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GOOD NEWS *from* HEAVEN:

O R,

The GOSPEL *a joyful Sound.*

The SUBSTANCE of a

S E R M O N,

Preached, at the

LOCK CHAPEL,

N E A R

H Y D E P A R K C O R N E R,

On Sunday, June 19, 1774.

By AUGUSTUS TOPLADY, A. B.

VICAR of BROAD HEMBURY.

*How excellent is Thy Loving-kindness, o God!
Therefore the Children of Men put their Trust
under the Shadow of Thy Wings. Pl. xxxvi. 6.*

L O N D O N:

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15-9-20

P S A L M LXXXIX. 15, 16.

Blessed are the People that know the joyful Sound! they shall walk, O Lord, in the Light of Thy Countenance: In Thy Name shall they rejoice all the Day, and in Thy Righteousness shall they be exalted.

I Have often wondered at the Hardiness of those Writers, who have presumed to affirm, that *the Gospel*, or Message of free and full Salvation by the Blood and Righteousness of God's co-æternal Son, *was unknown to those who lived under the legal Dispensation.*

Nothing can be more untrue. We may as reasonably affirm, that *the Sun did not shine* during the Legal Dispensation. And as it was the same Sun, which now shines, that then illuminated the World; so it was the self same *Sun of Righteousness*, who now rises upon the Souls of his People *with healing in his Beams* *, that then shone upon God's Elect, visited

* Mal. iv. 2.

them with the Irradiations of his Love, and saved them by Faith in his own future Righteousness and Atonement. *Unto us, saith the Apostle, is the Gospel preached, as well as unto them* †. And again, *These all dyed in Faith, having seen the Promises afar off; and were persuaded of them* [*περοθωδες, were assured of Interest in them*], *and embraced them* ‡. So that we may confidently affirm, concerning all God's enlightened People who lived before the Messiah's Incarnation, that, like Abraham *, they *saw the Day of Christ in Perspective, and rejoiced in the believing Anticipation of that blessed Sight.*

As the Depravation of human Nature is intrinsically the same, in all Ages; and as Men, in and of themselves, were neither better nor worse, during the Mosaic Oeconomy, than they have been ever since, and are at this Day; it follows, that, the Disorder being the self same, the Remedy likewise must be the same: and, of Course, that *there are not two Ways of Salvation, one for the believing Jews, and another for the believing Gentiles; but that our Lord's Declaration ever did, and ever must, stand good, I am THE Way, THE Truth, and THE Life: No Man cometh to the Father, but by ME* †. Suppose, we carry our Appeal to this Psalm, for the Truth of the Observation here made? What do you think David sings of, in the Text? certainly, he sings of those supernatural Comforts im-

† Heb. iv. 2. ‡ Heb. xi. 13. * John viii. 56. § John xiv. 6.

parted

parted by the Holy Ghost, and which, the Psalmist knew, would be procured, for all the Elect, by the Blood of Christ. Hence, he likewise celebrates the Praises of that *Righteousness*, in which, and in which alone, the Redeemed of the Lord are *exalted* to a State of Communion with God, and to the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.

No Wonder, therefore, that a Psalm, so richly fraught with Evangelic Truth, should open in a Strain of Praise and Thanksgiving to that God of all Grace, whose Love to his People embraced them without Beginning, and shall follow them without End. *I will sing of the Mercies of the Lord forever : with my Mouth will I make known thy Faithfulness, to all Generations.* Now, do you think that David did not enjoy, what has since been called, the *full Assurance* of Faith? or can you imagine, that David was unacquainted with what has since been termed, the Doctrine of *final Perseverance*? certainly, he was led into the clear Perception of both these Truths; else, he could not have said, *I will sing of the Mercies of the Lord FOREVER* : not only to-day, and to-morrow, if I live; not only this Year, and the next, if I live; nor only through Life, but when I come to dye; and not only when I pass through the Streams of Death, but when I am landed safe on the other Side; the high Praises, of His Mercy and Faithfulness, shall be *ever* in my Mouth. David was egregiously mistaken in his Views, if what some
blas-

blasphemously affirm be true, that “ he, who is a Child of God to-day, may be a Child of the Devil to-morrow.” You must either deny that the Psalmist wrote under the unerring Guidance of God’s Spirit; or you must admit, that the final Preservation of God’s renewed People is a Doctrine of God’s Book.

But it is not enough for true Believers to be sensible of *the Mercy of the Lord*, and of the *Perpetuity* of his Grace: they wish to diffuse the Savor of his Name far and wide, and to realize David’s Resolution, *with my Mouth will I MAKE KNOWN thy Faithfulness to all Generations*. Some, who know the Truth, shun to declare it, and are afraid to speak out: they hide Christ’s Mark in the Palm of their Hands, instead of wearing it on their Foreheads; and wrap up their Christianity in a Cloke of Secresy; as if they deemed it their highest Dishonor, to be seen with Christ’s Livery upon their Backs. On the contrary, such Believers as are *strong in Faith, giving Glory to God*, instead of sneaking to Heaven through Bye-ways and private Roads, concealed in a covered Litter, with the Curtains drawn close about them; rather wish to go thither, over the public Road of a declared Profession, in an open Chariot, so as to be seen and known of all Men. But MINISTERS of the Gospel, above all Mankind beside, should, *with their Mouths, make known God’s Faithfulness*; and, instead of desiring to sink into Heaven at the Back-door (if any such door there be),
march

march publicly, with Colors flying, and with Sound of Trumpet, to the Great Gate of the Celestial City, and labor to carry thither as many Souls with them as they possibly can. Hence, they must be *urgent* and importunate, *in Season and out of Season*; re-proving, rebuking, and exhorting, *with all long-suffering and Doctrine* *: the Ministry of the Word being the principal Reaping-hook, which God's Spirit makes Use of, to cut off the poysonous Ex-crescences of Self-Righteousness, to cut down the banefull Weeds of practical Licentiousness, and to gather elect Sinners to the sanctifying and saving Knowledge of Himself. Let it, however, be observed, that the ministerial Calls and Exhortations of God's Embassadors, urged and addressed as well to the awakened, as the unawakened; do by no Means imply, that, in the Divine Intention, Grace is universal, as the Arminians talk: nor that Man, by a proper Use of his reasonable Facultys, becomes the Architect of his own Salvation. No. Quite the contrary. A Fisher, who stands upon the Shore, and plunges his Net into the Sea *at large*, is not so frantic as to think of catching *all* the Fishes in the Sea, though he offers the Net indefinitely, and without Exception. So, when a Christian Minister spreads the Gospel-Net, he preaches to *all* that come within the Sphere of his Address: not with an Expectation of catching *all*, but of catching *as many*

* II Tim. iv. 2.

as God shall please; knowing, that it is the Holy Spirit alone, who can drive Souls into the Net, and effectually catch them for Jesus Christ.

What was it, which made David so desirous to *sing of the Mercies of the Lord*? What was it that warmed and emboldened him, at all Events, to *make known Jehovah's Faithfulness, from one Generation to another*? It was the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, *seen in the Light of the Spirit, and experienced through the Influence of Grace.* Here is the Reason of David's Zeal: *for I have said, Mercy shall be built up forever, thy Faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very Heavens.* What is this *Mercy*, that is *built up forever*; but the glorious and the gracious Scheme, the glorious and the gracious Fabric, of our Salvation, founded in the eternal Purpose of God—carried into Execution by the Labors and the Death of Jesus Christ—and then applied and brought Home to the Heart by the illuminating and converting Power of the Holy Ghost? This is that *Mercy*, which is *built up forever.* It was planned, from everlasting: and will know no Ruin or Decay, through the illimitable Line of Eternity itself. Who is the Builder of this Fabric? Not Man's Free-will. Not Man's own Righteousness, nor Wisdom. Not human Power, nor human Skill. Every true Believer will here join Issue with David, that it is GOD, and God ALONE, who builds up the Temple of his Church; and who, as the Builder of it, is alone intitled to all the Glory.

