

A

DISCOURSE

ON THE

NATURE and EXCELLENCY

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION,

AND OF THE

Rewards and Punishments

OF

VIRTUE and of VICE.

WITH AN

EXHORTATION

TO

FAITH and OBEDIENCE.

---

By *E. B.* A.M.

---

Published by his Request, for the Use of his  
Parishioners after his Decease.

T O

## My Friends and Parishioners.

**M**Y Infirmities and Illness have long detained me from officiating as your Minister, and obliged me to provide an Assistant. But my Heart's Desire that you may be saved, and my natural Affection for you, have induced me to publish this Sermon, and to present you with it; that it may be a continual Exhortation to embrace and entertain the noble Principles of Christianity, and to reap the happy Fruits of them; and to deter you from the Reproach and Punishment of Infidelity and Wickedness; and that it may be a continual Monument and Testimony of the Love and Respect I bare you, and a perpetual Acknowledgment of the many kind and friendly Offices, which I have always experienced among you.

The Gospel is the best Information of a divine Faith and Christian Life, which

is the Fountain of all true Wisdom and Knowledge, a Revelation of the Fall and Redemption of Mankind by Jesus Christ, a Message from God to sinful Men and a Guide to his heavenly Habitations, which is nigh you, in your Hands, and in your Houses, most worthy and requisite to be carefully read and inwardly digested by you, and some part of it daily retained in your Memory.

By thus reminding you of the Excellency of these Doctrines, and your Obligations to love and serve God, I shall endeavour that you may be able, after my Decease, to have these Things always in Remembrance, and to obtain the Recompence of the Reward.

Which is the earnest Prayer

of your faithful Servant

*E. B.*

A

# DISCOURSE

ON THE

Nature and Excellency of the Christian Religion, and of the Rewards and Punishments of Virtue and of Vice.

---

PHILIPPIANS iv. 8.

*Finally, Brethren, whatsoever Things are true, whatsoever Things are honest, whatsoever Things are just, whatsoever Things are pure, whatsoever Things are lovely, whatsoever Things are of good Report; if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praise, think on these Things.*

**F**INALLY Brethren, in these Words of *St. Paul*, I bid you farewell; and by these excellent Doctrines intreat you to establish and secure your everlasting Peace and Felicity: That your whole Spirit and Soul and Body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the generality of Men, by their corrupt Lufts, are tempted and seduced to offend against God, and to indulge themselves in sinful Actions and forbidden Pleasures; which darken the Understanding, make the Will rebellious, break through all Bounds of Reason and Religion, and lead Men to do what they condemn themselves for; and for which (without sincere and hearty Repentance) they will be condemned to everlasting Punishment. This Ignorance and Contempt of Religion and divine Virtues flows from the Repugnancy of our vicious Inclinations to an holy and unblameable Life, which is inconsistent with Impiety and Ungodliness, and with the gainful and pleasurable Life, which most Men propose to themselves. From hence many are content to deceive themselves with a slight and superficial Holiness, and strive to serve God and their own Lufts together; and worship him outwardly, whilst inwardly they are estranged from him: They seek to hide their Vices from the Remarks and Censures of Men, whilst God hideth himself from them, and they are given over to a reprobate Mind. Thus the Miser loves his Gold more than God; and pursues his Happiness, not in the Paths of Piety and Virtue, but of Greediness and Avarice; which is Idolatry: The worldly minded Man will not be concerned in the Practice of Religion, any further than suits with his Conveniency; so as to keep his Credit, and be a Gainer by the Bargain: The Libertine will not be debarred from thinking and acting according to his own Will and Pleasure; nor restrained

strained from ridiculing those Things, which are pure and lovely, and most acceptable to God and good Men. All such Offenders are a Seed of evil Doers, Children that are Corruptors, Scoffers walking after their own Lusts, miserable Slaves of Sin unto Death, and condemned to endless Shame and Punishment: Whose End is Destruction, whose God is their Belly, who glory in their Shame.

These Principles and Practices are entirely opposite to, and inconsistent with good Inclinations and virtuous Deeds: We shall either hate the one and love the other, or hold to the one, and despise the other: For it cannot be otherwise, than that Men should neglect and contemn those religious Duties, which oppose and condemn their lewd Desires and vicious Course of Life: It cannot be wondered at, that they should refuse and reject the most excellent Laws and Doctrines, which so much contradict their own Devices and wicked Designs; and that they will not suffer themselves to be undeceived and reclaimed by any thing, which tends to rectify their Minds, and to lessen their Gains and Pleasures.

But nothing will more tend to discover and display the Beauty and Gain of Godliness, and the Deformity of Ungodliness; nothing more conduce to inform our Judgments aright, and wisely determine our Choice, whom we should serve in our Lives and Conversations, whether God or the Devil, than a due Consideration of these Words;

*Whatsoever*

*Whatsoever Things are true, whatsoever Things are honest, whatsoever Things are just, whatsoever Things are pure, whatsoever Things are lovely, whatsoever Things are of good Report.*

In discoursing upon which Words I shall consider,

1st, The Nature and Excellency of the Christian Religion, which enjoins these Things, and how opposite and inconsistent they are with an impious and sinful Course of Life.

2dly, The good and bad Consequences of Virtue and Vice, and how different the Rewards and Punishments be in this Life and in the next.

The Nature and Excellency of the Christian Religion consists in those Principles and divine Virtues, which the Apostle here recommends, which are manifestly perfective of the Wisdom and Felicity of human Nature : for Religion is the Image of the Almighty, shining in the Soul of Man, a faint Resemblance of the divine Perfections of the Godhead, which are known and discovered in Habits of Purity, Truth and Goodness; which exert and manifest themselves in doing those Things which are wise and just, honest and of good Report, and lovely and commendable in the Sight of all Men. Which render Mankind faithful Subjects and Servants of the Almighty Maker and Govenor of the Universe; chearfully submitting to his Providence, and resolutely bent to do his Will in all Things: Which make Men Benefactors and Friends to

the

✓

the rest of Mankind, and to act upon Principles of Truth and Righteousness, of Mercy and Charity: Which make them wise and temperate, humble and resigned in all Conditions of Life, and to abhor every Thing which is unbecoming and inconsistent with their Character and Profession.

