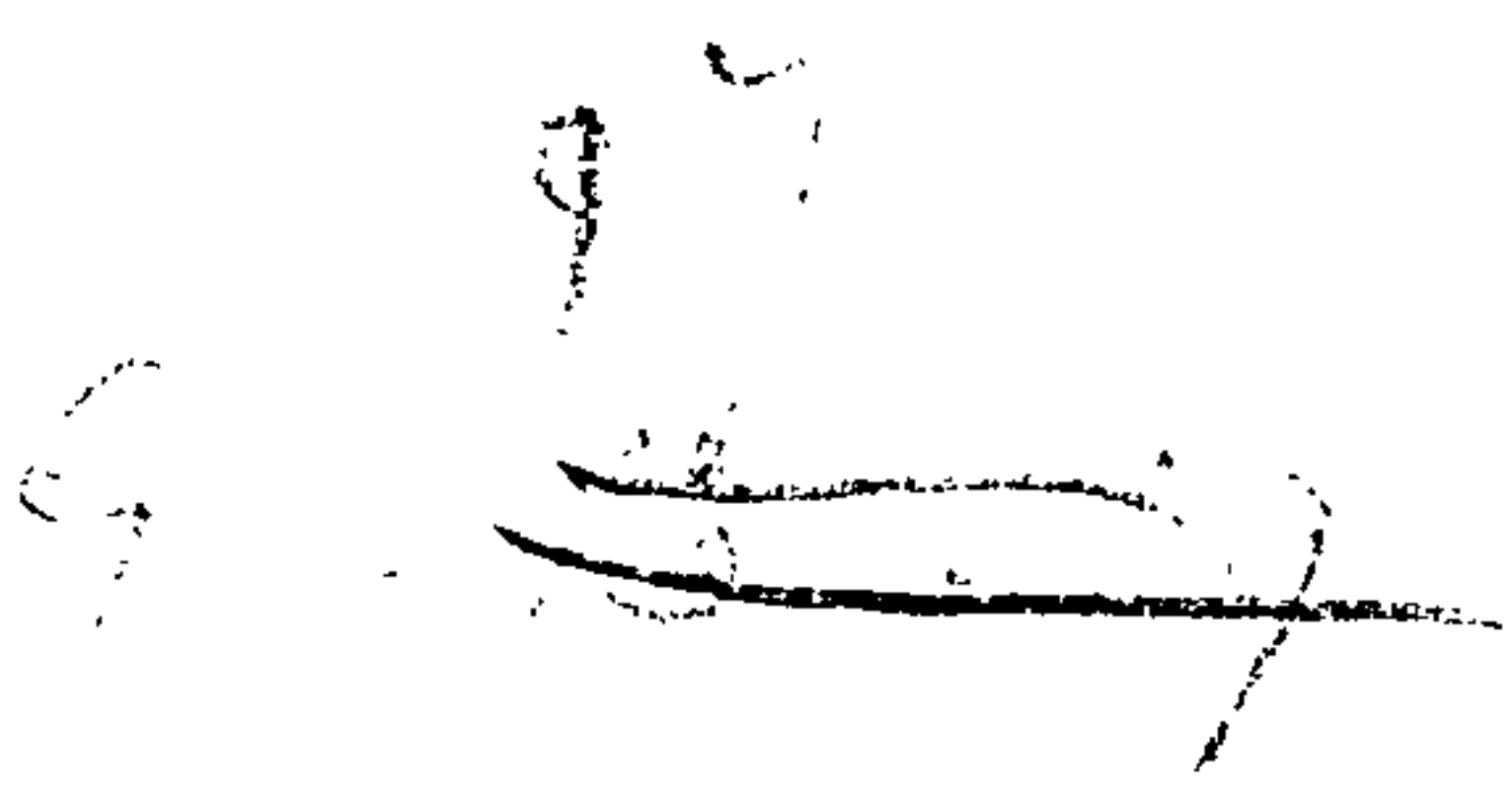


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7

49

# D I S C O U R S E S

## *II Part*

ON THE FOLLOWING

REGULIAR AND IMPORTANT SUBJECTS :

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>I</b> The nature and extent of Repentance.</p> <p><b>II</b> Faith imputed for Righteousness.</p> <p><b>III</b> The Lord's sufficiency, and Man's obedience.</p> <p><b>IV</b> Christ Man's Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, &amp;c.</p> <p><b>V</b> Paul's Fighting, Running, Faith, and Crown.</p> <p><b>VI</b> The Lord works, and Man works.</p> <p><b>VII</b> All Things being dissolved, &amp;c.</p> | <p><b>VIII</b> God's Judgment according to Truth.</p> <p><b>IX</b> Rewards and Punishments according to Works.</p> <p><b>X</b> Sinning and perishing without, and with the Law.</p> <p><b>XI</b> The Lord's foreknowledge, predestinating, calling, &amp;c.</p> <p><b>XII</b> Sodom consumed.</p> <p><b>XIII</b> Jacob's Vision.</p> <p><b>XIV</b> Jacob's Wrestling.</p> <p><b>XV</b> Pharaoh's Ignorance and Disobedience.</p> <p><b>XVI</b> Preachers described, and the People advised.</p> |
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BY NICHOLAS MANNERS

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MDCXCXI.

DISCOURSE	PAGE
I.	3
II.	13
III.	19
IV.	25
V.	53
VI.	69
VII.	80
VIII.	95
IX.	101
X.	107
XI.	114
XII.	121
XIII.	125
XIV.	128
XV.	132
XVI.	137

# T H E P R E F A C E .

**T**HERE is among those, who deal in books, a general, and I fear a just complaint, that religious ones are little requested, read, and regarded; which is an evident indication of the infidelity, irreligion, and immorality of the age, for what men believe to be absolutely necessary, for their present and future well-being, (and religion is) they will, if they act consistently with themselves, pursue with the greatest ardency, diligence, and perseverance till they partake of it. And that reading, religious books, has a direct tendency to promote the principle and practice of religion, all, of any understanding, will allow, inasmuch as what is read not only furnishes the mind, of the reader, with ideas of the essence, quality, properties, and tendency of the subject, but it also, as far as the reader permits, transfuses (as effluvia, by mixing with air, alters its quality) its nature into his spirit, and so transforms its disposition, into its own nature, as to become a principle of action to him. Those then, who neglect religious reading, not only in effect affirm that they neither believe, prize, nor pursue religion; but this neglect, and its consequences, are also the greatest evils that any can be guilty of, as they imply a want of concern for the soul, an omission of what respects its salvation, a contempt of religion, and consequently of God, the author, object, and end of it, with many other evils. And that religion is absolutely necessary, and in the highest degree profitable and pleasant, appears from this, that if men had as much worldly wisdom, riches, honour, and pleasure as Solomon had; if they did not, from a pious principle, know, fear, love, worship, and serve the Lord in holiness, righteousness, sincerity, and zeal, they would differ little from the devil, being, as all sinners are, his children, servants, and heirs. Those then, whose whole delight is in earthly and evil things, and have no relish, for any reading, but what pertains thereto, are in a corrupt and cursed condition, serve not the Lord, take no care of their souls, contribute nothing to the salvation of others, nor prepare to be happy in eternity; but, on the contrary, they sin against God, ruin themselves, corrupt others, and treasure up wrath, in hell, to torment themselves eternally. And if any of them are already too far gone, in irreligion, to be recovered to a better condition; the Almighty may, (as he did some of the ancient heathens, *Rom. i. 21, 28.* for not glorifying him as God, being unthankful, and not choosing to retain him in their knowledge, as the object of worship) have given them

up to vile affections, and to a reprobate sense; and then, it is certain, their damnation does not slumber. But let us suppose that few, of the living, are yet entirely forsaken of the Lord; which, from his long-suffering, slowness to wrath, &c. we may safely do. Yet what will this avail, if religion be neglected? Long life is not a blessing, but a curse, if it is not used to the purpose of pleasing God and promoting the salvation of the soul, because the longer men live; the more sin they commit, and must suffer the more for it. This being the case, let us consider how unwise and wicked they are, who neglect religion; for if they believe that there is a God to serve, and that they have souls to save, surely it is their wisdom, duty, and interest to do these things: Their wisdom, as being reasonable and right; their duty, in that, above all things, they owe this service; and their interest, as it is best for body and soul, in time and in eternity. Neither can it be neglected without the greatest danger of infinite loss and sufferings; for as the Lord made man to be infinitely happy in serving him, and infinitely miserable in not doing it; his neglect of it, exposes him to an absolute certainty of everlasting sufferings. And it being in every one's power, while the day of grace endures, to seek and serve the Lord, and to save their souls; they have no reason, for neglecting it, which can excuse them.

What then do you propose to yourselves, as the end of reading, who had rather read a romance, or any other idle book, than the Bible, or books written on religious subjects? Is it only to kill time, or to be instructed in trifles, or to have a little momentary delusive pleasure? Alas! none of these are valuable, nor can conduce to make you live to the Lord's praise and your soul's profit. And then what a madness are you guilty of in so wasting time, and neglecting your duty to God and yourself! Yea, suppose you read to gain historical knowledge, or to understand the present system of the world, or to be acquainted with physic, law, government, or any other art or science; yet as all these only pertain to temporal things, and time; the greatest proficiency that can be made in them, and the greatest profit, or pleasure, or both that can accrue from them, are nothing in comparison of serving the Lord and saving the soul. If then you would not be so unwise and wicked as to serve Satan both in soul and body, and devote yourself to eternal torments, but acquit yourself in doing your duty, in all the relations of life, and be finally saved; read, first and principally, religious books till you un-

derstand the nature, possess the principle, and live in the practice of religion.

Neither deceive yourself by supposing that any sort of religion will serve you. 'Tis true persons may differ in their opinions concerning non-essential things, in religion, and yet sincerely serve the Lord, and be saved. But if you believe and profess the best religion, and live in sin, it is of no service, as faith without good fruit is dead, and its professor condemned to eternal destruction. Yea, if you practice the outward duties of religion, and have not the inward power of it in a holy heart, it is lost labour; for you are as much a sinner when you look like a saint, as Satan is a devil when he is transformed into an angel of light; and, consequently, you are nigh unto cursing. If then you would have a religion which will save you from sin and misery, make your heart holy and happy, and teach and excite you to live soberly, righteously, and godly, read the Bible and such books as make it clearly appear that the root or principle, of religion, is a soul perfectly divine in its disposition, by which it has an inward union and communion with the Lord, a sense of acceptance with him, the knowledge of his will, power to perform it, a preparation for heaven, an earnest of it, and a true, sure, lively, and joyful hope to live in it forever. And as this is a necessary and proper preparation for the Lord's service and kingdom; what is there, in the world, that should induce any persons, in their senses, to neglect it? A thousand worlds are nothing in comparison of it, because they can neither supply its place, nor prevent the sin, loss of good, and eternal curse which are consequent on coming short of it. That then you may not sin, serve Satan, rob, offend, grieve, and despise the Lord, neglect salvation, injure others, and prepare yourself for hell fire, read religious books with that diligence and attention which one, who wants and is willing to learn, should do, and not in a hasty, cold, careless manner; and pray the Lord to help you to see what a sinner and neglecter of salvation you have been, how great your danger is, and how you may be delivered from it. If you wanted to learn a business to live by, would you not be attentive to it? You, as a sinner, want to learn how to be made alive to the Lord, to live to his glory, and to live with him for ever. Will you not then be at all possible pains to learn so profitable a lesson? Alas, life, death, and eternity are a loss and a curse without it! Impose then the discharge of this duty upon yourself. Enter upon it in earn-