The

The Elect constitute and form one grand *House of MERCY*: an House, erected to display and to perpetuate the Riches of the Father's Free Grace, of the Son's atoning Merit, and of the Holy Ghost's efficacious Agency. This House, contrary to the Fate of all sublunary Buildings, will never *fall* down, nor ever be *taken* down. As nothing can be added † to it, so nothing can be diminished from it. Fire cannot injure it: Storms cannot overthrow it: Age cannot impair it. It stands on a *Rock* §, and is immoveable as the Rock on which it stands: the threefold Rock of God's inviolable Decree, of Christ's finished Redemption, and of the Spirit's never-failing Faithfulness. God is neither an unwise, a feeble, nor a capricious Architect. He does not form a wretched Scheme, liable to be frustrated, and which will hardly hang together at best: but All is well-ordered; All is everlasting; All is sure; and nothing consigned to After-thought or Peradventure. God having *irreversibly* drawn his Plan, and Christ having *completely* accomplished the Redeeming Work assigned him; the Sacred Spirit has only to breathe upon the Hearts of his People in Effectual Calling, give them Faith, imbue them with inward Holiness, preserve and increase the Holiness he communicates, lead them forth in the Paths of outward Duty and Obedience, exercise them with Desertions, visit them with his Comforts,

† Eccles. iii. 14. § Matth. vii. 25. and xvi. 18.

B

keep

keep them from falling, or restore them when fallen, seal them to the Day of Christ, and carry them safely through Death to Heaven.

Thus, *Mercy shall be built up forever*. And as surely as this Book is the Book of God, as surely as the Spirit of God inspired it, and inclined David to write these Words; so surely is That a Truth, which the Words themselves convey. No Part of Salvation is left at sixes and sevens; but the whole is a Plan which does Honor to infinite Wisdom: a Plan, conceived and *bid* * in the allwise Mind of God from eternal Ages, but afterwards externally made known in the written Word, or Gospel of Grace; and savingly unfolded in the Souls of Men, when the blessed Spirit begins to turn us from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God †.

I was, Yesterday, at some little Distance from Town: and received a very refined Entertainment, in going over a most superb and elegant Mansion, which, both within and without, exhibited such a Combination of Magnificence, Beauty, and Perfection of Taste; that I could not help feeling a Curiosity to know, how long that masterly Edifice was in building? and, on being informed, that it was both *founded* and *finished*, within the Compass of ten Months only; I could not help observing, to some Friends who were with me, That if human Art and

* Eph. iii. 9.

† Acts xxvi. 18.

human

human Hands could rear so transcendent a Fabric as this, in so short a Space; why should we think it strange, that Jesus Christ was able to finish, and that He actually did finish, the Fabric of Man's Salvation in a Course of three-and-thirty Years?

Blessed be God, our Salvation IS a finished Work. It neither needs, nor will admit of, Supplement. And here, let us remember, that, when we talk of a *finished Salvation*, we mean, that *complete* and *infallibly effectual* REDEMPTION, accomplished by the Propitiatory Merit of Christ's own personal Obedience and of Christ's own personal Sufferings: both one and the other of which have that infinite Perfection of atoning and of justifying Efficacy, that 'tis utterly out of our Power to add any thing to the Merit or Validity of either. Every Individual of Mankind, for whom Christ *obeyed*, and for whom He *bled*, shall most certainly be *SAVED* by his Righteousness and Death, not one of the Redeemed Number excepted; seeing Christ has paid, completely paid, the Debt of perfect Obedience and of penal Suffering: so that Divine Justice must become unjust, e'er it be possible for a single Soul to perish for all or any of those Debts which Christ took upon Himself to discharge, and which he has absolutely discharged accordingly.

Arminianism cannot digest this grand Bible-Truth. Hence that poor, dull, blind Creature, Bishop *Taylor*, tells us, some where, if I mistake not, that "*We are to*

“ *atone for our great Sins, by weeping; and for our little Sins, by sighing*”. If our Sins have no other Atonement than This, we shall go on weeping, and wailing, and gnashing our Teeth, to all Eternity. But, Thanks to Divine Grace, the Work of Atonement is not now to do. Christ has already *put away our Sins, by the SACRIFICE of HIMSELF**. We are acquitted from Guilt, and reconciled to God, not by our own Tears, but by *the precious Blood of Jesus Christ, as of a Lamb without Spot or Blemish †*: — not our own Sighs, and Tears, and Sorrows; but the Humiliation, the Agony, the bloody Sweat, and the bitter Death, of HIM who did no Sin, of HIM who was found in Fashion as a Man, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross; these, and these alone, are *the Propitiation for our Sins* ||. And as surely as Christ obeyed, as surely as Christ expired, as surely as He rose again, as surely as He intercedes for all the People of His Love; so certainly will they *all*, first and last, be enabled to sing of *His Faithfulness; to all Generations*; and of that *Mercy which shall be built up forever* in their full, free, and final Glorification.

This is farther confirmed, by those Words of the Psalmist, *thy Faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very Heavens*. As much as to say: ‘ When all thy Chosen, Redeem’d, and Converted People are assembled round thy Throne; then Thou wilt,

* Hebr. ix. 26. † 1 Pet. i. 19. || I John ii. 2.

† *in the very Heavens*, give an everlasting Proof of
 ‘thy everlasting *Faithfulness*.’ So far will God be,
 from leaving his People to perish in their Passage
 through the Wilderness of Life, or through the
 River of Death; that he will present them, all,
faultless before the Presence of his Glory with exceeding
*joy**. God loves his *Jewels* † too well, and Christ
 bought them at too dear a Rate, and the Holy
 Spirit polishes them with too much Attention,
 either to throw them away, or to lose them, at last.
 No: they shall be *made up* †; their Number shall be
 accomplished; and in their Glorification will the
 whole Trinity be glorify’d.

Now, after surveying some of the Branches, let
 us look at the grand Root from whence they spring.
 Having taken a cursory View of these Streams, by
 which the Church of God is enriched unto Salvation;
 let us endeavor to contemplate them in their great
 Source and Head. That you’ll find, in Verse the
third; where God the Father says, *I have made a*
COVENANT with my Chosen, I have sworn unto David
my Servant, Thy Seed will I establish FOREVER, and
build up thy Throne to all Generations. Do you sup-
 pose, that this was spoken to David, in his own
 Person only? no, indeed: but to David as the
Anti-type, Figure, and Fore-runner of JESUS CHRIST.
 Hence, the Septuagint Version renders it, *I have*
covenanted τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς με, *with my Elect People, or*

* Jude 24.

† † Mal. iii. 17.

with

with my Chosen Ones : i. e. with them in Christ, and with Christ in their Name. *I have sworn unto David my Servant*, unto the Messiah, who was typified by David ; unto my co-æternal Son, who stipulated to take on Himself the Form of a Servant ; *Thy Seed*, i. e. all those whom I have given to Thee in the Decree of Election, all those whom thou shalt live and dye to redeem, *These will I establish forever*, so as to render their Salvation irreversible and inamissible ; *and build up thy Throne*, thy Mediatorial Throne, as King of Saints, and Covenant Head of the Elect, *to all Generations* : there shall always be a Succession of favor'd Sinners to be called and sanctify'd, in consequence of thy fœderal obedience unto Death ; and every Period of Time shall recompence thy Covenant-Sufferings, with an increasing Revenue of converted Souls, 'till *as many as are ordained to eternal Life* * are gather'd in.

Observe, here, that, when Christ received this Promise from the Father, concerning the *Establishment* of his [i. e. of Christ's] *Throne* to all Generations ; the plain Meaning is, that his *People* shall be thus *established* : for, consider Christ in his *Divine Capacity* as the Son of God, and His Throne was already established, and had been from everlasting ; and would have continued to be established without End, even if He had never been incarnate at all. Therefore, the Promise imports, that Christ shall

* Acts xiii. 48.

reign, not simply as a Person in the Godhead (which he ever did, and ever will, and ever must); but relatively, mediatorially, and in His Office-Character, as the Deliverer and King of Sion. Hence it follows, that His People cannot be lost: for he would be a poor Sort of King, who had, or might have, no Subjects to reign over. Consequently, that Throne of Glory, on which Christ sits, is already encircled in part, and will at last be completely surrounded, and made still more glorious, by that *innumerable Company, that general Assembly, and Church of the first-born, who are written in Heaven* §: for the Remission of whose Sins, his Blood was shed; for the Justification of whose Persons, his Righteousness was wrought; for the Preservation of whom in a State of Grace, his Intercession is still carry'd on in Heaven; and to recover and retrieve whom from the personal Dishonors of Sin, the Holy Spirit comes down, and takes up his Abode in their Hearts, nor will ever cease from his gracious Guardianship, 'till he has sanctify'd them into the Kingdom of God.