The Christian Religion is a Revelation of eternal Light and Goodness from Heaven, communicated unto Men to conduct them thither: manifesting itself in pure Intentions and virtuous Actions; and is confirmed and established in us by greater Supplies of divine Grace and Power from on high: Which implies a Freedom from corrupt Lusts; a Release from the Cares and Troubles of the World; a Reconciliation with God by Jesus Christ; and a Restoration to a State of Wisdom and Righteousness and Peace. Whosoever considers the Nature and Excellency of our Religion, will find how it guides the Affections to noble Ends and Purposes, and perfects our Nature in the Attainment of true Felicity: Whosoever recollects what Advantages it secures to Mankind in their Commerce and Conversation with each other, from the Practice of Truth and Righteousness, of Honesty and Charity, will acknowledge how good and profitable it is to be thus wisely and usefully employed: Whosoever remarks what Light and Knowledge, what Joy and Comfort, what Rest and Peace, it administers in all Conditions and Circumstances of Life, will find it recommending itself above all  
 B other



other Considerations to our Choice and Approbation.

It would be amazing to see, how much it is banished out of Mens Minds and Conversations; how much it is neglected and unknown, laid aside and counterfeited by the generality of Mankind; but that we find by Experience, that Men by worldly Lusts and carnal Security, are unknowing of the Power and Goodness of God, unmindful of his Redemption of the World by Jesus Christ, and unconcerned about the Duties and Benefits of, a religious and holy Life: They lose the Power of seeing and seeking what is for their own present Good, and will conduce to their eternal Peace and Happiness: They cannot know nor discern the Things which are pure and holy, relating to the Kingdom of God, and a blessed Immortality, which are spiritually discerned; which are above the Reach of our degenerate Nature, and require the divine Influence, and the Inspiration of the Spirit of God.

From hence it will appear that good Men are most honourable and highly to be esteemed, who are of divine Extraction, and born of God, who are renewed in his Image and Likeness, and are full of Grace and Truth, of divine Virtues and good Works; who are Heirs of a glorious and never fading Inheritance.

Nobility of Birth and human Accomplishments may make Men admired and applauded in the World, but cannot give that true Greatness of Mind, those noble Sentiments, those excellent Qualifications and Ornaments as the  
heavenly

heavenly Birth and holy Life, which raise our Affections above the World, to partake of the Love and Goodness of God, and of the Grace and Redemption of Christ, and of the divine Virtues and Fruits of his holy Spirit. High Birth is often sullied and debased by sinful Lusts and wicked Practices, which render Men vile and contemptible, and bring them to Shame and Punishment: But a divine Extraction and Spirit is ever doing whatsoever Things are honest, whatsoever Things are lovely and of good Report; ever seeking the Glory of God and the Good of Men, and increasing in everlasting Felicity.

The largest Income and Revenue, the greatest Retinue and Grandeur, cannot make a Man so honourable and beloved, as Religion and Virtue; which is adorned with a meek and quiet Spirit, and employed in Works of Piety and Godliness, of Righteousness and Charity, and is ever laying up a Treasure in Heaven which cannot fail: The one is often consumed in Revelling and Drunkenness, in Riot and Excess, which is attended with endless Remorse and Misery: But the Work of the other is Peace and the Effect of Righteousness, Quietness, and Assurance forever.

Good and bad Men are distinguished in the outward and inward Man, and it is apparently evident whose Son and Servants they be; whether of Sin unto Death, or of Obedience unto Righteousness: To whom we yield ourselves Servants to obey, his Servants we are to whom we obey: So a divine Spirit, and superior Excel-

lency of Soul is manifest in the Children of God ; there is a Likeness to their Redeemer, the only begotten Son of God ; they have that Meekness and Conformity to the Will of God, whereby regenerate Christians and the Sons of God are plainly distinguished from natural and worldly minded Men, in their outward Appearance and Behaviour. The Righteous shine with peculiar Brightness and Glory, which is darted upon them from Heaven, and they are continually employed in doing those Things which are pure and lovely, good and commendable : But Pride, Malice, and Intemperance, will be visible in the Countenance of the Ungodly and Debauched, and discover themselves in the outward Man : Vicious Affections and sinful Habits are written in the Forehead ; and Men are often branded with those Crimes to which they are most addicted : Anger and Passion will disorder the Countenance, and Shame and Confusion often overtake the Offender, whilst he denies the Fact, and prove him guilty. Neither Adulterers nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers go undiscovered by Men, nor unpunished by the Discerner of our Hearts, and Judge of all the Earth. The Regenerate and Righteous are known by their Looks and Behaviour ; they have a divine Light and Wisdom, Innocence and Peace stamped upon them, and are ever shining to a greater Likeness and Conformity to their divine Original, the Saviour of the World ; ever regulating their Affections, ever correcting their Errors, according to the most excellent Rules of Purity and Holiness,

Holiness, which he hath given them; ever labouring for that Meat, which perisheth not, and to increase in Grace and Goodness, in divine Virtues and Perfections, whereby they may be seen to be chosen out of the World, a peculiar People, zealous of good Works; whereby their Relation to God may be clearly discerned, and that they have his Life and Spirit within them, and that excellent Disposition and Demeanor which will make it manifest that they are the Sons of God. But wicked Men are of their Father the Devil; they derive their evil Disposition, and vile Affections from him, whose Image and Superscription they bear, whose Work and Will they perform; and are ever spreading Infidelity and Malice and Mischief amongst Men. In this the Children of God are manifest, and the Children of the Devil; the one always entertain good Intentions and Designs; the other doeth not Righteousness, and loveth not his Brother.

Good Christians are enlightened from above to approve Things that are excellent, and strengthened with Might by the Spirit of God, that they may be sincere and without Offence till the Day of Christ. Such Souls see and know the Vanity of worldly Wisdom, and perishing Enjoyments; and will not prefer gaudy Trifles before divine Virtues; nor worldly Wealth before a Treasure in Heaven; will not choose Corruption before Incorruption; and a short miserable Life, before an happy and eternal one: Such a Soul will guide it's Affections and Desires to observe the Laws of Truth and Righteousness in all it's  
 Actions,

Actions, and to do that which is right and good in the Sight of God and Man; will avoid and abhor all Fraud and Violence, all Diffimulation and Hypocrisy: Such a Soul beholds the Glory of God continually displayed throughout the whole Creation; considers the Gifts of Providence and Grace, and bleffeth God for being itself Partaker of them: Such a Soul fees it's own Weakness and Corruption by Sin, and endeavours to obtain Reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ; which knows and loves him, who is the Messenger and Witness of the Gospel Covenant, of the Rewards of Virtue and Innocence, and of the Felicities of a future State; Him, who is the Author of our Faith, the Word to declare the Will of God; the Sacrifice for Sin; the Pattern of Patience, Love and Meekness; the Conqueror of Death and Darkness; and the Restorer of Peace and heavenly Bliss; Him, who is the Giver of Wisdom, Truth and Righteousness; of Redemption, Grace and Salvation, by his Gospel and holy Spirit, that is revealed and dwelleth in us.