est, go on with diligence, and end with faithfulness. To see the propriety of this, and to be induced to do it, consider religious reading as a glass wherein to behold the state of your heart and life, and all that concerns your salvation. The Bible is the truest mirror, and the books, which best explain it, are the brightest. Nor do, as is sometimes literally done, *James* i. 23, 24. look, go away, and forget; but continue therein, that you may be blessed in your deed. This, indeed, requires care, labour, zeal, patience, faith, hope, and unweariedness. But if the labour be great, the prize is greater; the labour is temporary, the prize eternal life with the Lord. This then being the best object for ambition to act upon; give it scope, full exercise, and act with energy in the pursuit of it. And it is high time to do it, for your life is short, uncertain, and may end soon and suddenly; therefore delays are extremely dangerous. Yea, the greater the delay, there is the more danger, and the greater difficulty in doing the work; for by how much life is spent, and sin is committed, death is nearer, and the heart blinder and harder. And what you learn, which concerns your salvation, by reading, or hearing, or providence, or internal teaching, or any other way; quickly, carefully, and constantly reduce to practice, that you may not only know, but also do your duty. Yea, when you meet with difficulties and discouragements in discerning and doing, do not desist, but with patience, labour, and prayer conquer them, that you may be crowned with victory. And be sure, for your encouragement, that every thing, which is necessary, by these means may be done. Get then, by the best use of your powers, and such assistances as the Lord may give you, a right understanding of your state as a sinner, a strong desire to be a saint, a firm faith in Christ, and by fervent and frequent prayer, to God, prevail for mercy for what has been amiss, and for the grace of his spirit to make your heart holy, that you may have a sense of your acceptance, a seal of your sonship, an earnest of heaven, a clear understanding, an obedient will, pure affections, right tempers, and your whole soul set to serve the Lord, that, by a free and full use of it, you may serve him, assist your neighbour, preserve and prosper yourself, have the testimony of a good conscience, lay up treasure in heaven, and rejoice, in hope of it, with joy unspeakable and full of glory.



A C T S, Chap. xvii. Ver. 30.

*But now he commandeth all men every where to repent.*

**A**S the total want of divine grace, in those who begin to act a personal, an accountable, and a rewardable part in life, would render them incapable of knowing and choosing moral good or evil, of serving the Lord or sinning against him, and of being governed, judged, and rewarded by him; so would it incapacitate them from repenting, reforming, believing, and seeking salvation. But because the first, of these doctrines, would exclude the justice, and the second the mercy of God from men; it is absurd to suppose that any are destitute, of a divine disposition, till a course of practical sin has destroyed it, and disqualified them from doing their duty.

But let us inquire, 1. What it is to repent; 2. Who are to repent; and, 3. Why they must repent.

I. The word *μετανοειν*, *repent*, signifies a change, of mind and manners, from evil to good, and implies, 1. A change of sentiment concerning sin; 2. sorrow for it; 3. mortification of it; and, 4. a practice contrary to it. Now a change of sentiment, concerning sin, supposes a sense of its being offensive to God, prejudicial to its practiser, and, in many cases, detrimental to others. And that sin is highly offensive, to the Almighty, needs no proof but the predicted intolerable and eternal punishment of it, it being inconsistent with the nature and fitness of things for a wise, holy, just, and good God to punish, in so painful and perpetual a manner, for what is agreeable, or indifferent, or but a little displeasing to him. Prejudice, to its practiser, is also apparently implied in the punishment of it. Nor is any sin so small as to be separate, in the present time, from something disagreeable and detrimental either preceding, or accompanying, or succeeding it, or all. But its future effects are the most afflicting;

A

for a guilty conscience will prey upon and punish souls, as gnawing worms do bodies, and the fire of God's wrath will produce sensations more painful, than fire does in human flesh. Others also, it is certain, by evil example, or command, or council, or encouragement, receive, in many cases, that which is destructive to soul and body. It is, to beginners in life, generally the first occasion of sinning, and tends to perpetuate others in the practice of it; and therefore contributes to their condemnation.

But how is this conviction wrought? Principally by the sinner himself; for though other things concur in the case, yet they are but the materials for him to work by; which, separate from his concurrence with and use of, are no part of it, conviction being the consequence of consideration, comparison, and conclusion. This is evident from other cases: For what object, of sense, can be known but by the right exercise of its respective sense upon it? In like manner, if the sinner does not consider his conduct, and compare it with the commandments of God, and conclude accordingly concerning it, a conviction of his condition will not commence. And this is confirmed by the case of those who are said to have eyes, but do not see; which would not be, if they made a proper use of them. The things then, which commonly concur to accomplish a conviction, are, 1. Some external cause, as preaching, providence, &c. 2. The remains of a divine disposition, assisted by the Holy Ghost; and, 3. The concurrence of the person in admitting those aids, and using them and his own powers to the purpose for which they are imparted. But so much depends on man's acting his part aright, that, without it, all other things will not be effectual. And no sufficient reason can be assigned why any do not repent, but that they do not obey the call to it, inasmuch as the Lord never calls but when there is a possibility of obeying. However, when sin is clearly seen, as it neither appears to be a good nor an indifferent thing, but the worst of evils, there is, if the conviction be properly used, a change of sentiment concerning it, the once supposed good and agreeable thing is now pronounced evil and odious. The second thing, implied in repentance, is sorrow; one property of which is grief for offending a gracious God, destroying the sinner's own soul, and contributing to the destruction of others. Another is sympathy, a compassionate feeling for himself, and for all who have suffered by his sins. Hence he mourns over himself, bewails his condition, wishes

he had been wiser, and would give a thousand worlds that he had not been wicked. Now these properties, of sorrow, generally bear some proportion to the nature and number of the sins committed. Indeed the outward signs in sighs, groans, tears, &c. are different in sinners of the same sort; which doubtless depends, in some degree, on the natural disposition of souls, or the bodily temperature, or both. However, whatever be the cause of this difference, sorrow and a right sense of sin are inseparable: For who can rejoice in, or be unconcerned at that which provokes the Lord to punish them with intolerably tormenting and eternal pain?

Mortification is another part of repentance, and signifies not only forsaking every sin, but also subduing such tempers, affections, and desires of the soul as tend to make men sin. The senses and appetites of the body must likewise be brought into subjection, to reason and religion, that they may not, in the use of temporal things, lead the soul into sinful courses. And this part of repentance is more especially necessary, as it cannot be of essential service to be sensible of, and sorrowful for sin, if it be not forsaken. And the utmost exactness, in it, ought also to be; for if one sin be retained, forsaking all the rest will not suffice. And if one temper, affection, desire, sense, or appetite be indulged, it may prevent a reception of mercy for former misdeeds, and the sanctifying influences of the Spirit for future obedience. Thus the whole man must cease to act in opposition to, and concur with the remains of grace in the soul, in bringing forth the fruits of repentance.

Practising the contrary things, is the last part of repentance. And whoever would not perish, by being plunged into eternal perdition, must not only cease from sin, but also learn to do well, both inwardly and outwardly, and in all things. For although what is done, in this state, is not good according to the rule of the gospel; (which requires the acceptance of the person prior to the performance) yet, it is such as God requires, as he does not despise, and as repentance is not perfect without. Hence then, as a farther effect of grace and a right use of it, all those things, which oppose the former sinful practice, must be entered on, and continued in as a necessary part of repentance, and as an evidence of the sincerity of the preceding particulars. And having shewn the nature of repentance; I

II. Come, in the second place, to take notice of the num-

ber required to repent. This is signified by, *but now he commandeth all men every where to repent.* The apostle, in the preceding part of the verse, tells us of a time of *ignorance*, which, it is more than probable, was that wherein the heathen world worshipped idols; and at which, he says, God *winked*, did not open his eyes fully upon their wickedness, nor enter into strict judgment with them, as knowing they laboured under the evil of a deep-rooted idolatry, as well as an insufficient philosophy as a rule of religious life. This ignorant state, of the heathens, the Lord had compassion upon in bearing with, and in providing a remedy for.

Now when St. Paul was come to Athens, and found it full of idolatry, his spirit was stirred within him; and, as the effect of it, he disputed with the Jews in the synagogue, and with the devout persons, and with such as he daily met in the market-places. These, it seems, were generally Jews; and therefore he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection: Subjects better understood of them than of the Gentiles. But certain philosophers, of the heathen sort, attending thereto, and hearing of objects of worship, whose names were not in their catalogue, they stiled him *a babbler, and a setter forth of strange gods.* However, being curious concerning new things, they brought him to Mars hill, the place where their high court was kept, and where he, in effect, refuted the charge of his being, from its unnecessaryness, a setter forth of strange gods, by saying, *I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious, or religious, ως δεισιδαιμονεστέρους, too much addicted already, to the worship of demon-gods, to need any more, especially as your great devotion makes you worship even one whom you do not know; but, though you are ignorant of him, yet he made the world, &c.* So, taking occasion from the inscription, *To the unknown God*, he told them, “They worshipped they knew not what; adding, him whom ye ignorantly worship, declare I unto you: God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands. Neither is worshipped with men’s hands as though he needeth any thing; seeing he giveth to all life and breath and all things. And hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times appointed, and the bounds of their habitations, That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from any of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being, as certain of

your own poets have said, for we are his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone graven by art, and man's device." This piece, of natural philosophy, was very proper to convince them of the nature of the true God, and to rectify their mistakes respecting false ones. He describes this divine being as the Maker and Lord of all things; and hence infers, that, by reason of his greatness, he could not rank with their local deities; and therefore making an image of, and erecting an altar to restrain him to that particular place, was an argument of their ignorance of his spiritual and unlimited nature; and, by representing him as the giver of all things, he exhibited to them that offering gifts and sacrifices to him, as one who wanted something, was as contrary to the right way of worshipping him, as the former misrepresented his nature.

Then, having rectified their mistakes respecting the Lord and his service, he proceeds to inform them of the nature of men, and what the Lord requires of them. *And hath made of one blood.* Blood, though but a part of man, is here put for the whole, and indicates that, in the beginning, a part of man's composition was of a corporeal kind. Another part of him is incorporeal, or he would be incapable of seeking the Lord, inasmuch as spirit only can confer with spirit. Nor is spirit, without a peculiar quality, sufficient. The spirit of animals, with its earthly quality, does not seek him. And the spirit of man, if its disposition be entirely diabolical, is at enmity with him. Hence, it necessarily follows, that a third part of man's composition (and which is his principal qualification for seeking him) is a divine disposition. *All nations of men:* Hath given one kind of constitution to all men; so that, however scattered over the earth, and separated by national bounds, and divided into parties and professions, they are all brethren. *That they should seek the Lord:* That all nations and individuals should seek him as their director, benefactor, deliverer, object of adoration, gratitude, &c. inasmuch as none but himself is sufficient for, and worthy to receive honour from them. *If haply they might feel after him and find him:* If, when seeking him, they should be so fortunate as to find the way of feeling after him in order to find him. The word *feel* is here opposed to seeing; for, the idols of the heathens being visible, in seeking them the use of their eyes only was necessary. But the Lord being invisible, and

to be found only by the senses of the soul, feeling better represents the way of finding him than seeing. Feeling after him signifies the desire and endeavour of the soul to find him in or with itself. Nor does the invisibility of God set him at too great a distance; for we never feel for things out of, but within our reach. Indeed he is always so; as in him, in his essence, which is every where, we exist. Neither does his spiritual and holy nature render us incapable of finding him, inasmuch as the soul, by which we seek him, is his image; and, consequently, can discern and confer with him. They then, who seek him aright, are sure to find him.