Well may the Psalmist add, *And the Heavens shall praise thy Wonders, o Lord; thy Faithfulness also in the Congregation of the Saints.* What are we, here, to understand, by the *Heavens*? I should suppose, the primary Inhabitants of Heaven; namely, the Angels of Light. Electing Goodness, Re-

§ Hebr. xii. 23.

deeming

Seeming Mercy, Sanctifying Grace, and Preserving Power, so beneficently exhibited in the Salvation of fallen Man, are Wonders even to the very Angels themselves. But are Angels the only Beings, who shall *wonder* at this Display of Love? No: *thy Faithfulness also in the Congregation of the Saints.* In the Congregation of believing Saints below, and of glorified Saints above. For Saints and Angels, in the great Result of Things, when the Transactions of Grace and Providence shall be unfolded and clearly laid open to the delighted View; at that august Period, Saints and Angels, the redeem'd and the unredeem'd (but both elected, the one as well as the other), Spirits that were always unembodied, and Saints whose Souls were for a Time dislodged from the Body in consequence of Original Sin, but who shall receive their Bodies again in the Resurrection of the Just; all these, when they stand and shine above, shall join in casting their Crowns, and in striking their golden Lyres to the Praises of Him who has *loved* his People, and *Redeemed* them unto God *by his Blood* §.

Time will not allow me to consider, as I designed, all the præliminary Verses which lead to the Text. Enough, I hope, has been observed, to justify the Declaration, with which the Text begins: *Blessed are the People that know the joyful Sound!* awfully intimating, that there are some, who sit within the

§ Rev. v. 9.

Sphere

Sphere of this joyful Sound, but who *know* it, feel it, and enjoy it not. It is, to them, à *Vox, et præterea nihil*: a Sound, and no more than a Sound. But the *Blessedness* results, to those who *know* the joyful Sound: and whose believing Souls can say, The Free Blessings of the Gospel are all our Salvation, and all our Desire.

It is a very common Thing, when we talk of *knowing* the Things that belong to our spiritual and eternal Peace, for unconverted People to cry out, *Oh, how presumptuous you are!* I totally deny the Charge. It is *not* præsumptuous, to take God at his Word, and to *believe* and be sure that *there shall be a Performance of the Things which are spoken and promised by the Lord* †. Thus, when God avers to the penitent Sinner, *I even I am He that blot out thy Transgressions, for My own Sake, and will not remember thy Sins* †; it is not Humility, but præsumption itself, and the very Quintessence of Unbelief, that bids us put a Negative on God's solemn Affirmation; and induces us to question whether He will indeed make good His Promise. I am firmly of opinion, that the Man, who reads and professes to believe the Bible, must have a large Stock of *Assurance*, in the worst Sense of the Word (i. e. of Audaciousness and Effrontery), if he ventures to deny, that ASSURANCE; in the best Sense of the Word, or a clear Perception and Conviction

‡ Luke i: 45.

† Isai. xliiii. 25.

of Interest in God's pardoning Love, is the possible Privilege of Christ's converted People. These will certainly concur with David, in pronouncing them *blessed, who know the joyful Sound*: who know it when they hear it, and who know it *for themselves*: whose Hearts have been ploughed up, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Gospel-feed; and in whom it springs into *Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost* ||. This, and this alone, comes up to the full Idea of *knowing* the Joyful Sound. Hence we may learn, *Who* the Persons are, that know it indeed. Not Church-of-England People, in exclusion of others; not Romanists; not Members of the Church of Scotland; nor, in short, the Partizans of any one Denomination in particular. But the many Individuals, who, thro' Grace, are enabled to *know the joyful Sound*, are Those whom God *takes out* of all these and other Denominations, to be *a People for His Name* †: to-wit, the ELECT, of every Age, Place, and Party. All God's *converted*, all his *repenting*, all his *believing*, all his *obeying* People, through the whole Extent of the Earth, from under one end of the Heavens to the other; All, whose hearts are touched by the attractive Power of his divine Spirit; are *the People that know the joyful Sound*.

The joyful Sound of WHAT? Of that free Grace, which it is the Business of God's Ministers to pro-

Rom. xiv. 17.

† Acts xv. 14.

clame,

clame, saying, *Peace, peace, to him that is far off, and to him that is near* *. That joyful Sound, which says, *Ho, every one* (without exception of Time, or Place, or Person) *Ho, every one that THIRSTETH, come ye to the Waters* † of Life, Joy, and Salvation. But observe, that even this is not an *universal* Call. God forbid, that I should be misunderstood, by any who hear me this Day. Don't imagine, that I am hoisting the *Arminian* Colors, and hanging out the false *Arminian* Flag. No, by no means. I suppose, there is hardly a more *indefinite* Call, in all God's Word, than That which I quoted last. But then, take Notice, it is addressed *only* to those that *thirst*: i. e. to Those, who so far *know the joyful Sound*, as to WISH for an experimental Participation of the Blessings it proclaims. It would be frivolous, to call *them* to the Waters, *who do not thirst*. It would be ridiculous Mockery, should we invite the *Dead* to sit down at table, and lay a Plate and Knife and Fork before them, and ask them *Why they WILL NOT eat?* The plain Fact is, *they CAN NOT eat*, or drink. They must be made *alive*, e'er they can have so much as an *Appetite* to either.

There is a Passage, very frequently, but very idly, insisted upon by the Arminians; as if it were an Hammer, which would, at one Stroke, crush the whole Fabric of Free Grace to Powder. The Passage is, *Why will ye dye, O House of Israel* §? But

* Isai. lvii. 19. † Isai. lv. 1. § Ezek. xviii. 31.

it so happens, that the *Death*, here alluded to, is neither *spiritual* Death, nor *eternal* Death: as abundantly appears from the whole Tenor of the Chapter. The *Death*, intended by the Prophet, is a *political* Death: a Death of *national* Prosperity, Tranquillity, and Security. And the sense of the Question is, fairly and præcisely, this: *What is it, that makes You in love with Captivity, Banishment, and civil Ruin? Abstinence from the Worship of Images might, as a People, exempt you from those Calamitys, and once more render you a respectable Nation. Are the Miserys of public Devastation so very alluring, as to attract your determined Pursuit? Why will ye die? die, as the House of Israel; and considered as a Political Body?* Thus reasonably did the Prophet argue the Case. Adding, at the same Time, this no less reasonable Declaration: *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no Pleasure in the Death of him that dieth. Wherefore, turn yourselves, and live ye.* Which imports these two Things: 1. That the national Captivity of the Jews added nothing to the *Happiness* of God. It brought HIM no Accession, either of Profit or Pleasure. And I should wonder much, if (philosophically speaking) any Thing whatever could add to the Divine Felicity, which is already Infinite; and, consequently insusceptible of Augmentation. — 2. That, if the Jews turned from Idolatry, and flung away their Images; they should not die in a foreign hostile Country, but live peaceably

ably in their own Land, and enjoy their Libertys, as an independent People.

And now, what has all this to do with the Blessings of *Grace* and *Glory*? No more than it has to do with Gog and Magog. Would it not be very absurd, if I was to stand in a Church-Yard, and say, to the Dead Bodys there interred, *Why will ye dye?* Nor, in my Idea, would it be less so, were I to ask a spiritually dead Sinner, *Why wilt thou die?* Alas, he is *dead already**: and to put such a

Quæstion

* An ingenious Pen has lately exposed, with equal *Strength* and *Delicacy*, the impertinent Application, which *Arminianism* makes, of the Prophet Ezekiel's Quæstion and Exhortation.

“ Arise, ye *dead*,” ARMINIUS crys;

“ Arise, ye dead in Sin!

“ unstop your Ears, unseal your Eyes,

“ and a new *Life* begin.

“ Why will ye die, ye wretched Souls?

“ ye *dead*, why will ye die?

“ Quicken and make your Spirits whole:

“ to *Life* eternal fly.”

As BAAL's Worshippers, of old,
beg'd, pray'd, and cry'd aloud;
cutting their Bodys, as we're told,
to move a fancy'd god;

So on the Idol Man he'll call,
and pompously declare,
tho' slightly damag'd by the Fall,
how great his Powers are.