This is Wisdom and Knowledge far more excellent than Nature and the World can yield, which cannot discern the Things of the Spirit of God, but is under the Curse and confined to earthly Things, and perishing Enjoyments: The Things which are not seen are far more desirable, which will not deceive nor disappoint our Hopes and Expectations; than those which are seen, and will not profit us; which only delude us with false Appearances of Happiness for a  
short

short Time, and in the End will vanish away, and prove insipid, worthless, helpless Vanities. Without this Knowledge of the Truth and religious Principles, how is the Mind of Man alienated from God, and always striving to live without him in the World: Without this Knowledge of God, and of Christ, and of their own Frailty and Sinfulness, and continual Dependence upon him for Life and Salvation, how fearless and securely do Men live, how unthankful and disobedient are they to the Almighty Governor of the World? How do they toil and labour for the Wind and run into Confusion and every evil Work, and fall into Mischiefs and Misery without any Restraint? How confidently do they provoke the Maker and Governor of all Things, and wilfully neglect and oppose his Laws and Government, by their open Profaneness and Rebellion against him? How do they injure one another by Dishonesty and Injustice, Hatred and Revenge? How do they oppose their own Good and Welfare, when they bring Trouble and Shame and everlasting Punishment upon themselves? who will boast in their Wickedness, and glory in their Shame, and are at last made Monuments and Examples of the divine Wrath and Vengeance.

Such is the fatal Consequence of disbelieving the Gospel, and opposing the revealed Will of God: Such is the Restraint which Sin layeth upon us, and our Captivity under it: Such is it's Tyranny and Repugnancy to whatsoever Things are true, to whatsoever Things are honest,

ness, to whatsoever Things are just, to whatsoever Things are pure, lovely and of good Report.

Corrupt Nature will shew itself in a Fondness and restless Desire after vain Delights and Enjoyments; in doing its own Will, and neglecting the Will of God; in a Deafness to good Exhortations; in Self-conceit and Wilfulness and wicked Affections; in Pride, Luxury and Lewdness; in Avarice, Malice, and Intemperance; which are the Works of the Devil. But a true Christian Frame and Temper of Mind is a Composition of Faith, Love and Piety; of Meekness, Patience and Charity; which consists in the Knowledge and Love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, and in divine Contemplations and Communion with him; in a Contempt of the World and a fixed Resolution to obey God. On the other Hand, worldly minded and wicked Men place their Hopes and Happiness in worldly Vanities and sensual Enjoyments; in the Pride of Life and the Applause of Men: How vain and unprofitable are the Projects and Pursuits of such Men? How inconsistent with true Wisdom and Felicity? who trust in Vanity and speak Lies, who conceive Mischief, and bring forth Iniquity; their Transgressions are multiplied in the Sight of God, their Sins testify against them, and bring upon them, unlooked for, Death and Destruction. How much better and more preferable is Truth than Falshood, Honesty than Dishonesty, Love than Hatred? How much more desirable and excellent.

excellent is Purity of Heart, the Riches of the Mind, and the Glory of God, than unlawful Gains, and sinful Pleasures, and the Glory of the World? When the Soul is once purified from these little Projects and unsatisfactory Pursuits, and comes to have an humble Communion and Converse with the supreme Author of it's Being, how gladly will it oppose and conquer the Allurements and Assaults of the World, the Flesh and the Devil? And being ravished with divine Refreshments and Consolation from above, with what Disdain will it look down on those Things, which are the chief Objects of other Mens Desires, and the main End of their worldly Labours and Designs?

From hence it will appear that good Men have the greatest Share of true Contentment, of inward Peace and Joy; who walk agreeably to those Principles and Doctrines, which Reason and Religion prescribe to us, with Hearts full of the Belief and Love of God, endeavouring to keep a good Conscience, and the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace: The Works of Religion and Godliness are the constant Employment and sure Reward of a pious and upright Soul: Heavenly Comforts accompany good Men amidst all the Troubles and Afflictions of this present Life; and, after Death, will crown them with everlasting Glory.

But Impiety and Ungodliness will bring upon us Calamities and Evils, endless Torment and Vexation. It is obvious and easy to observe the Advantages and happy Fruits of a religious Life,



above those of an ungodly one; if we consider how much better it is to walk humbly with our God, and to praise him for all his Benefits, than to be careful about every Thing, or anxiously solicitous for what will not profit us. How much more lovely and commendable is it to be of a mild, compassionate Disposition, to forgive Injuries, to relieve the Distressed, to do Good and no Ill to our Neighbour, than to be passionate, malicious and revengful? How much more agreeable, to be free from fleshly Lufts and unruly Desires, than to be ever gratifying them, and never satisfied? For there can be no Disrelish, nor Discontent in the Ways of Godliness, and nothing but Disappointment and Vexation in the Lufts of the Mind, and in the Vanities and Pleasures of the World.

Wise and good Men are unchangeable amidst all the Difficulties and Dangers that surround them; and immoveable as a Rock, which cannot be shaken by Storms and Tempests; they keep a constant and even Temper of Mind, and rest satisfied in the Providence of God, and their own Integrity: Publick Calamities cannot deprive them of inward Peace and Joy; nor private Troubles rob them of their Hopes and Felicity: If innumerable Misfortunes fall upon them, they will be secured and delivered by religious Principles, and heavenly Contemplations: If Pains and Sicknes seize upon them, they will patiently abide the Chastisement of the Lord, and confide in his Power and Mercy, for their Deliverance from Death and Destruction. But the  
Wicked

Wicked are tossed to and fro with the Reproach and Applause of Men, with every Wind and Change of Fortune; they are lifted up with Pride and Self-conceit, or cast down into Disquiet and Despair; and are like the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest, whose Waters cast up Mire and Dirt: And there is no Peace saith God, to the Wicked: Such are the Devices and Actions of wicked Men, which produce nothing but Disorder and Confusion, nothing beneficial to others, or truly valuable to themselves: Who have rejected Truth and Honesty, and put far from them the Love of Virtue and Godliness, and made Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience, which drowns them in Perdition and Destruction: The Ungodly are bold and confident in all manner of Lewdness and Iniquity, and seem fearless and undaunted at the Wrath of God and future Punishments, whilst no Affliction nor Calamity befalls them: But how dejected and miserable will they be, when the Judgments and Terrors of the Almighty seize upon them? How will they faint and tremble when Death is about to strip them of their Wealth and Strength, and to cut them off from Life, and it's empty Pleasures? And how wretched, how astonished will they be, when those Props, which supported them, are taken away; and they are driven from Light into Darkness; from sensual Enjoyments into eternal Torments?

Let me therefore 2dly confider the good and bad Confequences of Virtue and of Vice, and fee how different are the Rewards and Punifhments here and hereafter.