Now, from the preceding particulars, it is easy to observe what number of persons the Lord calls to repent. For, 1. the apostle represents him as the maker of all men; 2. as the Lord or Governor of all; 3. as having made all men of one kind; 4. that all should seek him; and, 5. he commandeth all men to repent. And the 1. of these gives to God such a propriety, in all men, as intitles him to require of them whatever is due to him as creator; the 2. obliges them to perform it; the 3. implies an equal original capacity, in all, to do it; the 4. shews how it is to be done; and the 5. is rendered necessary by its not being done. By all men, then, we may understand all who have sinned, especially all who are yet capable of repenting. More particularly it seems to signify all sorts of men, Jews and Gentiles. After the heathen world had forsaken the true God, and were given up to idolatry; he, for a season, “suffered them to walk in their own ways”, by not sending them Prophets, as he did to the Jews. Not but that he had an external as well as an internal witness among them, in “that he did good, by giving them ruin from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness.” But the time of the Messiah, in which he intended to unite all men in one religious community, being come; and that their ignorance might no more make him wink at their wickedness, he sent his servants, as well to the Gentiles as to the Jews, to call them to repentance, to change their minds and manners, and to turn from idols to himself. Thus all men means all sinners, both of Jews and Gentiles.

III. I shall now observe why men must repent. The reason assigned by the apostle is, *God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness.* If there were no judgment, sin would be an insignificant thing, and men might perform their pleasure without fear of punishment. But,

it is certain, they must come to judgment, and be dealt with according to what they have done. It is the end of their existence, being made to act a part here, and to receive a reward hereafter.—Now this judgment and reward will be according to righteousness; for the law of the Lord, which is right respecting all things, is the rule by which he will proceed. And this law requires that all natural, civil, religious, and moral works be done to the Lord's honour; that temporal and spiritual good, according to time, ability, and opportunity, be done to all men with whom we have to do; and that, from a principle of self interest and honour, all possible care and labour be used to promote our own eternal reward. This then being the law of life and of judgment; whoever does not act, in all things, according to it, sins. And as the punishment is condemnation here, and eternal damnation hereafter, there is an absolute necessity to repent. Nothing less can prevent a sinner's perishing. And when the number of sins is great, there is the more need of it, as the punishment will be proportioned to it. And who, but men determined to be damned, will add present to past sin by disobeying an indulgent God, when, by his merciful measures, he seeks the salvation of their souls? To repent is also unspeakably profitable, inasmuch as it prevents the present danger of perishing, and prepares for pardon, peace, joy, and an high hope of heaven. These are some of the reasons why men must repent.

I will now make some use of this doctrine. In the doing of which, let us call to mind that all men were made to seek unto, and to serve the Lord; that sin is a voluntary thing; and that those, who have been guilty of it, must repent or perish for ever. This being the case, be sensible then, sinners, (if you love your souls, and would preserve them from the perpetual pains of hell) that sin is so offensive to God, so contrary to your own interest, and so sure, if persisted in till death, to be punished with eternal perdition, that repentance is absolutely necessary. But though the Lord calls to, and contributes all that he consistently can to accomplish it, yet it is your own part to repent. This is certain, notwithstanding that "Christ is exalted to be a prince and a saviour to give repentance," inasmuch as it means no more than that as a prince he commands it, and as a saviour he gives space for, calls to, and assistance in it. But as many of those, whom he thus commands, calls, and assists, do not repent, it proves that it is not irresistably enforced upon them, but is

their own free performance. Seeing then that repentance is the sinners own act; if he would not, with unparalleled madness, doubly murder and damn his own soul by adding impenitence to sin, nor provoke the Lord to swear that he shall never be saved, nor continue, by his wicked words and works, to assist Satan in destroying other souls; let him reflect on his numberless follies, and be confounded for them. But, alas, in lieu of this, who is not so careless concerning his soul, so in love with, and so desperately set on sinning as rather to labour to forget than remember, to cover than to confess their sin; and, instead of being sorrowful for, they rejoice in, and hate to be reformed from it? But, sinners, you cannot always do so; for death and hell will cure you of, and curse you for these inexcusable evils. Will you then, to prevent the punishment of soul and body in future fire, and to obtain pardon, holiness, and heaven, repent by seeing, sorrowing for, and forsaking your sins? If you will not, but through carelessness or wilfulness continue in them, how soon, for so doing, may the Lord suddenly slay you? Provoke him not, I beseech you, too far. He is a jealous God. Trifle not with him. He is serious. Be you so. He sees, and will judge you. Have you an eye to, and prepare to meet him. Consider then, as your only resource, whether, in all the parts of your past life, you always intended to please God, profit your neighbour, and secure your own salvation? If not, you sinned; for from a right intention only can acceptable and profitable actions flow. But, whatever your design was, what were your words and works? Were they such as you now approve? Did you delight in the Lord? Was it as your meat and drink to do his will? Were you your neighbour's keeper, naturally caring and labouring to promote his temporal and spiritual prosperity? And did you, like a reasonable creature, seek, by great assiduity, to save your own soul? Alas, if you did not, but sinned against them all, you robbed God, wronged your neighbour, and ruined yourself! Sore evils! Yea, the worst in the world! And for which, if the Lord had not been merciful, hell had now been your habitation. What a risk then have you run! O how thankful should you be, that you are yet alive!—But, if you have not repented, what will life avail, and what will you do, if you die in your sins? Long-suffering, in that case, will have a fore effect, will double your destruction. And ah, when the hour of death and the day of judgment are come, how miserable must you be! Pierced through with a



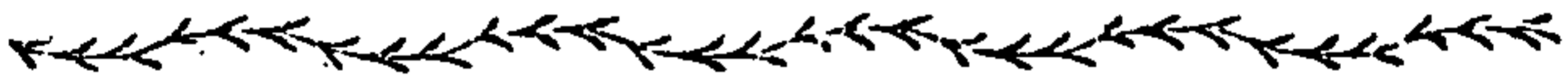
sense of your sin, you will roar for the disquietness of your soul. Stung with the wrath of God, your torment will be intense. And hell, with all its horrors, will be ready to receive you. Can you consider them, and keep your senses? Were you condemned to be hanged, how great would be your horror! You are, for your sins and impenitence, condemned to be damned. Are you easy? Is it possible? What! can you laugh, and live without concern for your soul, when heaven and hell are combined to punish you? Alas, are you so blind that you cannot see, so hard that you cannot feel, and so unapprehensive that you cannot fear! O dreadful! What a state! Awake, awake! Death is near! Destruction does not slumber! Sinners see, feel, and fear!—And, being awake, repent. Pore upon your past life, and compare it with the Lord's law. Nor rest till your utter ruin appears; for then only will you rightly repent. And, remember, it is your part so to do. None will, none can do it for you. Christ did not procure the act, but the grace of repentance. Nor will he compel you to perform it. Such force he useth not with free agents. What! would you have him do your work, or make you do it? He cannot act so inconsistently. Stir up yourself then. It is high time, for now is your destruction nearer than when you first sinned. O consider the greatness of your sin in living without a good design, and the superadded evils of millions of wicked words and works! Sin too, which you have so long and largely lived in, has made you an enemy to God, your neighbour, and yourself; a child, a servant, and an heir of Satan. Can you love that which the Lord hates? Delight in what is dear to the devil? Alas, by so doing, you reverse the right rule, and, in effect, prefer hell to heaven, pain to pleasure.

But, to quicken your pace, consider your danger. Nor is it small, seeing, by reason of your sinfulness, you are every moment upon the brink of endless burnings. That is your situation. There you wake, and there you sleep. And the circumstance of an uncertain life, added to your sinfulness, makes it imminent indeed; for, alas, it is but as an hair in strength, and an hair-breadth in length, being forfeited to offended justice! What then may a day, an hour, or a moment do? Destroy life, bring death, hell, and damnation. This, sinner, is your condition. To which being added the justice, the anger, and the threatenings of God against you, with the aggravating circumstance of impenitence, your state differs little from that of the damned. Whether then, sinners,

you are old or young, wise or foolish, let neither riches, honours, pleasures, friends, business, company, conversation, nor any other thing prevent your repenting. When you die, you will have done with all these. None of them will go with you into the other world. Only sin and suffering will attend you there. Wretched companions! Sinners see your danger, and let long-suffering lead you to repentance. To day; for to-morrow is uncertain. Make haste, time flies, eternity is near, the work is great, life is short, God is angry with you, devils delight in you, heaven is shut against, and hell is open to receive you. O hear the heavenly call, "turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, saith the Lord?" Your encouragement to repent is the continuance of life, the patience of God, his command to do it, and his promise of certain success in things the most needful, profitable, pleasant, and durable. Weigh then all these reasons for repentance; and if, through your madness, they have not weight enough to make you repent, throw into the scale the loss of heaven and the gaining of hell; and if these, through your unaccountable contempt of the happiness of heaven, and daring of the damnation of hell, be too light likewise, then it will appear, as clear as the sun, that you care not for your souls, nor regard the commandment of God; and that to offend him, hurt your neighbour, and ruin yourself by serving the world, the flesh, and the devil; to waste time, and neglect talents; to have no peace, and to be like a troubled sea; to live continually under the curse of God, and to be always in danger of being damned; to be every day nearer your death, and proportionably the more unprepared for it; to have neither right to, preparation for, nor well grounded hope of heaven; to be intitled to, qualified for, and to have a dire expectation of hell; to lay up no treasure above, and much beneath; and, after death and the last day, to live in flames sulphureous and eternally tormenting are the things which you choose for your portion. Unwise and wicked chiccie! But repent of it, and choose again. And oh, for the Lord's sake, and for your soul's sake, choose wisely and well, for it is for eternity!

O thou who art infinitely wise, and whose words and ways none can mend, but many mar; it is through the willing ignorance of some, who will not labour to learn, and the wicked designs of others, to make their sins sit easy on their souls, that thy truth is perverted, and many perish. Of which fore evils some, who preach, are the most guilty. And

herein, as one instance of error, some teach, and many believe, that the space for, and the means of repentance, granted by thee for man's effecting of it, is repentance wrought by thee in them; and so, mistaking thy work for theirs, they depend on thee for what can only be done by themselves: For, surely, when thou sayest, *except ye repent, ye shall perish*, thou meanest what they, not thyself must do; and therefore those, who do not repent, and perish, must blame themselves, not thee for that.—Yet how long, O Lord, wilt thou suffer men to deceive themselves? But, alas, what more canst thou do; for though fate, as the heathens fabled, does not limit thy labours; yet thou canst not, consistently, force free agents to forsake their follies, because that would contradict their nature and thy commands, and make them unrewardable for their works. But thou, O gracious Lord, canst plentifully pour out of thy Spirit to help men's infirmities, and make them wise, as they will use it, to know and obey the truth. O save, I beseech thee, as thou canst, that thou mayest be praised, and that men may not perish.



## GENESIS, Chap. xv. Ver. 6.

*And he believed in the Lord; and he accounted it to him for righteousness.*

SO early, as Abraham's age, were men made righteous by believing. And righteousness, according to the government of God, is absolutely necessary, inasmuch as no unrighteous person can inherit the kingdom of heaven.

Let us then, first, give some account of righteousness; and, secondly, shew how faith is accounted for it.

