, sometimes checked by the infirmities of my constitution, I have hitherto neglected to mention the affair; however, I now venture to submit it to your consideration. To this, or any other more adviseable method, I should very readily contribute the best of my assistance.

‘Are you inclined, dear Sir, to give the poor creatures all the instruction in the Christian religion you are capable of? We take you at your word; and henceforward look upon you as an associate in our great work. In a warfare of such unspeakable importance, we are glad to strengthen our force by the accession of every ally; much more of such an auxiliary, as will be regarded by the patients with such an uncommon degree of attention and pleasure. Nor can I think it any wise inconsistent with the office of a physician, or any derogation from the dignity of his character, to feel the pulse of the soul, to examine into the symptoms of spiritual maladies, to ask exploring questions concerning the habit of the mind, and prescribe accordingly, either for the purging off the peccant humours of vice, or corroborating the relaxed powers of grace.

May that infinitely condescending and compassionate Being, who disdained not, in his own sacred person, to take our sicknesses, and bear our infirmities, both direct your counsels, and prosper your endeavours in this momentous affair.

I purpose to wait upon you some afternoon in the next week, and cannot think of a more agreeable topic of conversation, than that of concerting measures for the proper exertion of this labour of love, and encouraging each other to abound in the work of the Lord. I am, dear Sir, &c.

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.

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