“ Rise, noble Creature! Man, arise!

“ and make yourself alive!

“ prepare yourself to mount the Skys;

“ for endless *Glory* strive.”

Deluded Seer! But Man will lye
still senseless as a Stone;
and you yourself stand fooling by,
'till both are quite undone:

Unless

Question to One in such a State, would be, in reality, to ask a Man, *who IS ALREADY fallen in Adam* (as every Man is), *why WILT thou fall in Adam?* Let Arminians rant in this Manner, if they think fit. They shall, for me, have all the Ranting, unenvy'd and unrival'd, to themselves. I think, it will not bear Water.

Quite a different Thing is the *joyful Sound of Gospel Grace*. It imparts *Life* to the Dead, and *Health* to the Living. *You hath He quicken'd, who were DEAD in Trespasses and Sins**. And, says God; concerning his quicken'd Church, *I will* [not, tantalize her with an empty Offer; but actually] *bring it HEALTH and Cure †*. Regeneration gives spiritual Life, and Sanctification gives spiritual Health, to the Soul. How is spiritual Health *evidenced* to Ourselves and Others? Not by lolling in the elbow Chair of Sloth: but by abounding in the Work of the Lord. For, however some People may call us *Antinomians* (as Christ himself and the Apostles were so || called before us, by the unblushing Pharisees of that Age), and *falsely accuse our good Conversation ‡*, as tho' we were Enemies to the Moral

Unless Almighty Power be mov'd
by God's Free-will, not thine,
to quicken both, and make his Love
on both your Hearts to shine.

See, *Serious Essays, in Verse*, P. 104.

By the Rev. Mr. JOHN RYLAND, junior.

* Eph. ii. 1. † Jer. xxxiii. 6. || Matth. xi. 19, with
Rom. iii. 8. ‡ I Pet. iii. 16.

Law;

Law ; We are so far from it, that (I aver it boldly, and let any contradict me if they can) — We, who believe Salvation to be the absolute Gift of Grace, are *the only People that assert the due HONORS of the Law, and establish it's AUTHORITY on an unshaken Basis.*

1. We *assert its Honors*, by considering it as a Transcript of God's own Holiness ; as absolutely perfect, in all it's Requisitions ; as the invariable Standard of moral Excellency ; as the sublime Rule, by which Christ Himself adjusted his own matchless Obedience ; and as the School-master, which, in subserviency to the Holy Spirit's Influence, prepares us (by the Severity of it's Discipline) for the Reception of Christ, and for hearing, to good Purpose, that *Sound of Gospel Grace*, which is *joyfull* to those only, whom the Law, thus viewed, has * instrumentally convinced of Sin.

2. We *establish it's* || *Authority*, by grafting our Obedience to it upon the never-dying Principle of § Love to Christ ; by aiming at Practical Conformity to it's Præcepts, as the grand visible Evidence of our Part in God's † Election and in the Messiah's † Redemption ; by believing and asserting, that it still remains in full Force, and will so remain while the Sun and Moon endure, as the Rule of our moral Walk ; and by beseeching God the Holy Ghost to

* Gal. iii. 24. Rom. iii. 20. || Rom. iii. 31. § I Cor. xiii. 8. *with* Matth. xxvii. 40. †† I Pet. i. 2.

write

† write it upon our Hearts accordingly. For; whatever is; absolutely, of moral Obligation; is; and must be; in its very Nature, irrepealable.

Thus does the *Joyfull Sound* proclame the Majesty, and even add to the Sanctions, of the Moral Law. To *fullfill* the whole Righteousness of that Law, and to *endure* it's awfull Penalty, as a Covenant of Works; the SON of God most High bowed the Heavens and came down.—To make his ransomed People *love* that Law, as a Directory of Conduct; and to make them actually transcribe it's Maxims into their *Lives*, as a Medium of their Conformity to God; the uncreated SPIRIT descends upon their Souls as a Dove, and works in them both to will and to do.

But still we must consider the Law, as in the Hand of † Christ: and remember, that *the LOVE of God*, graciously * *shed abroad in the Heart*, is that only acceptable Principle, from which believers act.

Now, that *joyfull Sound*, which the People are pronounced *blessed* who *know*; consists, greatly, in what the Word of God brings to light, concerning § that *eternal Purpose* of electing Grace, *which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord*. For, notwithstanding the prophane Endeavors of some, to misrepresent that great and precious Truth; as a gloomy, uncomfortable Doctrine; they, whose

† Heb. viii. 10.
§ Eph. iii. 11.

† I Cor. ix. 21.

* Rom. v. 5.

Eyes

Eyes God has enlightened, and they, whose Hearts God has touched, know, that it is not a gloomy, but a joyful, Sound: and all their Hearts Desire is, *O that I might, with more unclouded Faith, behold my Name shining in the Lamb's Book of Life!* Christ Himself, that great Preacher of Præ-destination, and who certainly was a competent Judge of the Quæstion in Hand; consider'd ELECTION as an heart-reviving Doctrine: or He would never have commanded His Disciples to *rejoice* BECAUSE *their Names are written in Heaven* *. Whoever professes to preach the Gospel, without taking absolute *Election* into the Account; that Minister turns his Back upon the Tree of Life, quenches one of the capital Lights which he ought to elevate on a Candlestick, and withholds from his People the very Root and Essence of the *Joyfull Sound*.

What is free Remission of Sin, through the precious Blood and Atonement of Jesus Christ; — What is unconditional and irreversible Justification, through Christ's Righteousness imputed; — What is that Truth, which tells us, that the Spirit of Christ is the Renewer, the Inhabitant, the Illuminator, and the everlasting Comforter, of God's Children; — What is that Word which assures us, that the Lord will not turn away from the People of his Love, nor suffer them finally to turn away from Him, but that He will seal them His forever, and preserve them

* Luke x. 20.

through Life and Death to Glory, though every Step they take upon Earth is paved with Snares, and, if left to themselves a Moment, down they must fall into the nethermost Hell; — What is the continued Advocacy of Christ, whereby He wears his Priesthood upon his Throne, and intercedes for his militant People, so that, while *they* are travelling, or fighting, or fainting, *He* is praying, by the perpetual Presentation of Himself before God, as a Lamb newly slain; — What are the Promises which relate to the Succor, Support, and Deliverance of the Soul, in Death; which ensure a bodily Resurrection to Glory, Honor, and Immortality; and which ascertain the endless Beatification of Soul and Body together, in the Kingdom of God; — What, I say, are all these, but so many Parts and Branches of the *joyful Sound*? And a joyful Sound it is. God make it such to us!

Was the Matter left in the Hand of our own Free-will, the joyful Sound would soon darken into a *dismal* one. We should never *come* into a State of Grace, at all. And, if God was to put us into it, and then resign us to our own Management, we should quickly make Shipwreck of every Thing. Adam, in the State of Innocence, did not, probably, stand twenty-four Hours. And how should the Believer, who is in a mixt State of Sin and Grace, and in whom are § *the Company of two Armys*, Flesh and Spirit,

§ Cant. vi. 13.

* at

at perpetual War with each other; how could such a Person possibly continue, even for four-and-twenty Minutes, if the same Almighty Love, which *put* him into the Covenant, did not *keep* him in it?

A good Man, of the last Century, says, and with great Truth, "The strongest Believer of us all is like "a Glass without a Foot, which cannot stand one "Moment longer than it is *beld*." And our Lord had a similar View of the Matter, when he declared, that he *holds* all his Sheep in † his *Hand*: as much as to say, *Was I to leave you for an Instant, down you'd fall: therefore I hold you fast, and none shall pluck thee out of my HAND.*

O, how comfortable is it, when the Lord makes these Truths known, by his Spirit, to the Heart! How *blessed are the People, that thus know the joyful Sound!* Who can see, that God has loved them in his Son; Who can feel, that Christ died for them, to be their everlasting Peace; Who are satisfy'd, that their Peace is not *now* to make, but was completely made and sealed, by the precious Blood of his Cross, Ages and Ages before they drew their Breath; Who are sweetly assured, that the Holy Spirit, who has begun to show them the great Things of Christ, will go on more clearly to show them that he will never leave them nor forsake them, in Life, in Death, nor even at their Journey's End! This is that *joyful Sound*, which God enables his People to

† John x. 28. *see also*, Deut. xxxiii. 3.

know. And what is the CONSEQUENCE of knowing it?