Now righteousness is either human or divine, consists of man's perfect obedience, or is by believing. Abraham's was not of the first, but second sort; his faith, not his works, was accounted to him for righteousness.—But, it seems, the sense of the righteousness of faith, in the scriptures, is not always the same. In some places, especially in the Old Te-

stament, it appears to be imputed as a positive act of righteousness: Of which, I presume, this passage is a proof. Yet, nevertheless, in the New Testament, particularly where it has respect to a sinner's salvation from his former offences, it answers to, or is put for past practical righteousness; and then, with the clearest evidence, it signifies the same as the forgiveness of sins. And this, it is certain, is the purpose which the apostle Paul applies it to when he says, *Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness; was equal to, and had the same effect that perfect practical righteousness would have had.* This is evident from his adding, *Now unto him that worketh, by keeping the commandments of God, is the reward, for so doing, not reckoned of grace, or as a favour from God, but of debt, as due to the worker for what he hath done. But to him that worketh not, that is disobedient, and deserving of eternal death, but believeth on him, on God, who justifieth the ungodly, pardoneth the sinner, his, the sinner's faith, in God's mercy through the merit of his Son, is counted, by the Lord, for the righteousness of the ungodly person; makes him as righteous as if he had not been unrighteous.* Thus a sinner's faith is substituted for former righteousness. And, agreeably to this substitution, I shall shew the nature and the necessity of it.

And as, in this sense, the righteousness of faith supposes unrighteousness, or sins, in those to whom it is thus imputed; it necessarily, as being opposed to their sins, and as designed to deliver them from them, consists of a salvation from every former offence, and of their being constituted righteous in themselves, and in the account of God, and privileged with the possession of present spiritual blessings, and with the hope of future and final ones, as if they had not offended. This sentiment St. Paul, with copious and perspicuous expression, and with conspicuous and well proportioned sense, exhibits in a passage cited from the Psalmist: *Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works: Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.* This then, agreeably to the sense of the New, and as confirmed by that of the Old Testament is the nature of righteousness.—And the necessity of it ariseth from the nature and consequences of sin. Now sin is either negative or positive, an omission of what the Lord commands, or a commission of what he contradicts. It also consists of one or many omissions or commissions; for he, who sins in one thing, is guilty, and he, who sins in

many, is so also. Yea he, who sins in one, in effect, St. James saith, sins in all things. The dreadful fruit of which is condemnation here, and, if he die so, everlasting damnation hereafter. And these, it is certain, are incompatible with man's well being; for as there is no peace for the wicked in this world, so there will be pain in the other. The righteousness of faith then, to all offenders, is absolutely necessary.

I will now point out how faith is imputed for righteousness. Faith, which is opposed to, substituted for, and answers the end of works, is man's own free act. Abraham believed God as the effect of his free-will, it being what he might do or leave undone. It implied, in his case, two particulars: First, an assent to what the Lord said; and, secondly, a dependance on him for the performance of it.—The principal objects of faith, to us, are the person, the performance, and the promise of Christ: His person, God and man; his performance, dying for our sins; his promise, pardon of sins, &c. Yet faith is not the meritorious cause, but only the condition of righteousness. In the case of sinners, then, faith depends on the merit of another. Abraham believed the promise of a Son, from whose seed, in some future time, should spring he [Christ] by whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. That then *for* which Abraham became righteous, was what the Lord had promised; and that *by* which, was the part he himself performed. In like manner that, for the sake of which God forgives us, is Christ's meritorious death; and, that on condition of which, is our dependance on it. But though faith does not merit righteousness; yet such is the nature, necessity, use of, and will of God concerning it, that man's act of believing is accepted of God for, and accounted to him as his righteousness, and has the same effects, in freeing him from guilt, possessing him of peace, joy, and hope of heaven, which a righteous life would have had: And, as a consequence, this condition has all the value and efficacy ascribed to it, which can be to any cause. And thus the Almighty, who, by his divine decree, has ordained that the faith of a penitent sinner should be of essential service to him, puts an honour upon it. Now by requiring faith, as the condition of salvation, he obliges man to believe in order to be blest. And having thereby fixed a method of acceptance with himself, he gives a proof, by pardon, peace, and joy, of its being complied with, when

he imputes faith for righteousness. Hence it necessarily follows, that conditions, though not meritorious, are matters of great moment, being dignified with the approbation and blessing of the Deity, and to which he attributes the virtue and benefit of Christ's death, as it thereby becomes effectual to salvation; which, otherwise, it would not, he having ordained not only that salvation shall be by faith, but also that as, by sinning, men voluntarily destroy themselves; so, if they be saved, it shall be by their free faith. And this method of proceeding renders man accountable, for his conduct, in respect of believing. Hence it is that as faith is as saving as obedience would have been, so unbelief is as destructive as disobedience: *For as he that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; so he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

Seeing then that the act of believing is rendered, to sinful man, for his righteousness; it lies at his own option whether he will be righteous or not. If he believe what the Lord requires, he becomes righteous; but if not, sin and unbelief, and the consequences of both, will continue with him for ever. And thus a sinner's salvation turns upon the use of Christ's merit by believing. And because the evidence, of righteousness, is manifested to the mind in pardon, peace, and joy, in freedom from the fear of death and hell, and in a title to and a preparation for heaven; uncertainty, respecting the rightness of faith, is thereby entirely taken away.

And as believing unto righteousness is absolutely necessary for all sinners, and that the evidence of it flows from its fruit; hereby all may know whether they are believers or not. If they have a sense of their acceptance with God through his Son, their faith is imputed for righteousness. But if they have not, their faith is false or defective, and not the faith of the gospel; for they are yet in their sins, and subject to eternal sufferings. This then is that which distinguishes believers from unbelievers, there being no medium betwixt faith's being accounted for righteousness, and its not being so, nor any other evidence of its being, or not being so accounted.

But, alas! if none are believers, who know not their sins forgiven, the number is small. And yet the smallness of the number neither militates against the nature of faith's being accounted for righteousness, nor the assurance of its being so. And indeed reason as well as scripture suppose it; for if righteousness be by the law, it is by keeping it: But sin-

ners have not kept it; so they cannot be saved by it. But faith in Christ's merit, and the application of the benefits of it by his spirit, give a satisfactory sense of salvation to the soul.

And how encouraging a consideration is this! A sinner, condemned to eternal death, by faith is freed from all his past sins, has present peace and joy, and a bright prospect of future and final felicity. This is a method of salvation which is sure, merciful, and mild; sure, as being founded on the Lord's infallible word; merciful, in delivering from all that is detrimental and dangerous to men; and mild, in requiring so easy conditions. Who then, that wishes well to himself, would not believe unto righteousness? How easy, profitable, and pleasant! It is to rely on, and receive from the Lord Jesus Christ; to be pardoned, purified, have peace, joy, hope; of sinners to become saints, of foes friends of God, of heirs of hell candidates for heaven. How many, great, good, and lasting things are its consequences! Nor can sinners be saved without it. They are condemned for sinning and disbelieving, which are a double cause of damnation. Believe, and be saved from both.

This then being the faith, and these the fruits of it, which St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, so earnestly contends for, as necessary to a sinner's salvation; let all, who call themselves believers, compare their faith and its fruits with them. Nor suppose this to be unnecessary; for, as sure as St. Paul taught the truth, those, who have not by faith found these fruits, are yet in their sins, and nigh unto cursing, both for them and their unbelief. If then you would not make the word of God of none effect, prove that your faith is imputed for righteousness; put it beyond dispute, that you have gospel faith, by having pardon and peace, freedom from the fear of death and hell, and a high hope of heaven in your heart. But, if you cannot, I conjure you, by all that is sacred, to consider the consequence of continuing in a condition for which you are condemned here, and will be damned hereafter. Nor suppose this sentence too severe, seeing the Lord has pronounced it. What! must he be at infinite pains to procure salvation, and must not men be punished for neglecting it? Consider then, I say, what you have to suffer, if you die in your sins. And if the damnation of hell be eternal and intolerable, what will you do? Sinners, unbelievers, will you continue unconcerned? What! is it nothing to you

that God is angry with you? That you may, in a moment, be plunged into eternal perdition? These are the worst of evils. Will you then, to avoid them, resolve to repent and believe? O that you would! Angels would rejoice at it, though Satan might be sorrowful. Nor defer it one moment, seeing you cannot tell how soon the Lord will require your soul. If you die before you do it, you are undone for ever. For the Lord's sake then, who wills it, and for your soul's sake, that cannot do well without it, make haste. Run over, by serious consideration, your past time, and future eternity; and see in the one a scene of sin, and in the other a series of suffering. Provoke yourself then to apply to, and pray the Lord to assist you in them. Nor consider it as contemptible to be thus concerned; for contrition, humility, and a deadness to the world, will become one in his sins, and on the verge of endless suffering. And till you find, by the good fruits of it, that your faith is imputed for righteousness, consider yourself as in unbelief, in sin, and in extreme danger of suffering for ever.

Gracious God, among thy many marvellous and merciful works, this bears the palm, that the faith of a sinner is accepted of thee for his salvation. But though this wonderful work commenced by thy kindness in sending thy Son, and was carried on by his suffering for sin, yet it is finished by man's faith. Nor is thy graciousness diminished by this decree; for how could it consist with thy wisdom, and his accountableness, to confer benefits upon him without some condition of receiving them? As his voluntary sins render righteousness necessary for him; it is right to subject him to a voluntary service to receive it. And faith being his own effect; if he fail of finding forgiveness, he will not have thee, but himself to reflect on. And to render his faith virtuous and praise-worthy, as well as necessary, thou hast appointed that *it*, the act of believing, should be for his righteousness. And to give a proof of the faith thou dost so impute; thou revealest, as inseparable from it, the remission of sins in his soul. And thus, by shedding abroad thy love in believers, they know they are accepted of thee, and that their faith, being thus answered by thee, is what it ought to be. How great, O Lord, is thy loving kindness!



## GENESIS, Chap. xvii. Ver. 1.

*I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.*

**A**FTER Abraham had believed unto righteousness, the Lord required him to live agreeably thereto. This is the effect of that. And as righteousness, in other believers, is accompanied with a renewal of the moral disposition of the mind, they are capable of complying with his commands. In treating of which, two things may be taken notice of: First, the Almighty God; and, secondly, walking before him.

The title, the Almighty or God All-sufficient, well becomes the grandure of this God: For he is Almighty to destroy, and to deliver. To destroy: A clear indication of which was in punishing the world, of the ungodly, by an overflowing flood. In which he gave the most signal instance of his powerful displeasure, which had been since the world began. An instance to be had in everlasting remembrance, that none should dare to do so wickedly any more, inasmuch as, by the greatness of his power and the fierceness of his anger, he can punish soul and body, in time and in eternity, with punishments unspeakably tormenting. Nor does he want instruments to effect his purposes, all being at his command: By water and fire; by plague, pestilence, and famine; by lightening and tempest; by angels and spirits; and by many other means he can bring down to death and damnation a man, or a multitude of men, in a moment. Herein he knows no restraint, or bound, but what his infinite wisdom, justice, and goodness prescribe; which will not suffer him, in any thing, to err or to act amiss.

He is likewise Almighty to save. Nor is this, like destruction, his strange work. It is his pleasure. His goodness is highly gratified by it, it being most agreeable to him to act according to the disposition of his nature; which is goodness itself. And when his greatness and goodness concur to countenance his creatures; if their own opposition to, or neglect of his will does not hinder, what may they not expect from so great and so good a God? He is sufficient to save both body

and soul. Being perpetually present, and infinitely powerful, he can protect all who trust in him. In cases the most critical, and where death, according to the natural course of things, is certain; he can deliver by stopping the mouths of lions, quenching the violence of fire, and in every other way necessary for them. He is also sufficient in respect of spiritual things. Being possessed of all perfections, moral as well as natural, he can so refine the soul as to give it a complete sameness with himself in quality, and thereby render it capable of comporting with his will in whatever he requires. And when the principle is perfect; to render duties and difficulties more profitable and pleasant, he imparts such supplies of blessing as serve to support it in doing and suffering, recruit its wasted strength, preserve its purity, and continue a consciousness of his kindness. Thus, in all conditions of body, and circumstances of temporal life; in all states of soul, services and sufferings; and to all necessary, profitable, and pleasant purposes, he, in the way of his providence and grace, is sufficient.