The Bleffings, which attend the fincere Profeflion and Practice of the Christian Religion, are not only fpiritual (*viz.*) inward Peace and Joy, and, after this Life, eternal Happinefs in a future State; but alfo temporal, increafing and eftablifhing the Health and Welfare, the Peace and Felicity of the outward Man: Godlinefs is profitable for all Things, having the Promife of this prefent Life, as well as of that which is to come.

Christianity, and the Practice of the Duties which it enjoins, does vifibly improve the Spirit and Difpofition of Men, correct and amend their Manners and Behaviour: This will make the bold and confident Offender humble and inoffenfive in his Demeanour; the Paflionate and Revengeful, mild and harmlefs as Doves; and the rapacious Churl, bountiful and liberal to the Poor: This will make lewd, profane Libertines, fober and modeft and temperate in all Things; bloody Ruffians, to become tender-hearted and compaffionate; the carelefs, fenfelefs, foolhardy Wretch, to live foberly, righteoufly and godly in this prefent World: Thefe excellent Qualifications and Ornaments of the Mind, which Christianity affords, will eftablifh Faith and Devotion towards God, Righteoufnefs and Good-will towards Men, Peace and Glad-  
nefs

ness within our own Breasts : When these Things prevail, there is no Need of Laws and Punishments to confine their unruly Affections and Desires within due Bounds : No Need of Oaths and Obligations to gain them Credit, and make them honest : No Need of Entreaties to be kind and merciful to the Needy and Afflicted : What an agreable and happy Disposition, what a friendly Correspondence, what a liberal Distribution and Benevolence, will such Doctrines and Practices produce ? What happy Effects and Fruits will they bring forth amongst Men ? which are the best Security of our present Ease and Welfare, and greatly increase the temporal Good and Felicity of Mankind. Where God is thus honoured he will dispense publick Blessings amongst Men ; and where Bloodshed, Rapine and Cruelty are abhorred and expelled, there can be no Wars nor Desolations ; and where Godliness, Honesty, and Charity take place, there can be no Mischiefs, nor Injuries, no Want, nor complaining in our Streets.

The Righteous shall rejoice in the Lord, and be filled with good Things, and delight themselves in Abundance of Peace : He will bless them in the City, and in the Field : He will bless the Fruits of the Land, and the Increase of their Kine ; and preserve them from the Famine, the Sword, and the Pestilence : But they, who wilfully offend against God, forfeit all Claim to his Protection, justly incur his Hatred, and will feel the direful Effects of it, and can expect nothing but Evil and Misery to be their Portion ;

Portion; for we find that Wars and Famine, bad Seasons, and sudden Deaths, Scarcity and Diseases among Men and Beasts, are Tokens of God's Anger and Displeasure, and the unhappy Fruit of our Iniquity and Contempt of God's Laws and Sovereignty over us, occasioned and brought upon us by our Impieties and Wickedness: These Evils and Calamities could not befall us, did not the Ungodliness and Sins of Men produce them; nor hurt us, did not they give them their Sting and Venom.

Profligate Sinners bring Judgments upon themselves, and the Places where they live, by the Injuries and Disorders which they commit: It is no Wonder to see them fall into insupportable Troubles and Miseries, who question the Power, and resist the Will of God, the Maker and Governor of the World; who wilfully cut themselves off from his Mercy and loving Kindness, by living without him in the World, in Opposition to his Government and Goodness: It is no Wonder to see such heavy Judgments poured out on a profane, cursing, rebellious, drunken Generation; indeed they may escape for a Time, but Wrath and Punishment will surely overtake them at the Last: For they that delight in Cursing, shall be accursed; and they who love not Blessing, it shall be far from them. How many bloody Battels and horrid Desolations have been occasioned by the Ambition and Avarice of Princes? How many Murders and Robberies have been committed by impious and presumptuous Offenders? How many Mischiefs  
and

and Quarrels by Drunkards and such incorrigible Sinners? But if Men had an Understanding Heart to discern the Majesty and Power, the Mercies and Judgments of God, such Overflowings of Ungodliness could not thus overspread and lay waste the whole Earth: If they could govern themselves by the Rules of Temperance, Righteousness and Godliness, such Legions of evil Spirits could not inhabit in them; such Monsters of Pride and Avarice, of Lewdness and Dishonesty, would not appear in the World, and triumph over it: If the Doctrines of Christianity; if Humility and Patience, Truth and Mercy; could prevail over us, so much Bloodshed and Revenge, Lying and Stealing, and committing Adultery, would vanish away and not be known amongst Men.

Good Men will be frequent in Prayer and Communion with God, and employed in good Works, which raise our Affections above the World, extinguish sinful Lusts and Passions, and shew the Excellency and Advantages of divine Virtues, which promote the Good and Welfare of all Mankind, and advance Love, Peace and Joy which can never fail. But wicked Men are immersed and swallowed up in the Cares and Enjoyments of this Life, overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness, which inflame their Lusts and Passions, and make them given up to delusive Vanities, and extravagant Lusts; which fill the Body with Pains and Diseases, and the Soul with vicious and depraved Affections; and the whole Man becomes blind and brutish, sensual

ful and devilish, and cannot escape the Evil, nor fly from the Wrath to come. Thus Blessing and Cursing depends upon our Obedience or Sinfulness; and there is an all-seeing Eye, which continually inspects the Ways of Men, and an omnipotent Arm, stretched out from Heaven, which does what seemeth it good, dispensing Rewards and Punishments according to the Doings of the Children of Men. Whosoever goes about to deny this, may as well deny the Succession of Day and Night, of Summer and Winter; or the Growth and Increase of the Fruits of the Earth, which supply the Wants of all living Creatures.

Such a natural Tendency and Fitness has Christianity, and a faithful Obedience thereto, to procure publick Blessings and happy Times, and to obtain Peace and Prosperity in this Life, that it will prevail with God to manifest himself to be our Protector and Saviour, and to command the kind Influence of the Heavens to descend upon the Earth, that she may bring forth her Increase; and He will open the Storehouse of his Mercies, and not suffer us to want any Thing that is good: Religion and Piety will also render Mankind bountiful and compassionate to one another, and prevent the Evils and Mischiefs that Sin and Disobedience do manifestly bring upon us: If Men would acknowledge this, and experience the Power and Mercy of God, which is the Support and Salvation of all Things, and pay him that easy and reasonable Service which he requires of us, we should reap the happy  
Fruits

Fruits of Goodness and Virtue in the outward and inward Man; and find Light and Life spring up in our Darknes and Shadow of Death; Chearfulness and Honesty, instead of Mourning and Injuries; and the Scourge of Diseases and Miseries would be removed far from us, and we should rejoice in the Love and Peace and Salvation of our God.