BLESSED are the People that know the joyful Sound. Wherefore are they blessed, or happy? And in what does their Blessedness consist? *They shall walk, o Lord, in the Light of thy Countenance.* As much as to say, we need but *know* this joyful Sound, to be happy. We need but *know* what it is, to be loved, chosen, redeemed, and sanctified from among Men; and then that Knowledge will cause us to § *walk upon our high Places*, and to triumph in the Name of the Lord our God. We shall bask in the Smile, we shall enjoy the Sun-shine, of God's *Countenance* upon our Souls.

What is the Meaning of that Phrase, *They shall walk in the Light of thy Countenance*? Suppose any great Personage was to patronize some obscure Man, and favor him with his peculiar Intimacy and Friendship. It would, in that Case, be natural for us to say, "such a Person is greatly *countenanced* "by this or that Nobleman." So, here: *They shall walk in the Light of thy Countenance*: i. e. they shall be, sensibly, in the *Favor* of God. They shall enjoy comfortable *Communion* and *Fellowship*, with God. They shall have a satisfactory Persuasion, that the Lord is at Peace with them, thro' the Blood of Christ; and that, † *being justified by Faith*, they also are, on their Part, at Peace with

§ Hab. iii. 19. † Rom. v. 1.

the

the Lord. They || *receive the Atonement* (for the true Business of Faith is, not to *make* Atonement, but simply to *receive* and rest upon Christ's Atonement already made, and which Faith itself does not render more efficacious than it intrinsically is). Sometimes, the Tide of Assurance rolls in so richly upon the Soul, as to rise quite (if I may so speak) to *High-water* Mark, and not leave so much as the Shadow of a Doubt upon the Mind. When it is thus with the Believer, he may be eminently said to *walk in the Light of God's Countenance*. Faith looks † *within the Vail*. The interposing Scene opens. We almost hear the Angels sing. We almost see the Souls of the glorify'd do Homage to Grace, and throw their Crowns at the Divine Footstool. We almost behold *the King of Saints* * *in his Beauty*, shining as ‡ *the Lamb in the midst of the Throne*. — Precious Moments these! But, soon, the Scene closes. We descend from the Mountain Top, and find ourselves again in the Valley.

If God, however, has not yet given you any Assurance of his Love; do not imagine, that you are, therefore, an Alien and an Outcast. For, I imagine, that God's *Countenance*, or Favor; and the *Light* of his Countenance, or the clear and comfortable *Knowledge* of his Favor; are two distinguishable Things. God may bear a Favor to us, He may love us, and be resolved to save us; and

|| Rom. v. 11. † Heb. vi. 19. * Isai. xxxiii. 17. ‡ Rev. v. 6.

yet

yet not indulge us with the immediate Light of his Countenance.—But, of one Thing, I am as clearly positive, as that I am now preaching in the Lock Chapel: namely, that none, whose Hearts are at all wrought upon by the Finger of God's Spirit, can sit down, quite easily and contentedly, without *wishing* to experience what the *Light* of God's Countenance means. Their *Desire* is, to know it, to walk in it, and to walk worthy of it.

Have you never observed, after the Sun has been shining, perhaps, for Hours together; a diffusing mist has arisen from the Earth, or a floating Cloud has interposed in the Sky, and shaded the grand Luminary from your View? yet, in Reality, the Sun still shone as before, tho' your Sensation of it's Lustre was suspended. — Thus, in the darkest Seasons of spiritual Distress, God's Countenance, or Favor, is still toward you for Good; and shines, not only with inextinguishable, but also with undiminisbable Intensity. Is it not, however, a most desirable Felicity, to *see* and to *feel* the Light of His Face, beaming full upon us, *as the Sun when it goeth forth in it's Might**? This is what the Apostle means, where he says: *God, who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath SHINED IN OUR HEARTS, to give us the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God* [i. e. to enlighten us into the Knowledge of the Father's glorious Grace, as exhibited] 11 πρὸς ρωμ.

* Judges v. 31.

in the Person [and as displayed in the finished Salvation] of *Jesus Christ* §. And this is, likewise, what the Psalmist means, in the Text: *They shall walk, o Lord, in the LIGHT of thy Countenance.*

Do you ask, “How is this happy Communion with God to be attained?” — I answer: that it is not of human Attainment, but of the Holy Spirit’s Vouchsafement. Whence David, elsewhere, prays; *Lord, lift THOU up the Light of thy Countenance upon us* ||.

Do you, farther, ask; ‘How this sweet Illumination and Fellowship are to be sought, and cultivated, and cherished?’ — I answer: that the WISDOM, and the WILL, of God; and that orderly CONCATENATION of one Blessing with another, which He has established in His Covenant of Grace; all concur to assure us, that, if we wish to enjoy the unintercepted Rays of His Presence within, we must cultivate *Holiness*—abound in *good Works*—be much in God’s Company, by *Prayer* and *Supplication* with *Thanksgiving*—drink continually at the *Fountain of his written Word*—and converse frequently, and compare Experiences, with others of God’s Children; more especially, with such of ’em as are either eminently lively, or remarkably exercised with *Desertions*: such Conversations are always profitable, and often make *our Hearts burn within us*, while we mutually *unfold the Scriptures*, and † *speak*

§ II Cor. iv. 6. || Psalm iv. 6. * Luke xxiv. 32. † Mal. iii. 16.

one

one to another, concerning § the Things which pertain to the Kingdom of God. The sick and the dying Beds of Christ's People are, in a very eminent Degree, Schools of Instruction and Consolation. I have often gone to them, as cold (spiritually speaking) as a Stone: and returned from them, half as warm as an Angel.

In one Word: Communion with God requires, that we be found in all the *Means* of Grace, and in the Way of *universal Duty*: and that we *shun*, as we would Poyson or the Plague, whatever tends to cast a Damp upon our Intercourse with the Holy Ghost, to tarnish our Graces, or darken our Evidences. Was you to find, that even the Crossing of a Straw was conducive to bring a Cloud upon your Soul, and to obstruct your Fellowship with God; it would be as much your Duty to abstain from crossing that Straw, as if *Thou shalt not cross a Straw* was one of the ten Commandments. But, in all these Respects, every Man must judge for himself in particular. God has, generally, *connected* Good with Good, and Evil with Evil. If, therefore, you are suffered to be off your Guard, and off your Watch; tho' you cannot (if you are a true Believer) so fall, as to break your Neck; yet, you may break your Limbs, in such a Manner, as to go halting to the Day of your Death. The Lord graciously “* strengthen such as do stand,” and effectually

§ Acts i. 3. * *Litany.*

“ raise

“ * raise up them that fall ;” by making both These and Those more ardently and more practically carefull, than ever, to *walk in the Light of His Countenance!* For, surely, next to the Love of God’s Heart, Believers value the Smiles of his Face: from which, as from the Agency of the Sun, arise the Buddings of conscious Joy ; the Leaves of unfully’d Profession ; the variegated Blossom of holy Tempers ; and the beneficent Fruits of moral Righteousness.

They are totally mistaken, who suppose, that *the Light of God’s Countenance*, and the *Privileges* of the Gospel, and the *Comforts* of the Spirit, conduce to make us indolent and unactive in the Way of Duty. The Text cuts up this Surmize, by the Roots. For, it does not say, *They shall SIT DOWN in the Light of thy Countenance* ; or, they shall *lie down* in the Light of thy Countenance ; but, *they shall WALK in the Light of thy Countenance*. What is *walking* ? ’tis a *progressive Motion*, from one Point of Space, to another. And what is that *holy walking*, which God’s Spirit enables all his People to observe ? ’tis a continued, progressive Motion, from Sin to Holiness ; from all that is evil, to every good Word and Work.