II. I come now to the second part of the subject, *Walk before me, and be thou perfect.*

The walk of a Christian is internal and external, corresponding with his two constituent parts. The internal is that of the mind, will, and affections; the external, the words and works of men.—The proper and perpetual use of the mind is to discern what is that *good and acceptable and perfect will of God*. And that, by which it is chosen and done, is the right use of the will, assisted by that affection which is suitable to the duty exercised in.—And when the mind is in a right state, the will of God not being otherwise revealed, it is a rule as well as principle of action. But as the external law corresponds with the nature of the internal, and being intended to illustrate and render it more legible; they combine to give that knowledge, of the will of God, to which they jointly extend. Yet as many cases occur which cannot be determined by the scriptures, and, on the contrary, many things being revealed there to which the law of the mind does not extend; in these things they instruct separately.—Other things there are, the knowledge of which can only be by immediate revelation, or the ministry of others, providence, &c.

As then the law of the mind and the scripture contain the general sense of what is required; in order to have the bene-

fit of them, the sense of the scripture must be collected, and incorporated with the sense of the soul, that it may be furnished, with every point of knowledge, requisite for a rational and religious creature. The substance of which, as it respects the Almighty, is, that all designs, words, and works be such as tend to honour his name, nature, and government in the world, this being the first and principal end for which man was made.—Nor must the mind be insensible of its own concerns; which will be a farther inducement to do the will of God, inasmuch as man's interest and the Lord's honour are closely connected: *For he that honoureth me, saith the Lord, him will I honour; but he that despiseth me, shall be lightly esteemed.* Whatever promotes the honour of God, profits the promoter; they who do his will, witness the good effects of it in peace and joy, their consciences acquit and console them. Moreover, in the way of well-doing, is to be found whatever is wanting, the right use of a little being always succeeded with more. Neither will any good work fail of a final reward, for as much as God has promised to give to every one as his work shall be. Sufferings will likewise work together for good here, and work out more glory hereafter.—The mind must also discern what is right with regard to others, their interest must be seen to have a close connection with the well-being of all, who labour to promote it, as what is done to man, is, in effect, done to the Lord, who will requite it: *He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord; and he that giveth a cup of cold water, for Christ's sake, shall not lose his reward.* How much more then shall they be rewarded, who not only do all the temporal good they can, but likewise endeavour, by all possible means, to promote the salvation of souls? Proportionable to the one will be the other. Happy then are they, who abound in doing good!

And whatever man discerns to be his duty, he should choose and do, inasmuch as it is not he who only knows, but also does his master's will that is blessed. And herein he ought to be faithful, that he may not be condemned of himself: For notwithstanding that his will, as renewed, inclines to goodness; yet, as it is the will of a free agent, he is not naturally forced to follow its inclination, but it depends on a right use of the power which he has over himself, as the author of his own actions, and as accountable for them; and therefore his obedience will be in proportion to the voluntary force which he puts upon himself, in the use of his moral,

rational, and animal powers, in the doing of the several parts of his duty : And consequently the degree, of the good testimony of his conscience, and future reward, will be accordingly.

*Walk before me.* The power of knowing, willing, and doing is in order to walking in a religious regard. By this may be done whatever is required. The person thus principled, then, must walk in the light of his understanding, and his will must concur in forming such designs, words, and works as will be pleasing to God, profitable to himself, and advantageous to others. And in proportion to the want of a close and constant attention, to this inward principle, imperfection and irregularity in the practice will be ; as, on the other hand, weighing well what ariseth from it, before it be reduced to action, will be an excellent preservative from evil, and proportionably promotive of good.—Walk then as in my presence, under my perpetual inspection ; for, remember, being infinite in essence, and equally so in eye, I survey, at one sight, whatever is ; the most secret thought, the softest whisper, and the privatest action are as easily and as well understood, of me, as matters the most obvious are. Walk then before me as one, who is a witness of all thy ways, and according to which thy approbation with me, credit among men, conscience, and reward shall be. Walk soberly in respect of thyself, righteously in regard to thy neighbour, and piously respecting thy God : Keep thy body under by restraining its appetites and senses, govern well thy tempers and tongue, that thy conversation may minister good to many ; in all thy ways, with men, walk by the rules of truth, justice, and generosity, do as thou wouldest be done to ; and in all thy actions, whether sacred or civil, have a pious eye, intend to please thy God.

*And be thou perfect ; upright, or sincere.* Do thy best ; use all thy power, and use it in the best manner. Not only keep thyself from insincerity in design, but also from defectiveness in deed ; go to the utmost bound of thy ability : So shall thy conscience acquit thee, by which thou shalt have a testimony, in thyself, that thou pleasest God. And walk on, in this way, till thy last step be taken, that thou mayest not lose thy reward ; but that, by the continuance and increase of its cause, it may be insured and increased also. Let not thy graces languish. Do not outlive thy religion. Bear fruit in old age. Alas ! the beginning of many is better than their end. Better had it been for abundance, that they had died.

in the day of their espousals to the Lord. Long life, which should conform to, and confirm in the principle and practice of religion, is destructive to many. Walk then, to the end, in all well-pleasing to God, in a wise improvement of time and talents touching thyself, and instructively respecting others. Thus live, and thy departure shall be in peace, thy rise glorious, and thy reward according to thy works; heaven shall be thy habitation, saints and angels thy associates, and happiness thy perpetual portion.

But whose soul is so pure in itself, and so predominates over the body as to be capable of judging truly, choosing wisely, and acting justly, as a qualification for acquitting himself in walking with God? Do you, reader, as a professor of religion, find it so? You most assuredly should, or how will you so walk in the spirit as not to fulfil the desires of the flesh? Alas, it is but to counterfeit religion, to deceive, and to destroy yourself to think, of serving the Lord, while your soul is sinful, and enslaved, by the body, to temporal things. It is reversing the apostle's account of a Christian; of being risen, in spirit, from a death of sin to a life of righteousness, and setting his affections on things above. If then your tempers are unruly, and your affections fix on things beneath, it is a sure sign, whatever you may suppose, that you are incapable of keeping the commandments of God. The first distinction, it is absolutely certain, betwixt the servants of God and the servants of sin, consists in the state of the inward principle, it being its nature and properties with which the works, produced by it, are impregnated. Such then as are not right in that respect, are wrong in all that they do: And therefore if you would not deceive yourself, sin, and suffer for ever, know, by an experimental sense of them, what it is (if you have sinned) to be in a state of personal acceptance with God, (by the forgiveness of sins, through faith in Christ Jesus) to be enriched with his heavenly grace, to have an intercourse and fellowship with him, to delight in his service, to have an hope full of heaven, to be willing to die, and to be assured of being received into glory. These concur to constitute a christian condition of soul. If then these things be in you, you may live to the glory of God, and to die would be gain. But if it is not so, your pretending to serve the Lord, is like building without a foundation; for, at the best, you can but deal in the form of religion without knowledge, a right intention, a pure and a powerful effort in what you perform. The matter then being momentous, see that

there be no delay to seek, nor labour spared to find so much heavenly light, life, and strength as will, rightly used, enable you to judge truly, choose wisely, and act with energy, in all that concerns you, as a rational, religious, and rewardable creature. This is a duty incumbent upon you; and you will not fail, of doing it, without incurring the most dreadful consequences; as, without this qualification, you cannot comply with the duty required of you; and then your soul, body, time, talents, labours, and all will be worse than lost; for if you do not serve the Lord, you sin against him, and must, in consequence, endure the damnation of hell.— But, if you are qualified, do you acquit yourself accordingly? Do you constantly, with prudent care, employ your understanding in judging how you may, in all things, most please the Lord, profit other persons, preserve yourself pure, and increase your crown of rejoicing? Do you also faithfully choose what your judgment shews will best answer these excellent ends? And do you, in despite of all opposers, urge, by constant self-exertions, all your affections and animal powers to execute fully, and in the best manner, whatever you choose? This is your duty; and only by thus walking, inwardly and outwardly, in all things, with sincerity and completeness, can you do well. Who then does thus? Alas, how few! A man may, as in ancient days, run up and down the streets of cities, towns, and villages, and find but few who do. And it is this laziness, double-mindedness, and hypocrisy, in religion, which makes so many have lean souls, live unedifying lives, and their end to be worse than their beginning. Save yourselves then, from these things, by faithfully using all your powers to better purpose. So will your conscience console you, peace preserve you, and hope of heaven heighten your happiness. Happy the heart where graces thus reign, as the effect of faithfulness!

O thou who art sufficient to destroy and to deliver, how art thou to be feared and adored! When the earth groaned under its weight of wickedness, and thou didst grieve, yea repent that thou hadst made man upon it; what course couldst thou take with so rebellious a race? To relieve them was a measure most agreeable to thy mercy. And though that prevented the course of thy justice, yet it was a sacrifice which thou didst willingly make for the good of men. But when thy merciful measures had long been lost upon them; then the hand of thy justice was let loose. And lo! in thy righteous wrath, thou didst pour out the liquid element till the

earth was covered with, was one wide waste of waters, in which all the wicked made their graves ! So didst thou consume them for their sins, and wash the earth from its wickedness. Great God, what is it then that thou canst do ? What sinner, or number of sinners, canst thou not, wilt thou not punish, if they persist till thy patience sees an end ? Who then would not fear, and not offend thee ? Who would be the object of thy dire displeasure for that which is worse than nothing, when they may be thy delight for what is of more worth than many worlds ? Such is sin to the sinner, and such, O Lord, is thy service to the saint. And when thou biddest men walk before thee, and be perfect ; is it not that, by doing thy will in the best manner, thy servants may have a quiet conscience and great consolation, for thou hast pleasure in their prosperity ? And when thou sayest, I am thy exceeding great reward ; what is it, O thou fountain of good, but proposing thy everlasting sufficiency as the end of their actions ? Thus wouldst thou have thy creatures do well, in both worlds, by doing thy will in this. How great the reward for a little work ! How unwise then are they, who will not walk before thee, and be perfect ! And how wise, who do thy will in the most excellent way ! Such not only answer, in all things, the present end of life, but also the future by laying up for themselves, as the reward of their services, a treasure in the heavens which will continue, and be a cause of unspeakable comfort for ever.



## 1 CORINTHIANS, Chap. i. Ver. 30.

*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*

**A**S men are not in their created, but redeemed condition, their wisdom, &c. necessarily comes from Christ. Accordingly St. Paul says, *of him, of God, as his sons, servants, and heirs, are ye in or through Christ Jesus, the Redeemer of*

sinners; and who, as their Saviour, to exalt them to so holy, happy, and hopeful a state, *is made of* or appointed by God to be their *wisdom, righteousness, &c.* But as the apostle, in this passage, speaks of what was done to them in a personal and conditional sense; it supposes them capable, as the consequence of preceding grace, of comprehending and complying with the condition.

I shall now attempt an explication of the particulars contained in the text, and conclude with a word of use.

I. Now *σοφία, wisdom*, as communicated by Christ, is what is proper for, tends to, and makes men wise, if they improve it to that purpose, in religion and morality. But though none can be wise, in these superlatively excellent, and absolutely necessary things, without a rational faculty, and a moral quality; yet that, which is here denoted by wisdom, is what Christ teaches by his Spirit, Word, and Providence; the effect being put for the cause. His Spirit, which is the first and principal instructor, teaches without or with means, as necessity or convenience requires.—And as this teaching, in the apostle's time, through the ignorance of the Gentiles, in what concerned their salvation, was rendered necessary; so the ignorance of many, at this time, makes it as needful now as it was then; for though these things are clearly revealed in the scriptures, yet the religious and moral infatuation of multitudes of christians, so called, equals, if not exceeds, the ignorance of the heathens in these important particulars; the inseparable effect of which is, that, though they are sinners, and in extreme danger of suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, they neither know their disease nor cure, danger nor how to be delivered from it; and therefore remain secure in deplorable circumstances.—Now, in this senseless security, they are, in their general conduct, governed by the body, being led by its senses and appetites in a perpetual and ardent pursuit of what pertains to it, and live only to make provision for its profit and pleasure; in which prostitution of themselves, time, and talents they sin against God, themselves, and others; and, so dying, must, as the consequence, endure intense and eternal torments.