The Nature of Sin and the fatal Consequence of it can never be changed, which is a wilful Transgression of the Laws and Will of God, and the fruitful Parent of innumerable Calamities. Such Obstinacy and Rebellion provokes God to withdraw his Blessings from us, and to pour the Vials of his heavy Judgments upon us: Publick Sins will draw down publick Calamities; the Sword, the Famine and the Pestilence, are Scourges wherewith he visits the Nations and People, whereby whole Kingdoms and Countries are ruined and undone.

The Sins of Men provoke God to smite them with sundry Grievances and manifold kinds of Death; to make the Heavens over our Heads Brass, and the Earth under our Feet Iron; to consume the Fruits of the Land with Blasting and Vermin; or to prevent their Growth by unkindly Seasons and inclement Weather, and to smite the guilty Race of Men with Blindness and Madness, and Astonishment of Heart; and to send upon them Cursing, Vexation, and Rebuke, in all that they set their Hand unto, for to do it, until they are destroyed and perish.

D

In



In such Times many are so great Enemies to God and themselves, that they will not discern and acknowledge the Hand of God therein, but impute these Judgments to natural Causes and mere Chance ; whereby they exclude God from the Government of the World, and provoke him to deliver them up to the Powers of Darknes and evil Angels to enslave and destroy them : Who ascribe Drought and Sicknes to a bad Air ; Wars and Slaughters to the Ambition of Princes ; Shipwrecks and Losses to violent Storms ; Fire and Desolation to common Accidents and Events : All which may be true ; but the Error lies in not seeing and owning God's Government and Providence, and the Wilfulness and Sinfulness of Men, which is the prime Cause and Mover of such Accidents and Calamities, and that he ordereth all Things, both in Heaven and in Earth. Such Men contribute, what in them lies, to keep the World in a State of Infidelity and Misery ; and continue hoping for better Times, without forsaking those Sins which occasioned bad ones, until they are consumed and perish ; and such Judgments may not be owned and acknowledged by wicked Men, but will prove no less fatal, and not fail to accomplish their End.

Every Blasphemer and evil Doer, is an Incendiary in the Commonwealth, who indeed does not take Fire in his Hand to do it, but stirs up the divine Vengeance to break out in Burnings and direful Tokens of his Anger and Displeasure : Every Niggard and Miser is a Plague

to his own Family, and to all Persons he deals with: Every Drunkard selleth his Birthright for strong Drink; and is the Cause of Scarcity and Misery in his own House; ever spreading his Infection and doing Mischief by his Words and Example, and wasting those good Things which are for the Support and Succour of others, and enticing them to run with him to the same Excess of Riot. Every Enemy to Religion and Virtue is an Enemy to the Good and Welfare of others, and of himself. Such Transgressions against the Laws of the Almighty, cause the Air to be unwholesom; the Earth to be unfruitful; the Sea to be tempestuous, and our Enemies to insult and triumph over us, and bring upon us Disquiet, Contempt and Misery; they take away the innocent Freedom and Mirth of the People; turn our Feasts into Mourning; our Conversation into Hypocrisy; and the World into a kind of Hell, where there is weeping and wailing, and gnashing of Teeth.

Virtue and Goodness, which proceeds from the Knowledge and Love of God, not only secures our temporal Happiness, but brings Peace and Blessedness to the inward Man, and is Health and Joy unto the Soul; which heals its Distempers and Disorders, gives it a sprightly Vigour and Alacrity, and yields a grateful Sense of God's Goodness and its own Felicity: But Intemperance and Lust, Dishonesty and Ungodliness, are the Effects of Infidelity, and a Love of the World, and the Fountains of perpetual Disquiet and Misery. He, who hath raised his Thoughts

and Desires to that uncreated Light and Glory, which is above, will have different Affections, different Pursuits, from him, whose Hopes and Happiness are confined to the Riches and Pleasures of this World. The Love of God, and of whatsoever Things are true, honest and just, of whatsoever Things are pure, lovely, and of good Report, cause the Soul to delight itself in the most desirable and satisfactory Enjoyments, and fix the Heart on the most excellent and durable Objects: But a Love of the World and earthly Enjoyments deceive and disappoint it's Expectations, and are only Snares and Restraints to Guilt and Punishment: But divine Love hath no Bounds; which is forever delighted with the Beauties and Wonders of the Creation and Redemption of the World; which are the continued Fruits and Manifestations of God's infinite Power and Goodness; and a divine Life founded hereon, hath Liberty and Peace, Joy and Blessedness forever.

Who then will reject these Virtues and their Rewards, which are so commendable and advantageous, and refuse to obey these Doctrines and Precepts, which he hath given us, by his Son Jesus Christ, which are most just, equitable, and beneficial for us? Who will not choose, and gladly submit to those Laws, which only can establish our present Peace and eternal Bliss? Which only can restrain us from Impieties, Injuries and Debaucheries; which bring down the Wrath of God upon us; which will be a Terror and Sa-  
vour

vour of Death unto evil Doers, and the Protection and Felicity of them that do well.

A wicked Man is under the Tyranny of the Prince of Darknes, and incapable of knowing and pursuing his own Good: There can be no greater Folly and Slavery, no greater Debasement to human Nature, than sinful Lusts, and a confident Rebellion against God; which war against the Soul, and bring it into Captivity unto the Law of Sin; which degrades Men, who were made a little lower than the Angels, into a far worse Condition, than the Beasts which perish. So unnatural and unaccountable is the Disobedience of Man against his Maker: So dishonourable and ungrateful is a wilful Offender against his only Benefactor: So guilty and condemned is a presumptuous Sinner before the Governor and Judge of all the Earth; that nothing can deserve greater Shame and Punishment than such obstinate Offences and wilful Sins, committed against God, our Brethren, and ourselves.

Excellent therefore is the Christian Profession, that Gospel, which we have received from Heaven, by *Moses* and the Prophets, by Christ and his Apostles, which enjoins Faith, Love, and Godliness, Truth, Justice, and Honesty; Patience under Wants and Sufferings; Compassion to the Miserable and Afflicted, and a reasonable Service and Obedience towards God: Which requires nothing but what is our Advantage and Interest to comply with; nothing but what will highly contribute to our Comfort and Welfare: Which instructs us in the Way to Heaven, by  
those

those Doctrines which our Saviour taught and directs us in the Way to eternal Happiness, by those Rules which he hath marked out; which teach us to love God with all our Heart, and our Neighbour as ourselves, and delight ourselves in Works of Piety and Beneficence. Excellent is that Religion which gives us these glorious Privileges, the Adoption of the Sons of God, and the Comfort and Conduct of his holy Spirit; which has so well provided for the Happiness of others, as well as of ourselves; and so annexed the one to the other, that we cannot be cruel nor injurious to them, without troubling our own Flesh; nor kind and compassionate, just and merciful, without feeling a sensible Satisfaction therein, which is most conducive to the Peace and Felicity of the Soul; which is the best Means to establish the Good and Prosperity of all Mankind.