And the self same Light of God’s Countenance, in which you, o Believer, are enabled to walk, and which at first gave you spiritual Feet wherewith to walk ; will keep you in a *walking* and in a *work-*

* *Litany.*

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ing

ing State, to the End of your Warfare. So that your Path shall, under the Shinings of His Spirit, (for we can do nothing, but as He vouchsafes His Grace from Moment to Moment), *wax brighter and brighter, to the perfect Day* *. The truly Righteous shall *hold on in his Course*; and *he that bath clean Hands, shall grow stronger and stronger* †. Nor shall they only *walk*, o Lord, in the Light of thy Countenance; they shall also, at Times, even *run, and not be weary* ‡: namely, when they are eminently *drawn* of God. *Draw us, and we will run after Thee* §.

Though God finds all his Children still-born, or spiritually dead, before He has quickened them by his own effectual Power and Grace; yet he makes them alive, in order that they may live, afterwards, to his Honor and Glory ||: He lifts up the Light of his *Countenance*, upon the Human Mind; with a View, analogous to that, for which He causes the Light of the natural Sun to rise upon the World. To what End, does the Sun shine upon us in a Morning? Not that we may continue to close our Eyelids, and press, all Day, the Bed of Indolence: but, that we may up and be doing. And why does the light of God's Spirit shine inwardly upon his People? That they may *arise*, and *walk* in the Light of his Countenance, and *work the Works of God, while it is Day* ¶, as Jesus Christ gave them Example: walk becomingly of Him,

* Prov. iv. 18. † Job xvii. 9. ‡ Isai. xxxix. 31. § Cant. i. 4. || I Pet. ii. 9. ¶ John ix. 4.

who

who has called them to Glory and Virtue. For, 'tis not holy Talking, but holy Walking, that proves us to be Children of God.

Yet, after we have done as much, and have walked as far in the Ways of God, as His Grace has enabled us; what is the Subject-Matter of our Confidence and Rejoicing? Not Ourselves, nor our own Performances: but the free Mercy of the Father, and the all-perfect Merit of Him that dy'd and rose again. As good Mr. HERVEY asks, "Can our charitable Deeds *expiate* our innumerable Offences? As soon might a Drop of fresh Water correct and sweeten the unfathomable Brine of the Ocean. Can our defective Performances *satisfy* the Demands of a perfect Law, or our wandering Devotions *screen* us from the Displeasure of an injured God? As well may our uplifted Hand eclipse the Sun; or intercept the Lightning, when it darts through the bursting Cloud. We can be reconciled to God, only by Jesus Christ †." — 'Tis the sweet Employ of Faith, to *do* as many good Works as she can; and to *renounce* them, as fast as she does them: saying, *Lord, when saw we Thee hungry, and fed Thee* || ? &c.

E 2

Thus,

† See Mr. Hervey's Sermon, entitled, *The Ministry of Reconciliation*.

|| Matth. xxv. 44.—The holy and judicious Dr. *Crisp* has some Remarks, equally valuable in themselves, and pertinent to the Argument in hand. "We [who believe] do not perform christian Duties, in order to our being deliver'd from
" Wrath

Thus, we learn, from the Text, that the self-same People, who *walk* in the Light of God's Countenance, and are *active* in the Observations of Moral Duty; have, when they have done all, something infinitely better to *rejoice* in and to *rely* upon, than the Sanctity of their Walk, and the various Dutys

“ Wrath; but we perform them, *because we are deliver'd.* —
 “ — — A Man will work for Christ, who hath tasted of Christ's
 “ loving Kindness: he stands ready to shew forth the Praise of
 “ that glorious Grace, which hath so freely saved him. Such a
 “ Man is as glad to work for Christ's Sake, as if he was to
 “ work for his own Salvation. — — — There are many inge-
 “ nuous Persons in the World, who will be more ready to serve
 “ a Friend that *has already* raised them; than to serve a Master,
 “ that they *may* be raised. This is the true Service of a Be-
 “ liever. His Eye is to the Glory of Christ, in Regard of what
 “ Christ hath already done for him: and not in Expectation
 “ of any Thing Christ has yet to do. He looks upon all, as
 “ perfectly done for him in the Hand of Christ, and ready to
 “ be deliver'd out to him [i. e. to the Believer himself] as his
 “ Occasions may require. The *Work of Salvation* being thus
 “ *completed* by Christ, and *not to be mended* by the Creature; the
 “ Believer having now nothing to do for himself [as a Cause or
 “ Condition of Salvation]; all he Doth, he doth for Christ —
 “ — I would only ask you this plain Question: *Are our Works*
 “ *of Sanctification, CHRIST himself; or are they NOT?* If they
 “ be Christ himself, then there are Thousands of Christs in the
 “ World. If they be *not* Christ, then there is no coming to
 “ the Father by them: because, the Coming to the Father, for
 “ Peace, Pardon, Reconciliation, and Salvation, is by Christ
 “ *alone*; and by Him as the *sole* Way. — Salvation itself, there-
 “ fore, is not the End proposed, in any good Work we do.
 “ The Ends of our good Works are, the Manifestation of our
 “ Obedience and Subjection; the setting forth the Praise of
 “ God's Grace, and thereby glorifying Him in the World; the
 “ doing Good to others, with a View to their Profit; and the
 “ meeting the Lord Jesus Christ in the Performance of Duty,
 “ where He will be found, according to his Promise. These
 “ are *some* of the special Ends, for which Obedience is ordained;
 “ SALVATION being settled firm before.”

Crijs's Sermons, Vol. I. P. 69—77. Dr. Gill's Edit.

which

which they perform. *In THY Name*, not in their own Rectitude, *shall they rejoice, all the Day: and in THY Righteousness*, not in their own Doings, *shall they be exalted*. During the Day of sublunary Life, they shall sing, with the Apostle, *God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ †*: and when, having breathed their last on Earth, they fly to the Coast of Immortality; they are then inchoatively, and shall (after the final Audit) be completely, and everlastingly, *exalted to the Kingdom of God, in and through the alone imputed Righteousness of their Saviour, their Surety, and their Head*.

By the *Name* of Christ, in which the Elect are here said to rejoice, I understand Christ Himself: the blessed Person, signified by that Name. Who is the Brightness, the ἀπαύρασμα, the *Emanation*, or *forth-beaming Ray*, of the Father's Glory *: and is, by Virtue of that Eternal and incomprehensible Derivation, † *God of God; Light of Light; very God of very God; BEGOTTEN, not made; co-equal Partaker of one Substance* [i. e. of the same numerical Nature and Essence] *with the Father: and by whom all Things were made*.

In *HIS Name*, i. e. in the Divinity of his Person, and in His Offices as Mediator; in his finished Atonement, in the perfect Righteousness of His Obe-

† Gal. vi. * Heb. i. 4.

† Θς Θς EK Θς, φς EK φς, κ. τ. λ. Symb. Nicen.

dience,

dience, and in His never-failing Intercession for the Elect; 'tis the Priviledge of the humble, the contrite, the feeble, the tempted, and of the fallen (if returning) Believer, *to rejoice*: because it was for *such Men*, and for *their* Salvation, that this adorable Being came down from Heaven, and poured out his Soul unto Death.

Don't imagine, that David was an Antinomian, because he makes no mention of good Works, as Objects of Joy and Dependence. True it is, that he does not say, 'Saints shall rejoice in their Faithfulness, in their affected Mortifications, or even in those Works that spring from genuine Grace'. No: not in these, but *in His Name, shall the Gentiles trust* ||, and of His only Righteousness shall they make their Boast. Inherent Graces and personal Dutys are the *Ornaments*, but neither the *Foundation*, nor the *Pillars*, of God's mystic Temple.

As Christ's Righteousness is the only Merit, that can exalt us to the Presence and to the Kingdom of God; so that Doctrine alone is to be considered as evangelical, which depresses the Righteousness of Man, and exalts the Righteousness of Christ: leading us to trust, not on what *we* do, but singly on what *He* has done and suffered *for us*. The Business of the *Law* is, to knock us down from the Pedestal of Self-Confidence, and to grind us small; as Moses ground to Powder, and dispersed, the Materials of

|| Matth. xii. 21.

the

the Israelitish Idol. The Business of GRACE is, to lift us from the Dust, to settle us upon Christ the Rock of Ages, to put a new Song of free Salvation into our Mouths, and to order our Goings in the Path of God's Commandments. This it is (even the Power of the Holy Ghost, who first breaks us in Pieces by the Hammer of the Law, and then puts us together anew by the Grace of the Gospel) that enables us to *rejoice in the Name of Christ all the Day*. Not that a Believer's Rejoicing is uninterrupted, from the Time of his Conversion, 'till the Moment of his Arrival in Heaven: for the Elect have their Weeping, as well as their Triumphant, Seasons; and their Pilgrimage is wisely chequer'd and diversifyed, both with Joys and Sorrows that the World knows not of. The Meaning, therefore, of the Text, is: that a Sinner is no sooner born again, than Christ, and Christ alone, becomes the Object of that Sinner's Dependence: who can thenceforth say, with Dr. Watts,

*“ While Jews on their own Works rely,
 “ and Greeks of Wisdom boast;
 “ I love th' Incarnate Mystery,
 “ and there I fix my Trust.”*

The converted Sinner having thus, through the good Hand of God upon him, fixed all his Hopes on Jesus Christ the Righteous; travels the Residue of his Way, *leaning on the Merits of the † beloved*

† Cant. viii. 5.