But when the Holy Ghost, who is perpetually present, and perfectly acquainted with the condition of men's minds, can, consistently with their freedom in acting, (they being accountable for their conduct) intimate to them, in an immediate way, the evil of their actions, the danger they are



in, the necessity of ceasing from sin, of seeking salvation, &c. and prompts them; by his powerful working, to submit to, and reduce his instructions to practice, he would be their wisdom without the use of external means. And thus, being mindful of, merciful to, and lovingly solicitous to save them from sin and suffering, and promote their salvation, he teacheth them what tendeth thereto. And by how much they attend to, learn the nature of, and carefully practise his precepts, they become wise with the wisdom of Christ.—But though the Spirit is the principal teacher of this wisdom; yet, generally, where it can be, there is a concurrence of external causes, by which, as his instruments, it is begun, carried on, and completed. In particular the word, as contained in the scriptures, and as continued to be spoken by the servants of Christ; which, when applied by the Spirit, has a two-fold effect, it instructs and distresses. Hence it is called his sword; for it enters the sinner's heart, lays open his case, and wounds his conscience, as a sword would his body if pierced with it; by which he is made sensible of, and distressed for his sins.—By providence likewise he prosecutes the same purpose, occasionally making the occurrences of it instrumental for the conviction of careless sinners. Thus books written on sacred subjects, the instructions, reproofs, and examples of good men, sickness, pain, poverty, losses, crosses, thunder, lightning, storm, tempest, dreams, visions, deaths, and a countless number of things which occur, he renders subservient, by a suitable application of them, to the making of Christ man's wisdom.

I shall now shew the necessity and effects of wisdom. And that it is necessary the ignorance, the wickedness, and the want of concern, so common among men, are certain signs. For who, but fools, would sell themselves to Satan, by sinning, for no future recompence but everlasting fire? But this is done daily by all sinners; for he, that sinneth, is of the devil, and damnation is his due. What then is their wisdom? Alas, it is folly, yea, madness in the extreme. Some, when their natural faculties fail, destroy themselves. But sinners, with all their natural senses, rush on to endless ruin. And how many, of all orders and degrees of men, are thus mad! What multitudes curse, swear, lie, get drunk, break sabbaths, pick, steal, whore, deceive, cheat, &c.! Over what numbers have pride, covetousness, anger, self-will, and other diabolical tempers and affections the dominion! All which,

and every other evil, are clear indications of infatuated minds. Hence it is, that, being unconscious of their condition, though God is angry with, and hell waits to receive them, yet they are unconcerned; their mouths are full of laughter, they talk pleasantly, have a cheerful countenance, live at ease, sing merry songs, delight in carnal company, and find pleasure in unrighteousness: Yea they fear no evil, for neither death nor judgment, the devil nor damnation dismay them; God is disregarded, holiness despised, heaven undesired, and the soul entirely neglected. In which condition, if tradition, custom, (not conscience, except an erroneous one) example, pride, or any cause, consisting with a sinful state, keep them conversant with some externals in religion, their blindness subjects them to the sore evil of substituting the means for the end, supposing that, if they hear, read, pray, receive sacraments, give alms, &c. they are religious. This is a mistake which dark souls easily slide into. And therefore where something, which looks like religion, is kept up; with most it seems to be but a dead form, as it consists with diabolical tempers and damnable practices: By which it plainly appears, that their religious actions are but of the outside sort, are no more the effects of a pious principle, than the motions of a puppet, performed by an external mover, are the fruits of free-agency in it. How highly necessary then is wisdom, seeing, without it, sinners sleep secure on the brink of endless burnings!

Now the entrance of this wisdom giveth understanding; and as it increaseth, so does knowledge. The beginning of it is like the earth enlightened by the beams of the sun, when its body is at a distance; they mingle with the darkness, and give a faint light. And when the light of instruction, from the Lord, dawns upon the mind, darkness begins to disappear, and good and evil, safety and danger, heaven and hell look a little like themselves. And as light increases, the shades of darkness decrease; and the dimness, which prevented the soul's clear sight of itself, being done away, sin becomes exceedingly sinful in the sight of the sinner; what he before thought innocent, he now sees is really evil. Nor does he observe his present conduct only, but also reflects on what he has done, and looks at what is to come. In the review of which, the sins of his past life appear in as lively colours as if but newly committed. Multitudes of evil thoughts, words, and works, which long lay in oblivion, now rise up to his view like mountains upon mountains, with

a heinous form reaching to heaven. A dreadful scene! And this reflection casts him upon a consideration of what is to come, of that eternal torment which he now perceives is inseparable from his sins. Nor can he behold the one without the other, being linked together as cause and consequence. Thus the past and the future, by remembrance and remorse, centre in his sinful guilty self. Hence, similar to one on an isthmus, he sees himself situated on the narrow neck of life, betwixt the unbounded oceans of heaven and hell. In which situation his sins, and the foreboding of future sufferings, principally engage his attention and care. These, in his present condemned condition, sit so uneasy on his soul, and point out his future perdition, as to render life an inexpressible burden, and from which death would be no deliverance: Therefore, being oppressed, he humbles, reproaches, condemns himself, and cries, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me!*

And with his sinfulness, his insufficiency appears. While he was insensible of his sin, he depended on the worth of his own works. But the knowledge of the one has led him to that of the other. He is now convinced that he has done nothing which can be of any service to his soul. What he before called his good works, he now finds were only *splendidum peccatum*, splendred sin, inasmuch as they were not the effects of a pious principle, nor done in the fear and love, nor to the honour of the Lord. These then, notwithstanding their appearance, wanted all that could constitute them pious performances, and contribute nothing to the taking away of his sins. Moreover, as he before sinned willingly, so he now sins unwillingly. This is the effect of necessity; he cannot do better by reason of inability. The goodness of his moral mind is so small, that though it sufficeth for effecting repentance and reformation; yet not for producing love, joy, peace, power, &c. in the use of which only the Lord can be served. Hence, finding himself so circumstanced as that the good which he would do, he cannot, and the evil which he would not do, he does; he is clearly convinced that neither his present nor past life produce any thing on which he can depend for a pardon. A farther reason, for the same thing, is the condition of his soul, and the relation he stands in to the Lord. A condition, by reason of sin, full of condemnation; and therefore his relation to the Lord is that of a

child of wrath: Consequently, all his works are unacceptable to the Lord, and require to be forgiven.

The things of this sublunary world, its profits, pleasures, honours, &c. are also seen in a light widely different from what they were. When he was blind to better things, they were his *summum bonum*, his chief good. But now they appear poor, low, insignificant things. Concerning which, with as much sincerity as Solomon did, he can say, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity*. These then no longer please; emptiness is written on all that is earthly. The whole world, purchased by the loss of the soul, would now be thought infinitely too dear. Thus wisdom proportions the price to the value of the purchase. Hence, what he once prized, being earthly, is now but lightly esteemed. He sees that all these shadows pass away, and that he himself, respecting this world, is but a creature of a day; therefore the things, which are so slippery and uncertain, he treats as trifles. Yea the body, which was once admired and idolized, pampered and pleased, decked and adorned with art and elegance, is now considered as a sordid, sensual thing; wasting, if it attain thereunto, from the meridian of a short and uncertain life, and running as fast as the wings of time, a decaying constitution, and a thousand incidents can carry it, to mix with its original elements in the grave, where all things are forgotten. What then are the things which perish in their using? Alas, they are too gross, little, and short-lived to place the affections of an immortal spirit upon!

Another fruit of this wisdom is, that the soul is dissatisfied with itself, for it has neither peace nor pleasure; but is an empty aching void. God discovers his disapprobation of it by condemnation; it has fearful forebodings of future infelicity; is utterly unable to relieve itself; is doubtful whether the Lord will relieve it; and the thought of enduring eternal damnation is what it cannot endure. These are the natural effects of a right sense of sin. But wisdom, which discovers the dark, represents the bright side also, shews that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses; which gives a prospect of righteousness, the second part of the subject.

## R I G H T E O U S N E S S.

Christ, who is the light of the world by wisdom, is its life by righteousness. Righteousness is, literally, a practical conformity to the known moral laws of God; which, in the

ten commandments of the Old Testament, run, generally, in the negative form, forbidding what is offensive to God, and prejudicial to men. In the New Testament the form is more positive, commanding what is to be done for the honour of the one, and the advantage of the other. In each both are implied, though not so clearly specified. The substance of which is loving the Lord with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves.

The sanctions, or things intended to enforce the authority of the law are rewards and punishments; he, who keeps it, *shall live* in the favour of God here, and in his kingdom hereafter; but he, who breaks it, *shall die*, be condemned in this world, and damned in that which is to come.

Now man, the subject of this law, is composed of natures, matter and spirit, which, though contrary in themselves, are compatible in their use, and act in concert. His spirit is the principle of intention, and his body the instrument of action. And herein the law and the human constitution correspond; for the law has a spirit and a letter, and may be kept or broken by the intention only, or by the action also. So he who would serve the Lord or man, by his body or estate, but is incapable of accomplishing his purpose, does, in that degree, keep the law; as, on the contrary, he who would sin, by some outward act, but is prevented against his will, so far breaks it. But the mind and the body may act equally; the one with a perfect intention, and the other with a full execution. When the soul is holy, and wills whatever the Lord would have it, and the body reduces every resolution to practice, the law is fulfilled. In like manner when the soul is unholy, and the body acts in all things agreeably thereto, it is completely broken. Moreover, when the soul is imperfect in its religious disposition; it can only intend according to its degree of goodness, and move the body, in the same measure, to suitable actions; consequently, in that case, the law is not completely kept, and therefore they are condemned for defectiveness. And when the quality of the soul, and the ability of the body are not employed in keeping the law, in the measure and manner they might be, that is also cause of condemnation. Yea when sinners, who shew their inward enmity to God by their outward opposition to his law, use forms of blessing, give alms, say prayers, search the scriptures, receive sacraments, fast, contend for particular modes of worship, warmly defend peculiar opinions

in religion, &c. it is but the effect of pride, or custom; or hypocrisy, or some such cause: Therefore, wanting a pure disposition, and a good design as their ground, they are not acceptable to God. Nor is the law kept, according to the will of God, when conformed to in all points of outward practice, if it does not arise from a holy heart and a right intention; for though it may be kept by the intention, without the practice, when it cannot be added, yet the contrary is not true, inasmuch as the outward depends on the inward, but not the inward on the outward, as the shadow does on the body, and not the body on the shadow.

And as the law was made for man, it supposes the quality of his mind, and the ability of his body to be equal to the nature and extent of it. But if he is, without corrupting himself, contrary to its nature, or defective in his degree of likeness to it, he sins by necessity; and therefore cannot be justly condemned. But neither of these is to be supposed, the government of God being more equal than to require impossibilities, and innocent than to condemn without cause. If then those powers were once perfect, and that perfection might have been retained, but has been weakened or lost by neglect or abuse; man is condemned for corrupting and incapacitating himself from keeping the commandments of God, and for all the sins committed in consequence of that incapacity. And if ever it was possible to retrieve that loss, but the possibility was not improved to that purpose, that is a farther cause of condemnation.