Most wretched and miserable is their Condition, who live in Defiance to these Precepts and Doctrines, and to the Will of him, who ruleth in Heaven and in Earth: They become their own Tormentors, whose Sins, like Furies, perpetually vex and scourge them; whose Conscience is a gnawing Worm that never dies; making them a Plague and Terror to themselves and others. Whoredom and Drunkenness and inordinate Affections are infernal Enchantments, which bereave Men of their Reason and Understanding, and leave them reprobate to every good Work, forsaken of God, and exposed to every  
Temptation,

Temptation, falling from one Wickedness to another, and at last into eternal Perdition.

There is something so sacred and excellent in the Christian Religion, that it will ever be honoured and esteemed amongst Men: The Lord is with them that love him, and his Glory shineth upon them: His Angels guide and defend the Innocent and Godly that no Evil may happen unto them. The Doctrines of the Prophets and Apostles, such as Humility and Patience, Purity of Heart, and Holiness of Life; Kindness and Beneficence towards our Brethren, will manifest us to be the Children of God, will employ us in good Works, and afford us the blessed Fruits of Love and Joy, and Peace with God and Man.

A pious Obedience, or sinful Disobedience, will therefore bless us with Prosperity and Happiness, or bring upon us Curses, and publick Calamities; and fill us with eternal Peace and Joy, or with eternal Remorse and Misery: For God will be a gracious Father to cherish and comfort us; or a severe Judge to punish and destroy us; and puts a wide Difference between him that serveth him, and him that serveth him not: He that seeketh to do whatsoever Things are pure and lovely, is delivered from innumerable Evils; He that giveth Alms will find Mercy and Help in Time of Need; He that serveth God, will be protected and blessed by him; who will render to every Man according to his Works: Crosses and Disappointments to the Froward; Delusive Joys to the Voluptuary; Pains and Diseases to the Lewd and Intemperate; Perplexities

plexities and Troubles to the Unrighteous and Profane ; Judgment, without Mercy, to the Obstinate and Unmerciful ; and the bitter Pains of eternal Death to incorrigible Sinners.

If therefore there be any Distinction between Good and Evil ; any Rewards and Punishments to be distributed unto Men in the Day of Judgment : If there be any Virtue in holy Doctrines and good Intentions : If there be any Praise in good Deeds and charitable Employments : If there be any Mischief, Shame and Punishment in evil Purposes and Actions, think on these Things, to do the one and shun the other, and the God of Peace shall be with you.

Lastly, Let these divine Virtues be the Study and Employment of your Lives ; and the Ornaments and Attire of your Souls, to meet Christ, your Bridegroom, and to gain you Admittance to the Marriage Feast : Who is coming to judge the World, and to condemn it's guilty Inhabitants to unquenchable Fire, and to receive his chosen People into his Kingdom of Glory.

A N

E X H O R T A T I O N

T O

F A I T H and O B E D I E N C E.

E P H E S I A N S iv. 6.

*Who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

**I** Have long had my Conversation among you, and am now leaving the World, and returning to the Maker and Judge of all Men: And beseech you to accept this my last Exhortation and Intreaty to believe in God, and to serve him. Know ye, therefore, that the Lord your God, he is God in Heaven above, and in the Earth beneath. The Lord is one God, and besides him there is no Saviour; who will not admit of any Rival in thy Heart and Affections; and will be to thee every Thing which thou can'st desire; Health and Relief from Pain and Sicknes; Peace and Comfort, under all thy Troubles and Afflictions; Help and Strength to the Needy in his Distress; and the Resurrection and the Life after Death: Your Fear and Love, your Desires and Affections must be unfeigned and undivided, and center in him alone; whose

E

All-



All-sufficiency will support and succour you in all Dangers and Temptations, and deliver you from Sin and Death.

It is your Wisdom and Felicity to know the living God and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent; and to observe and keep his Commandments and to do his Will, in your several Callings and Stations; who only can make all Things go well with you, and protect and bless you forever: Forget not the natural Life, which, like a Cloud, appeareth for a little Time, and then vanisheth away: Nor the rational Soul, which is capable of Virtue and of Vice; of Rewards and Punishments, which are intellectual and everlasting: Forget not the Fall of our first Parents; how their Wisdom and Felicity and Glory departed from them, and they became ashamed, guilty, and condemned: Nor the Restoration that is in Jesus Christ the second Representative of all Mankind; by whom we may be reconciled to God the Father, renewed in the Spirit of our Minds, and received into the Adoption of Sons. Forget not the Things which thine Eyes have seen, Light and Darkness, the visible Beauties and Witnesses of God Almighty's Power and Goodness, which are in Heaven and in Earth; whose secret Providence supports and governs all Creatures, and disposes of all Events. Let it be your Wisdom and Felicity, not to seek to do your own Will, and to follow your own Devices, which lead you into Mischief, and end in Death: Your corrupt Lusts and wilful Disobedi-

2

dience,

dience defile your Nature and expose you to the Wrath of God, who is a consuming Fire.

Behold the Heaven of Heavens is the Lord thy God's, and the Earth and all that is therein; from whence cometh thy Salvation and Prosperity, and all the Necessaries and Accommodations of Life; for he is thy Life and Succour; he is thy Praise and thy Glory. Know that the Lord thy God, is the God that ruleth and judgeth the Earth; that sheweth Mercy to them that love him, and repayeth Vengeance to his Adversaries: It is he that will bless the Fruit of thy Land, and the Increase of thy Kine, and give Success to all thy Labours and Undertakings: But if thou wilt be stubborn, and walk in thy own Ways, and rebel against him, thou shalt be snared therein; Rebuke and Trouble shall cleave unto thee, and thou shalt be suddenly cut off; for he only holdeth thy Soul in Life, and giveth thee Food and Raiment, and fruitful Seasons, and inward Peace and Felicity here, and beyond the Grave heavenly Habitations.