Mediator :

Mediator: and is, finally, *exalted* to the actual Participation of the Cœlestial Inheritance above, *in* and by virtue of that Divine *Righteousness*, which God the Son wrought out, which God the Father imputes, which God the Spirit applies, and felt emptying Faith receives.

The Learned and Evangelical Mr. † *Thomas Cole*, a renowned and useful Minister of Christ in the last Century, had an Observation or two, in his last Illness, full to the Sense of the Clause with which the Text concludes; *In THY Righteousness shall they be exalted.* “It would be miserable Dying, if we
 “had not something, every Way adequate to the
 “Demands of the Law, to ground our Hopes of
 “Eternal Life upon. We have an abundant En-
 “trance into the Kingdom of God, by the Way of
 “Christ’s Righteousness. The Devil, and the Law,
 “may meet us: yet cannot hinder us from entering

† Author of a well-known Treatise on *Regeneration, Faith, and Repentance.* This excellent Man dyed (if so triumphant a Passage to Glory may be called Death), September 16, 1697; as I learn from a valuable Manuscript, formerly put into my Hands by a Gentleman of London: out of which Manuscript (containing Mr. Cole’s own Account of his spiritual Experiences; together with a Memoir, afterwards added, of his dying Sayings) I extracted the Passages given above. And I wish I was at Liberty to publish more: or, rather, that the very respectable and judicious Person, who favor’d me with a Sight of those choice Papers, would, Himself, give them to the Public, and condescend to be the Editor of them. I should ask his Pardon, for the Freedom I take, in venturing to print even the few Lines here quoted, without having first solicited his Permission; did I not believe, that He infinitely prefers the Glory of God and of the Gospel, to any Punctilios derivable from the Scruples and Delicacys of ceremonious Complaisance.

into

“ into Heaven by THAT Righteousness. We shall
 “ be sure to meet with the Devil, with Conscience,
 “ with wicked Men, and with the Law of God, in
 “ our Way to Heaven : and we can deal with none
 “ of them, but by THAT Righteousness which hath
 “ satisfied all. Let us bring That along with us,
 “ and they will all flee before it.—If a Sinner comes
 “ in *his own* Righteousness ; SHUT HIM OUT, saith
 “ God : so saith Conscience : so saith the Law. But,
 “ when One comes, cloathed with the Righteous-
 “ ness of Christ ; LET HIM IN, saith God : so saith
 “ Conscience : so saith the Law : and let the Devil
 “ say a Word to the contrary, if he dare.

“ I should not dare to look Death in the Face,
 “ were it not for the comfortable Assurance, which
 “ Faith gives me, of Eternal Life in Christ Jesus ;
 “ and for the comfortable and abundant Flowings
 “ in of that Life. It is not what I *bring* to Christ,
 “ but what I *receive* from Him. The Beginnings
 “ of which I see springing up into Life eternal.

“ Some Persons think to lick themselves whole,
 “ by their own moral Righteousness : but 'tis the
 “ ready Way, to die in Horror of Conscience.

“ If you want the Manifestation of the Pardon of
 “ any Sins, carry them to *Free Grace* : which, having
 “ blotted them out, knows how to give you a Sense
 “ of it. — The Gospel of our Salvation is a Gos-
 “ pel of *Free Grace* : and they that would have it
 “ otherwise, may gather up what they can, and go

F

“ boast-

“boasting to Heaven’s Gates ; but, they’ll be turn’d
“back again”.

And how was this great Man of God supported by
Christ’s Righteousness, when in the immediate View
of Death ? Learn what that Righteousness can *then*
do for us, by the following memorable Speech, which
he addressed to one of his Visitants : “ You are come
“ to hear my last dying Groans : but know, when
“ you hear them, that they are the sweetest Breath I
“ ever drew since I knew Christ Jesus ”.

O thou blessed Son of God, *exalt us in thy Right-*
eousness, and shake us out of our own ! Ye, that hear
me this Day ; which, o which, are you for ? For being
found and exalted in Christ’s Obedience ? or for
inheriting Perdition and Damnation in your own ?
God enable you, and cause you, to chuse the good
Part !

To cut off, as far as Man can do it, all the Pleas
of proud, self-righteous Unbelief ; let me conclude
with two or three pertinent Remarks.

1. Why is the Gospel News of Salvation, called
the joyfull Sound ? Not, indefinitely, a joyfull ; but
peculiarly, and exclusively of all other Schemes
whatever, *the joyfull Sound* ?

Because it is the Vehicle of making known to us,
that God is Love, and that He has (in the Blood
and Righteousness of Christ) open’d a Channel for
his Love to exert itself in the Salvation of the Un-
worthy. The *lost* are found : the *blind* see ; the *deaf*
hear .

hear : the lame walk : the leprous are cleansed : the dead are made alive : and all, *without Money, and without Price* *.

2. Have You any Part or Lot in that *Blessedness*, of which the Text speaks? Any comfortable Views, or Hopes of Interest in God's Election, and in Christ's Propitiation, and in the Spirit's renewing Grace? *Ask and it shall* (not be sold to you for your Works, and for your imaginary Fulfillment of pretended Conditions; but a Sense of Interest *shall be*) GIVEN you: *seek*, in the alone Name and for the alone Righteousness Sake of Christ, *and ye shall find* the Mercys you want: *knock*, but let it be with an empty Hand, at the Door of Divine Clemency; *and it shall be opened unto you. For EVERY ONE, that asks, receives: and he that seeks, finds: and to him that knocks, it SHALL be opened* ||. As surely as God draws you to Christ; so surely will Christ, at his own set Time, make you a Sharer in the *Blessedness* of them *that know the joyful Sound*.

3. You, who have *believed with your Hearts unto Righteousness* §, give God the whole Glory; and pray that you may continually have more enlivening Views of that Imputed Righteousness, on which He has caused You to trust. As, on one Hand, nothing can warrant and animate your Joy; so, on the other (to use the Expression of a good Man now with God), "Nothing can effectually kill Sin; but

* *Isai. lv. 1.* || *Matth. vii. 7, 8.* § *Rom. x. 10.*

“ a clear Beholding of Christ’s Righteousness.”
Cleave to THIS sure and stedfast Anchor, and you’ll
finally rise superior, both to the *Waves* of Affliction,
and to the *Mud* of your own Lusts and Corruptions.

4. Make it your prædominant Object of Ambition, to *walk in the Light of God’s Countenance*. If you are blest with HIS Smile, no Matter though the whole Creation were to frown.

5. But, whether you walk in Light or Darkness, in Comfort or Distress; remember, that you have nothing but *the Name*, the Covenant, the Person, and the Work of CHRIST, to *rejoice in* and to depend upon. *We*, says the Apostle, *are the Circumcision, who worship God the Spirit†, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no Confidence in the Flesh*.

6. Know from whence all your spiritual and eternal *Exaltation* arises. Not from yourselves, in any Respect, nor in any Degree. *Free-Will*, ’till sanctify’d by Regeneration, is a broken Tooth, and a Foot out of Joint. And *Works*, “ done before the “ Grace of Christ and the Inspiration of his Spirit, “ are,” as our Church justly pronounces them to be, “ sinfull and displeasing to God*.” Nay, even the best Works we can perform *after* Conversion, fall immensely short of what God’s Law requires; in Point both of Matter and of Manner, of Quantity and Quality, of Number, Extent, Purity, and

† Ὁ Ἅγιος Πνεύματος Θεὸς ἁρραβωτός, Phil. iii. 3. Irrefragable Proof of the *Personality* and absolute *Deity* of the HOLY GHOST!