Seeing then that the law respects the heart as well as the life, and requires a perfect and perpetual design to cease from every sin, and to do the Lord's will in the most acceptable way; it is in this respect that it must be first conformed to. But designs must not terminate in themselves; rather, where it is possible, they must be reduced to practice in what will satisfy the law in a literal sense, omitting all that is prohibited, and performing all that is required. But, if these commandments are not kept, the consequence is condemnation: *For cursed is every one who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* This is the sentence. And as the law is spiritual and eternal, so the curse is equivalent, agrees with its nature, and runs parallel with its duration. *All things:* So if many, or most, but not all have been done, that is cause, proportionable to the degree of defect, of condemnation. And whoever has sinned in a customary, or habitual way, has sinned in all things,

inasmuch as none can be the servant of two different masters at once: *No fountain, saith James, sendeth forth at the same place sweet water and bitter.* Only the one or the other. Agreeably to which, no heart produces a right and a wrong practice: For *he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous,* who doeth no evil; as, on the contrary, *he that committeth sin is of the devil,* who doeth no good. A farther confirmation of which the apostle affords, where he says, *when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.* Here an habitual sinner is represented as having no righteousness; all that he does is suitable to himself. Being out of the favour of God, (and he is angry with the wicked every day) and governed by a diabolical disposition, all his works are sinful, and, as such, unacceptable to the Lord: Therefore, so circumstanced, whether he swear or offer sacrifice, break sabbaths or keep them, lie or speak the truth, reverence or prophane the Lord's name, &c. all is the same; whatever he doth, whether good, bad, or indifferent in itself, is disagreeable to him; for the sacrifice, and the plowing of the wicked are sin. Seeing then that sinners are free from righteousness, and that no unrighteous person can inherit the kingdom of heaven; they are in a dangerous condition, condemned here, and liable to be lost hereafter.

Now, this being the case, what can a sinner do? Righteousness he has none, nor can have from himself, it being impossible for him to atone for and take away his sins. Could he, from the present time, wholly conform to the law of God, that would not free him from his past sins; as thereby he would do no more than his duty, and so not discharge any part of the old debt. This is certain, and affords a full conviction of the absolute insufficiency, of a sinner, to save his soul by any future righteousness of his own. What then will avail? How shall he, who hath no righteousness, and much unrighteousness, become righteous? The question is of the greatest concern. But it is answerable, for *Christ is made of God unto us righteousness.* Its nature, procuring cause, and method of receiving I shall now consider.

And in how many and different senses soever the word *δικαιοσύνη*, *righteousness* is understood in the scripture, it here, with the clearest evidence, excludes all ideas of our own righteousness, whether moral, ceremonial, or political, inasmuch as *Christ is made of God unto us righteousness.* The law is the rule of righteousness, and keeping it is righteous-

ness. Sin is a violation of the law, and therefore unrighteousness. It is likewise the whole of unrighteousness, nothing else being any part of it; consequently, in the case of a sinner, forgiveness is the whole of righteousness, without the addition of any other thing. And this, the moment it is received, frees the sinner as much from sin and guilt, the fear of death, and the danger of being damned as a perfectly past righteous life would have preserved him: For being justified by faith, he has peace with God through Christ; his love is shed abroad in his heart, and he rejoices in hope of his glory.

But though Christ, by forgiveness, takes away the evil of men's past actions; yet he does not make them good and rewardable of God: Therefore, though they have a negative righteousness by remission, they have not a positive one in good works: As such, their past life, in respect of a reward, is lost. Nor does he impute his own good works to supply the want of theirs, and thereby intitle them to a reward, as that would raise them all to the same height in heaven; which the scripture indirectly denies, by saying that every one shall be rewarded according to his own works. And the different degrees of these, in different persons, will be the only cause of different rewards. Proportionably as some have excelled others in serving, and suffering for the Lord, and ministering to the good of mankind, will they be differently dealt with. Those then, who are saved, but have not served the Lord, (through want of time, &c.) will be glorified, yet not rewarded. And those, who are saved, and have served him, will be glorified, and rewarded according to the nature and the number of their works. Certain then it is, that the righteousness of Christ, as communicated to men, consists only in the forgiveness of sins. The procuring cause of which, I shall next take notice of.

Now the death of Christ is the only meritorious cause of this; for *God made him, who knew no sin, to be sin, (or a sin-offering, to which sin was imputed, or on which it was laid) for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* The wages of sin is death. But Christ tasted death for every man. And being infinite in his person, a taste of that which was eternally due to men was sufficient. And as death, condemnation here and damnation hereafter, is all the evil consequent on committing sin; so the death of Christ is all that is necessary as an atonement for it. Being the substitute of such as the law pronounceth accursed, he was made a curse for them; by



which the justice of God was satisfied, his anger appeased, and all spiritual blessings procured. This is the one mediator: *For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all.* Other causes then, in this case, the scripture knows not; it assigneth no reason, for the salvation of a sinner, but the sufferings of the Son of God: It represents him as “a lamb without spot, on whom were laid the iniquities of us all, and by whose stripes we are healed.” In a word, it asserts “that there is salvation in none other; and that to him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive the remission of sins.” The way of receiving it, I shall now consider.

And first, as preparative thereto, the sinner must see, by a comparison of his life with the law, and by a keen conviction of its evil in his conscience, that he deserves to be, and is in imminent danger of being damned. And as this knowledge will rather obtain by degrees than be perfect at first; so, if it is rightly used, repentance and reformation will proportionably proceed from it. And yet when his penitence is come to the highest pitch, and his reformation is complete; it is probable, he will find himself in more seemingly wretched circumstances than ever; for the guilt of his sins will sit so heavy on his heart as to make him extremely unhappy: Which, though it appears like a paradox, is, notwithstanding, both natural and necessary; natural, as the effect of unforgiven offences, and necessary, to stimulate him to seek salvation. Nor will his prayers, tears, watchings, fastings, &c. afford relief; and so some other thing will be necessary whereby to recover the forfeited favour of God. And that only, which can ensure success, is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In order to which a knowledge of his person, as consisting of a divine and human nature; his office, as Mediator betwixt God and men; and his actions, in living, dying, rising, ascending, and interceding for sinners will facilitate faith. These, rightly understood and firmly believed, will assist a guilty sinner in seeing his privilege, and choosing his portion. Hereby he will learn that help is laid upon one that is mighty; and therefore, though he deserve to be deprived of life, and to be hurled into hell, yet he need not despair of seeing salvation. So, having learnt where his relief is, and fixed his choice; with ardent desire and earnest supplication he pours out his soul to God for salvation, and diligently seeks it in all appointed means. And,

if it tarry, he waits for it, well knowing that it never can be well with him, till he obtains it. In this way he wrestles till he prevails, and proves that the Lord is his righteousness, by the remission of his sins. And as happy effects, and excellent evidences of this, and of his acceptance with God; his guilt is gone, the fear of death has taken its flight, the peace of God keepeth his heart, he rejoices in God his Saviour, and in hope of the glory which shall be revealed. Thus Christ is made of God unto him righteousness.

### SANCTIFICATION.

Righteousness saves from the guilt of past sin, and sanctification from the present sinful quality of the soul. Now this quality is wide spread, every faculty being infected with it. And, according to its degree of depth, the understanding is dark, and neither discerns good nor evil; the will is impure, choosing only wicked or worldly things; the affections follow, loving, hating, hoping, fearing, joying, sorrowing, &c. in ways prohibited, being improperly principled, placed, and employed; loving what they should hate, and hating what they should love. &c. Hence the heart is said to be *deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*. And though this corruption of the soul does not extend to the body as its seat; yet, as the soul resides in, and presides over it, its members are made instruments of unrighteousness by it. A liberty, indeed, to become sinful is compatible with a holy heart in beings whose actions turn upon the use of their free-agency. But a continuance therein is incompatible with it, inasmuch as sin corrupts its quality. This is evident, in both cases, from the instances of angels and Adam, who, though they had a holy principle, sinned in practice, and thereby corrupted their principle. The great contrariety then to sobriety in a man's self, to truth, justice, and charity to others, and to piety to God is the effect of a deep depravity of spirit, and the prevalence of the animal powers.

In opposition to this, *αγιασμος, sanctification*, consists of an entire change of heart. Agreeably to which, when sin has corrupted and rendered it incapable of rightly comprehending its condition, this change begins in a conviction of its contrariety to God, whereby the power of sin is broken, and the desire of the soul turned into a contrary channel, running religion, the Lord, and heaven-ward. A farther degree obtains when conviction issues in conversion by such a deliverance, from the nature and dominion of evil tempers and

affections, as makes their contrary sensibly exist in the soul, unrighteous anger being not only reduced in degree, but the quality of the temper so altered as to resent sin against God or man, and so far to transfer the resentment, from the sinner to the sin, as to wish well to his person, while it hates his performance. Yea, so far as this temper is right, personal injuries, which, in its corrupter condition, were its only objects of opposition, are now, in every case, especially if received for righteousness sake, borne with a proportionable degree of patience.—Pride also, by the same principle, is not only diminished, but its possessor has new objects and aims, glories in God and doing good to men, in honouring the one and promoting the advantage of the other; and, if these ends are answered, though his personal honour lies in the dust, and contempt is poured upon him from every quarter, he is content.—The love of the world is likewise changed into the love of God and man, whereby the subject of it is made free to sacrifice all that he has to please the one and to profit the other. Its joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, and all that belong to it too, as a moral agent, are so altered and exercised upon new objects as to evidence the outlines of a new creation.

But, notwithstanding this excellent beginning, it is still so defective in power to perform its duty, that the want of a greater change, to make it comport more fully with the Lord's moral commands, is manifest. This sense of defect arises from a consciousness of its condition; a sense similar to that of the bodily appetite, when it is not satisfied. By which uneasy sensation, the soul is stimulated to seek salvation from it; which, by a gradual or an instantaneous change, is done; and thereby its present state is made to differ from its past. For, as before it was weak and wavering, now it is strong and steadfast. Its weakness appeared in its proneness to wander, in the multitude of its imaginations, and in its easy admittance and retention of the ideas of outward objects, which kept it unprofitably employed, carried it off from, and made it unmindful of God, the chief good. The tempers and affections likewise, having retained a tincture of their contracted corruption, were too weak in respect of right, and too strong in regard of wrong things. Anger, in its opposition to moral evil, had not the full consent and strength of the soul, nor was so passive, in personal injuries, as it ought to have been. Neither was pride, by praise for pious and benevolent actions, stimulated only to excel in the same things,

but rather, through the remains of the immoral mind, something was sacrificed to self, which served to puff it up. And, in proportion to these, there was a weakness in goodness, in all the other passions, and a strength in evil. And by the weakness of the one, and the strength of the other, the senses and appetites of the body were less in dominion to the divine disposition, and with greater difficulty kept in decorum. Notwithstanding then that there was a power, in the right principle, to counteract, by a good use of it, the motions of the animal and spiritual man; yet the difficulty was not only equal to the opposition made to it by inward evils, but when temptations, from external things, fanned the flame, it was increased. The effects of which were a war in the mind betwixt the opposing principles of nature and grace, an imperfect performance of duty to God and man, and condemnation as the consequence of that imperfection.

But when the heart is more divested of its diabolicalness, and the contrary quality is wrought into its constitution; it is stronger in itself, more fixed, regular, and forcible in the service it performs; has a more natural and constant tendency towards God; the tempers and affections are purer, and have a juster sense of the good or evil of their respective objects; the imagination and fancy are more subject to the superior faculties; the ideas of outward things are less entertained, and more easily cast out; and the animal appetites and senses more managible, being deprived of the assistance which they had from the soul in its corrupter condition; and therefore act more instrumentally to the honour of God. Thus, in proportion to the advancing of the pious principle, all evils subside, and all excellences increase; by which peace prevails more in the inward principle, duty is better discharged, and the conscience is quieter.