Remember the Lord thy God in Plenty and Fulness, and give him Thanks and Praise, and cleave unto him, in Scarcity and Affliction, for his Aid and Salvation: Be obedient to the Voice of the Lord your God, who speaketh to you in the Clouds, and wonderful Dispensations of his Providence, in the *Old and New Testament*; and in the secret Whispers and Inspirations of his holy Spirit. Remember how thou hast provoked God to Wrath, by thy Forgetfulness and Contempt of him, and by a wilful Breach of his

Laws and Covenants; how some of you have been guilty of the most presumptuous Sins, and the Authors of your own Ruin and Destruction; But he is long suffering, and had rather that the Sinner would turn from his Wickedness and live, and he will pardon him.

Your Eyes have seen how the Lord your God can make the Heaven over your Head Brass, and the Earth Iron; that there be no Rain, nor the Land yield her Fruits; and can make the Fowls and the Cattle, and their Owners to perish and consume away; and as soon restore Grass in the Fields, and Plenty of Food, and that they may eat and live, and be filled with good Things: Who, from the Beginning to the End of the Year, presideth over all Things, and doeth whatsoever pleaseth him, in Heaven and in Earth; and in the End of the World, will judge both the Quick and the Dead; for the Hour is coming, in which, all that are in the Grave shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth; and they that have done Good, unto the Resurrection of Life: and they that have done Evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation.

Remember Him who was born of a pure Virgin, and brought from Heaven glad Tidings of Grace and Salvation unto Men; and dispelled the Darknes of Infidelity and Sin among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and destroyed the Works of the Devil: Who manifested the Beauty of Holiness, Faith and Devotion, of Meekness and Patience; of Love and Charity: Who appeared more excellent than any of the Sons of Men,  
and

and his Glory as the Glory of the only begotten Son of God. Remember Him, who was innocent and undefiled; the Pattern of all Goodness and Perfection, and unworthy of any Sorrow, or Punishment. Consider Him, who endured such Contradiction of Sinners against himself; and thereby made Suffering and Affliction the Discipline and Improvement of the Soul, and momentary Sorrows the Means of eternal Blessedness; and Death the Gate of Life, and Entrance into heavenly Mansions: Consider Him, who delivers us from all Troubles and Afflictions, which are the Offspring of our Impiety and Ungodliness; who is Light in Darkness, the Ransom from Sin, and Life in Death: Who directeth our Souls towards God and eternal Life; and putteth us in Mind of departing from all Iniquity, and of attaining to heavenly Perfection and Glory. See Him, who is the Messenger and Witness of Grace and Salvation, and of the Benefits of divine Virtues, and of the Felicities of a future State: See Him despised and afflicted and put to Death, and you will see your own Likeness, and the Frailties of human Nature made triumphant and victorious over worldly Vanities and the Pride of Life; and Mourning turned into Gladness, and Heaviness into eternal Joy: By whom the Wickedness of the World is overcome, Man is redeemed from eternal Misery, and received into eternal Glory; by whom the Poison of Sin is healed, and the Sting of Death is taken away; and the Treasures of divine Vir-

tues,

tues, and of his heavenly Kingdom, are opened and given to the Children of Men.

It is your Wisdom and Felicity to know the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life and Motion, and Increase to all Things ; and to live and act under this Influence and Power from on high, which effectually worketh all in all ; and to obey this holy Spirit, which worketh in us to will and to do, the Works of Nature, and of Grace : Christ is the Author and Original of all Life and Action, of all Truth and Goodness in the Bodies and Souls of Men. Forget not Him, who is sent in the Place of the blessed Jesus, to be a Guide and Comforter to the Souls of Men ; to collect and seal his People, chosen out of the World, to serve him, and to unite and establish his Church amongst Men ; by whom it is guided and governed, in divine Virtues and good Works, and by Repentance, Faith, and Obedience, made meet to partake of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light : Forget not Him, who is sent to shew us the Way to Heaven, and to assure us of the Truth and Certainty of it ; and is the Light and Life to lead and conduct us thither : Who is sent to bear Witness with our Spirit, that we are made like unto God, redeemed from the Bondage of Corruption and the Tyranny of the Devil, and shall be raised up, at the last Day, from the Darkness of the Grave, to a blessed Immortality ; and to testify within us, that we are regenerate, and the adopted Sons of God, and Heirs of a glorious Inheritance ; and to make it manifest we are are sealed

sealed hereby unto the Day of Redemption ; become his peculiar People, zealous of good Works, and, after Death, shall be received in heavenly Mansions of everlasting Bliss and Glory. Behold the Tabernacle of God is with Men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his People ; and God himself shall be with them, and be their God : Behold the Kingdom of God is within you, which is not Meat and Drink, but Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost : Behold what Manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God ; and how the three Persons, in the ever blessed Trinity, are concerned in the Creation, Redemption, and Salvation of Men.

Cleave unto the Lord thy God, with full Purpose of Heart, and seek unto him for Aid and Protection : Who is a God of Might and Mercy, without Imperfection and Deceit ; He is the Rock from whence thou art hewn, and his Work is perfect ; his Doing cannot be mended nor changed ; his Will cannot be withstood nor defeated ; nor his Word be undone or unfinished : Is it not He, that hath made, of one Blood, all the Nations upon Earth, and hath chosen unto himself the Penitent and Holy ? Is it not He, that divideth to all People their Inheritance, and hath appointed different Stations and Employments unto Men ? Is it not He, that wounds and heals ; that killeth and maketh alive ; neither is there any that can deliver out of his Hand ? Is it not He, that separateth the Good  
from

from the Bad, and maketh an evident Distinction between him that serveth him, and him that serveth him not; for the Lord's Portion is his People, and good Men the Lot of his Inheritance? But some will despise the God that made and supports them, and lightly esteem the Rock of their Salvation; wilfully rebel against the sovereign Ruler of the World, and daily provoke him to Anger, by their repeated Transgressions: But his Mercy doth not blot out his Justice, nor his long Suffering prevent his Vengeance; from such he will hide his Face, and deny them his Protection and Blessing: Their Foot shall slide in due Time, and they shall suddenly die in their Sins; his Judgments will overtake them, and they shall be cut off with bitter Destruction. O that Men were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter End!

I am now grown infirm and almost overcome with Pain and Sicknes, and can no longer continue with you, and the Days are approaching that I must die; but another, I hope some good Man, will supply my Place among you, and will faithfully instruct you in heavenly Things, and duly administer God's holy Sacraments; which are our Covenants with him, and Testimonies of his Mercy and Pardon, and Seals of our Acceptance and Adoption, of our Redemption and everlasting Salvation. The Law of the Lord thy God is not hidden from thee, neither is it afar off: Which requires,

That thou worship not any Thing that is made; nor make any Thing to worship.

That

That thou reverence and fear the Name of the Lord thy God, and not use it in profane Oaths, or common Discourse.

That thou honour thy Parents with Love and Obedience, for their Education and good Things which they have given thee.