* Article XIII.

Weight.

Weight. What, then, would become of us, if it was not for Christ's Righteousness? *St. Paul* himself, with all his matchless Retinue of Holy Works and useful Labors, must have sunk, even from the Scaffold of Martyrdom, into the nethermost Hell. Blessed, therefore, be the Free Grace of God, for that precious Word of infallible Promise, *In THY Righteousness shall thy People be exalted!*

7. What is it, which made, and will forever continue to make, Christ's Righteousness so infinitely meritorious and efficacious? *The DIVINITY of his Person.* All the created Beings in the Universe, whether Angelic or Human, unfallen, fallen, or restored; would never, by their utmost Endeavors united, be able to furnish out and make up a Righteousness of sufficient Value to claim the Favor of God upon the Footing of *Justice* and *Merit*, or to present Any One of the chosen Seed *blameless* before the burning Eyes of Infinite Sanctity. Such Power belongeth only to the Righteousness of the God-Man, Jehovah Incarnate. Nothing but that all-perfect and everlasting Merit, which is the complex Result of HIS Obedience and of HIS Sacrifice, can *exalt* and retrieve us to the Dignity and Felicity of Heaven.

The *Divinity* of Christ can hardly receive stronger Proof from Scripture, than That which our Text supplis. For the whole two Verses, which have been the Subject of our Meditation this Morning, are a solemn Address to the Messiah; not *as Man* and Messiah, but in his highest Capacity, as *God*
with

with God, or as the eternally and the only begotten of the Father. Let us give the Text a short Review, and we shall immediately perceive, that it is neither more nor less than a devotional Application, explicitly directed to the Second Person of the Trinity: an Application, formed in the strictest Terms of *Worship*, even of *Worship* absolutely and properly *divine*; and which cannot, without the most gross and damnable Idolatry, be offered to Any Being inferior to GOD Himself.

Blessed are the People, that know the joyful Sound of Salvation by Thee: They shall walk, o JEHOVAH, in the Light of Thy Countenance; in Thy Name shall they rejoice all the Day; and in Thy Righteousness shall they be exalted.

Now, what would you think of the Man that was to offer such an Address, as this, to the highest *Archangel* in Heaven? And what was David, if he could solemnly and deliberately pen this Address, to a *created* Intelligence; and cause it to be publicly sung by the Levites and Chief Singers of Israel, and even leave it on Record for the Seduction of Posterity? And at a Time, too, when the Jewish Nation were particularly carefull to execrate and shun every Thing that had the least Tendency to Idolatry? Either Christ is truly God, or David was the sacrilegious Worshipper of a false One.

If, therefore, any of you should be beset by the *cunning Craftiness* of Men who lye in wait to deceive; should you meet with such as tell you, that Christ is
not

not Jehovah, or very and eternal God; recollect, if no other Passage of Scripture, yet these two Verses and their Context: which will, alone, at any Time, suffice to put to flight the Sophistry of the Aliens.

Can we be *exalted in the Righteousness* of a Creature? Would God the Father accept, and command us to trust in, the Atonement of a finite Being? By the same Rule, we might (with the impudent *Papists*) trust in the supposed Merits of the *Virgin Mary*, or of *St. any body* else. And by the same Rule, we might descend a Step lower, and (with the still more impudent *Pelagians*) trust in *our own* supposed Merits, and burn Incense to the wither'd Arm of our own blasted Free-will. In short, there is no End to the horrible Impietys, which flow from trampling the *Divinity* and the *Righteousness* of Christ under Foot.

Moreover, if Christ was not *God over all, blessed for ever*; each Individual of mankind, who trusts in the Messiah's Merits, would come within the Circuit of that tremendous Malediction, denounced by the Lips of Him who is able to save and to destroy. *Thus saith JEHOVAH, Cursed be the Man, that trusteth in Man, and maketh Fieish his Arm, and whose Heart departeth from JEHOVAH: for he shall be like the Heath in the Desert, and shall not see when Good cometh, &c.* Jer. xvii. 5, 6. Faith in Christ would be the most damning Sin under the Cope of Heaven, and God's Law would pronounce us *accursed*, for relying upon Him; if He were not as absolutely

JEHOVAH

JEHOVAH as the Father. And I must add, that this awful Text concludes equally strong against *Pharisees* of all Sorts and Sizes, who trust either in Angels, or in departed Spirits, or in their own wretched *Selves*, for any Part of Salvation, whether little or much. **CHRIST** alone is to be trusted in, for Pardon, for Justification, for Everlasting Life, and for the whole of our Safety and Felicity, from Beginning to End. Whence 'tis immediately added, in the above Chapter of Jeremiah, *Blessed is the Man that trusteth in JEHOVAH, and whose Hope JEHOVAH is. For he [i. e. the Man that trusts and hopes in Jesus only] shall be as a Tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her Roots by the River, and shall not see when Heat cometh, but her Leaf shall be green; and shall not be carefull in the Year of Drought, neither shall cease from yielding Fruit.*

I perceive, the Elements are upon the Sacramental Table. And I doubt not, many of you mean to present yourselves at that *Throne of Grace*, which God has mercifully erected in the *Righteousness* and *Sufferings* of his Co-æqual Son. O, beware of coming with one Sentiment on your Lips, and another in your Hearts! Take heed of saying, with your Mouths, "*We do not come to this thy Table, o merciful Lord, trusting in our own Righteousness*"; while, perhaps, you have, in Reality, *some secret Reserves* in Favor of that very *Self-Righteousness*, which you profess to renounce: and think that *Christ's Merit ALONE* will not save you, unless you *add* something
or

or other to make them effectual. O, be not so deceived: for God will not thus be mocked, nor will Christ thus be insulted, with Impunity. Call your Works what you will, whether *Terms, Causes, Conditions, or Supplements*; the Matter comes to the same Point, and Christ is equally thrust out of his Mediatorial Throne, by these or any other similar Views of Human Obedience. If you do not WHOLLY depend on Jesus, as *the Lord your Righteousness* †; if you *mix* your Faith in Him with *any* Thing else; if the FINISHED WORK of the crucified God, be not, *alone*, your acknowledged Anchor and Foundation of Acceptance with the Father, both here and ever; come to his Table, and receive the Symbols of his Body and Blood, at your Peril. Leave your own Righteousness behind you, or you have no Business there. You are without the *Wedding Garment* ¶; and God will say to you, *Friend, how camest thou here?* If you go on, moreover, to live and dye in this State of Unbelief; you'll be found *speechless* and excuseless, in the Day of Judgement: when the slighted Savior will say to his Angels, concerning you, *Bind him, Hand and Foot, and cast him into outer Darkness; for many are called, but few chosen* ¶.

On the contrary, You, who can sincerely say, “*We do NOT come to Thee, trusting in our own Righteousness,*” but feel and confess ourselves to be “*Unworthy of so much as gathering up the Crumbs*

† Jerem. xxiii. 6. ¶ ¶ Matth. xxii. 12. 14.

“ *under thy Table* ” ; in Thee alone do we seek to be *justify'd*, and in Thee alone do we † *glory* ; Let such “ draw near with Faith, and take this Holy “ Sacrament to their Comfort.” The Lord enable you to bring your Sins, and your Dutys, and yourselves, and your All, to the Great Propitiation ! May He wash us in His own Blood, cloath us with His own Righteousness, and seal us an Holy People to Himself by His Spirit ! Then shall we be acceptable Guests at his Table below ; and ripen fast, for the House of Glory above : While this is *all* our Plea, and *all* our Song — Lord, I am not worthy to come under thy Roof, nor that Thou should’st come under mine : but the * *Lamb that was slain is worthy* ; and my every Particle of Hope centers in Him, in his Covenant, in his Obedience, Cross, Humiliation, and Exaltation. For the Sake of *His* Agonys, take away my Iniquitys. For the Sake of *His* Righteousness, receive me graciously. And in the Mantle of *His* imputed Merit may I be || found ; living, dying, at the Judgment-Bar, and to all Eternity.

† Isai. xlv. 25.

* Rev. v. 12.

|| Philipp. iii. 9.

F I N I S.