That thou commit no Murder, by unhappy Quarrels, or excessive Passion.

That thou commit no Adultery, nor Fornication, nor Uncleanness.

That thou rob none of their Wealth and Goods which belong to them.

That thou rob none of their Right and Reputation, by false Witness or Slander.

That thou covet nothing which is another Man's, but be content with thine own.

Which contains our Duty to God and Man, and is fully explained in our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount.

In which, Life and Death, Cursing and Blessing, Good and Evil, is set before thee, and preached and enforced by his Ministers, to turn thee from thy evil Doings, and to make thee forsake them, and live. Love therefore the Lord thy God, and obey his Voice, that thou mayest inherit a Blessing, and thy Soul may live: For he is thy Life and the Length of thy Days and the Support and Succour of all his Creatures, and the Maker and Judge of all Men; lest these Revelations from God, in the *Old and New Testament*, and continual Warnings from Men, testify against thee, and increase thy Damnation.



Unto the Place which the Lord your God hath chosen, even to his holy Habitation, shall you seek for Aid in Time of Distress ; and thither come, to pay your Sacrifice of Prayer and Thanksgiving ; to hear his Voice, and understand the Mystery of Godliness ; and if you worship him with Faith and Stedfastness, he will send you Help from his holy Place ; he will teach you of his Ways, and the Paths of Life shall be made known unto you.

If an upstart Preacher, or Dreamer, entice thee to any new Faith or Doctrine, consent thou not unto him and reject him : But walk after the Lord thy God, in Truth and Holiness, to fear him and keep his Commandments, and obey his Voice, and cleave unto him and serve him all the Days of thy Life ; and he will look down with Mercy upon thee, and give thee Peace and Prosperity, and make all Things work together for thy Good. Let there not be any one among you, whose Heart turneth away from the Lord your God ; nor any Root among you, that beareth Gall and Bitterness ; that shall bless himself in his Heart saying, I shall have Peace and escape Punishment, tho' I walk in the Imagination of my Heart, and commit any deadly Sin, and add Drunkenness to Thirst ; the Lord shall give such a one the Fruit of his Doings, and heap Mischief upon him ; he will separate him unto Evil, and make him to inherit the Curses denounced against him.

If thou wilt obey the Voice of the Lord thy God, and observe to do his Will, thou shalt  
I
be

be blessed at Home and Abroad; the Lord shall open unto thee, his good Treasures of Wisdom, and Peace, and Felicity, and no Plague shall come nigh thy Dwelling: But if thou wilt not hearken to his Voice, to keep his Commandments, and do them, thou shalt be vexed and cursed when thou goest out, and when thou comest in; he will send upon thee Trouble and Rebuke, in all that thou settest thine Hand unto; and will smite thee with a Consumption and Diseases, because of the Wickedness of thy Doings, whereby thou hast forsaken him, until thou perish and be destroyed; and thou shalt walk in Darknes and Error, and be oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no Man shall save thee, and there shall be no Might nor Deliverance in thine Hand. He shall send Distress and Anguish, a trembling Heart, and Sorrow of Mind; from Heaven shall it come upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

Secret Things belong unto the Lord, who is unseen and secretly governs and directs all Things in the Universe, by his Wisdom and Providence; Who blesteth the Righteous with secret Blessings in the inner Man; and curseth the Ungodly with Torment and Disquiet, and he discerneth it not; with many Evils and Troubles, and he cannot escape them: He is a God that hideth himself and doeth great Things, and unsearchable in Heaven and in Earth: Secret Things in the Works of Nature and of Grace, and of Judgment, and of Mercy, belong unto the Lord; the Discovery of the Works of Darknes; the for-

faking the Ungodly, and the Punishment of ſecret Sins ; but thoſe which are revealed belong unto us ; and thoſe Bleſſings and Curſes which are diſtributed by an inviſible Hand, we know will cleave unto us, according to our Fidelity or Diſobedience ; and that Good or Evil, which is the Fruit of our Doings in this Life, will be our Portion for ever.

But if thou wilt return unto the Lord thy God, after any of theſe Calamities and Evils have befallen thee, with all thy Heart and Mind, he will return unto thee and pardon thine Iniquities ; and will rejoice over thee to do thee Good, and, in the End, give thee Poſſeſſion of an incorruptible and heavenly Inheritance. Our imperfect Obedience in doing the Will of God, and hearty Repentance for the Sins we have committed, will be accepted and available to our Forgiveness and Remiſſion, through the Sacrifice and Interceſſion of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt ; and, through him, we may be reconciled to the Lord our God, and find Redemption and eternal Salvation : We may be ſtrengthened with Might, by his Spirit, in the inner Man, to think and do thoſe Things that be good, and to keep his Commandments ; and to have Victory over the World, the Fleſh and the Devil ; and be ſealed for his choſen People, unto the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God ; when the bleſſed Jeſus ſhall come again with great Power and Glory, and ſhall ſend his Angels, and ſhall gather together his Elect, from the four Winds, from the uttermoſt Part of the Earth,

Earth, to the uttermost Part of Heaven; and the wicked and obstinate Offenders shall be cast into everlasting Fire.

Since the Time of Death is drawing on, and cannot be escaped, and an eternal Reward or Punishment will then be thy Portion forever, how should'st thou mind what God hath taught and told thee; and search after what he requires of thee; set thyself to practise it, that thou mayest obtain his Promise, and be saved in the Day of Judgment. Cleave unto thy God, the Maker and Judge of all Men, with thy whole Heart and Affections, and not faintly nor feignedly; for when thou seekest his Grace and Mercy, and retainest thy own Folly and Sinfulness, thou art deceived, and will come short of the Praise and Glory of God. Get above the Lusts of the Flesh and of the World, for every Lust warreth against the Inspiration of the Spirit, and tendeth to destroy the Life of God and of Christ in us: Forsake the vain Conversation of Men, and the Error in which so many are involved; and abstain from the Pride of Life, and the Infidelity of the Ungodly. Believe in the invisible God, who judgeth the World righteously, and governeth the Nations upon the Earth, and in Jesus Christ, who came from Heaven to be the Saviour of the World, and be secure of Mercy and Salvation, and sanctified by a Belief the Truth.

He that is thus furnished with the Knowledge and Love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, will stand at a Distance from all Sin,  
and

and be amazed at it ; and will live under the Guidance of the holy Spirit, and hath God within him, and cannot fail of an everlasting and incorruptible Inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven.

And my Prayer for you is, that you may abound more and more in all Knowledge and Judgment ; that you may approve Things that are excellent ; that ye may be sincere and without Offence 'till the Day of Christ ; and be filled with the Fruits of Righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the Praise and Glory of God.

*F I N I S.*

---