And yet it is not hereby made perfect; something of evil remains from which to be delivered, and of good to be received: for the moral quality must be complete. The evil, to be delivered from, is the remain of the irreligious disposition, and the good to be received is the contrary quality in a proportionable quantity. The knowledge, of the necessity of both, is from the sense which the soul has of itself, and which is so clear that all other evidences, of not being perfect in principle, are unnecessary. Hence, by this, and by the hope of success resulting from the promise of God, it is excited to proceed to further attainments, to the utter extinction of all that is sinful in the quality, tempers, and affections of

the soul, and to the implanting of every grace of the spirit in perfection. The excellencies of which condition consist in having a full preparation for every good word and work, and an habitual meetness for an immediate admittance into the Lord's everlasting kingdom.

And as hereby the heart is brought into that state which the nature and fitness of things, and the holiness of the Lord and his law require; there is necessarily an evidence of it. The first part of which is from itself; for the soul being the seat of sense, and its condition that from which the evidence issues, it not only springs from, but also agrees with it: As such, where there is no sin in the soul, there is no sense of it, it sees and feels no evil, but all holiness and happiness. And as souls convinced of sin, and such as are but partly sanctified are assured, by this sort of sense, of the condition they are in; there is the same reason to admit it in this case, especially as it has a circumstance, which the others have not, viz. that there is no cause of deception from itself, its quality being complete; whereas the others are mixed, and therefore not so clear a glass to behold its state in. The second part, of the immediate evidence, is the witness of God; his spirit bearing witness, with ours, by shining upon it, and shewing what its condition is. And this light being without any mixture of darkness, it exposeth the soul, to the view of itself, in a more conspicuous manner than its own light does. And yet hereby, in a sanctified soul, no evil is seen; it bears the reflection, without the detection of any degree of sinful temper or affection. Hence, finding nothing to censure, it necessarily gives a sign of approbation in peace and joy. Thus, by these evidences, the soul is seen to be without spot of sin, or wrinkle of imperfection.

And now being wholly new born, it begins to live, in respect of degree, as it never did before, in perfect holiness to God, and righteousness to men: The perfection of which can only result from an undivided soul. In which case a good man is satisfied from himself, has the approbation of his own heart in the testimony of his conscience.

But though this principle capacitates man to comport with what is required of him; yet as it acts not of itself, but is reduced to action by his own agency, as that which denominates him the author of his actions, so the measure and manner of it depend on his own choice; therefore the fruit of this principle, in practice and the testimony of the heart, will be proportioned to his voluntary care and labour.

And as neither the nature, nor the highest-degree of grace makes men act but as free-agents; so neither does it destroy the affections of the soul, but only rectifies and restores them to their right state. Hence, as a consequence of their continuance, they are moved, by their respective objects, as they agree or disagree with them. Yet, it is probable, these different sensations do not arise from different senses in the soul; but as its spiritual nature is one, so its moral sense is one also; and therefore as it has a variety of ideas, without innate ones, from various objects striking on the outward senses, so it has different sensations, without different inward senses, as their different natures excite love or hatred, hope or fear, joy or sorrow, &c. And sensations, which are incident to every condition, differing according to different dispositions of soul; its present ones differ from its past in quality or quantity: When it had no prevailing holiness, it loved and hated only in an evil manner: When its disposition consisted of good and evil, it loved and hated according to its measure of holiness: and in its present perfect state of disposition, its love of goodness and hatred of evil may be so also, by a right use of its powers.

But how is Christ made unto us sanctification? First, by procuring it; and, secondly, by implanting it. The first of these, although denied by the Socinians, &c. is so clear from his *tasting death for every man, and redeeming us from all iniquity*, as to need no other proof, in this place. His passion then being the procuring cause of all the good, which accrues to men; the means and manner of its implantation, are the only things necessary to be taken notice of.

Now the principal former, of this, is the divine spirit. Human efforts, art, force, &c. may prevent the outflowings of an evil heart, but cannot change its quality: Therefore though a profligate, by human restraints, may be reformed in practice, yet he may be sinful in principle; for though excrescences may thus be cut off, nature, in its contrariety to holiness, is not so to be cured. Diabolical darkness and death, the properties of a sinful principle, cannot be changed into divine light and life, but by the influence of an agent possessing these properties. Agreeably to which, the Lord claims the prerogative of purifying the heart: *A new heart, saith he, will I give thee.* The manner of which he represents by saying, *I will circumcise thine heart.* The sacred rite of a literal circumcision, the cutting off the flesh of the foreskin, is alluded to; but this is the removing of the sin-

fulness of the spirit. Hence it is said, *circumcision is that of the heart*. The spiritual part of man is the subject of it, and the spirit of the Lord is the circumcising instrument. Under the operation of which the heart is enlightened to see, and enlivened to desire a deliverance from sin. This is the beginning of that divine cutting. But though it is profitable, yet it is painful, for it wounds the heart, and fills it with fearful forebodings of future ruin. But it is necessary, as only a painful sense of sin and danger will induce it to submit to, and concur in the destruction of its diabolical disposition. And when willing, the Lord, by the refining influence of his spirit, sits upon it as the fire of a refiner of silver, and purges it from the tin of unholy tempers and affections. And, as these depart, he principles it with pure properties, by infusing divine light, life, and every other grace into it, whereby it is changed from one degree of glorious holiness to another, till it attains to a *pleroma*, or fullness of God. In which condition the mind is at unity with itself, and in full conformity to God; there is no war from opposing principles, nor any enmity with him, the seeds of discord and opposition being lost in a oneness with itself and its Saviour.

But though the Holy Ghost is the principal efficient, in this affair; yet other things concur, in a subordinate way, to effect it. In particular the word, and the part to be performed by man. The word, wherever it is, defects the soul, lays open its case, and makes it conscious of its condition; for, being applied by the spirit, it is quick and powerful, and of wonderful efficacy in every degree and circumstance of spiritual life. It serves too to illustrate the divine operation, on the heart, by describing its nature, process, and excellent effects, whereby that which is inward and spiritual, real and substantial is better understood, and distinguished from counterfeits. It is likewise of exceedingly great service by its promises, prescriptions, commands, threatenings, &c. Its promises raise hopes of, and excite to endeavours after sanctification; its prescriptions shew the way to find it; its commands oblige, by virtue of its divine authority, to prosecute it accordingly; and its threatenings tend to preserve from apostacy.

The part to be performed by man has also a direct tendency to, and exceedingly facilitates the work of sanctification. And herein he, as the receptive subject of the pure influence and

grace of the holy spirit, is both active and passive; active in seeking, and passive in receiving. The active part must be performed with all the earnestness and constancy he is capable of. The eye of the soul must look to the Lord continually; which, as it will raise the soul's attention to things above, so will it draw it from things beneath, whereby they will lose much of their weight; for riches, honours, and pleasures will not be desired, and poverty, contempt, and misery will be easily endured. Moreover, by this, an embargo will be laid on the body; the eyes, ears, taste, touch, and smell will be restrained, and proportionably prevented from inflaming the soul to, or interrupting it by an immoderate pursuit of earthly things. The passions, anger, ambition, hope, fear, joy, sorrow, &c. will also, by the same procedure, be preserved from contracting corruption by conversing with them, and offer less opposition to, and more freely admit the refining influence, of the holy spirit, to restore them to their right state. And the lighter powers, the imagination and fancy, will likewise be mortified in respect of earthly matters; and, by consequence, less employ and prevent the soul from pursuing heavenly things.

Now by thus living and acting in the highest region of the heart, not only all that can prevent and perplex are so far avoided; but it more clearly discerns its wants, and is better disposed to supplicate the Lord for a supply of them: For while the soul centers in, and continually ascends unto God in its motion; its access, in petitioning him, is with more ease, and to greater advantage. And hence, as the happy effect of it, frequent, fervent, pious breathings flow to him for the increase of every grace. And being, in every business and circumstance of life thus employed, it not only keeps the intercourse open, and the faculties and graces of the soul in exercise, but also brings many blessings, tends to preserve the sense and spirit of religion alive, and prepares for more importunate prayer; the effectualness of which may be inferred from all good things being given to them that ask.

To which must be added the use of all the means appointed for furtherance in this affair, viz. searching the scripture, hearing, reading, fasting, and whatever else that comes within the compass of our condition in life. And, in the use of all, a steadfast faith in the death of Christ as the procurer, in his spirit as the worker, and in his promise as holding forth the blessing of sanctification.



And that these are necessary, is evident from man's being commanded to *make himself a new heart, to cleanse himself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and to purify himself even as he is pure.* These, indeed, have no real efficiency, do not cleanse by changing the quality of the soul from evil to good; but yet their use is such as, except in extraordinary cases, and where man cannot concur, he will not be sanctified without. This is clear from men's being required to give all diligence, and also from the nature of the work, which is such that, if the heart be not, by constant care and labour, kept up to, and exercised on things above, in order to its being principled with their properties, it will necessarily tend towards earthly things, and spiritual evils; which, by how much it does, it will be prevented from prosecuting spiritual good, and be corrupted by them. How highly necessary then is it to be active in the use of grace given, and to abound in the means of it for more? Indeed the want of these is the principal reason why souls do not prosper, inasmuch as the Lord is able, willing, and ready to supply all their wants out of the fulness of his Son. Thus then men may receive a salvation from all the sinfulness of the soul, and a fulness of the divine nature, with all its properties of light, life, love, power, peace, joy, long-suffering, &c. a preparation for living in the manner most agreeable to God, profitable to others and its possessor, and for a place in the paradise above.

### R E D E M P T I O N.

The word *Απολυτρωσις*, *redemption*, it is probable, implies, first, the price paid for man's ransom; secondly, the deliverance of the soul from the body; and, thirdly, the redemption of the body from death.

The first of these is so clearly taught in the New Testament, and so strongly signified by the sacrifices of the Old, that nothing, but an ignorant or a wilful perversion of them; can prevent a conviction of their truth and importance. And as men have sinned in their represented and personal capacity; redemption, in this respect, has for its objects their deliverance from both. Touching the first of which, nothing can afford a more convincing proof, of its truth, than that *as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life.* Here the first and the second Adam

are opposed to each other, in relation to their posterity, by the one of whom they were rendered guilty, and by the other acquitted.—Neither is it less certain that Christ suffered for men's personal sins. This assertion receives full confirmation from the following pertinent passages: *Ye are bought with a price: He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity: Who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree: For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust: He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.* These are a specimen, of the scriptures, which afford a convincing proof of a propitiatory sacrifice. It was not, indeed, in all the circumstances of it, such as sinners were obliged to pay in their own persons; for that was destruction of soul and body for ever. But it was such as the Almighty accepted from their surety. Nor was it defective in value, inasmuch as his person was infinite: Therefore though he but *tasted death for every man*; yet that taste was equivalent to what was eternally due to them. Nor did its satisfactoriness flow only from its sufficiency, but also as being devised and done by the Father himself: for *he laid upon him the iniquities of us all, and by his stripes we are healed: He was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses*: Thus from a concurrence of causes, the matter and the manner, the Almighty was pacified, and redemption equally and actually procured for all men.

The second sort, of redemption, is the deliverance of the soul from the body. The body, in the present time, is the soul's seat, instrument of action, and hoped for eternal home. And, perhaps, except in the case of Enoch, Elijah, and the living at the last day, there will be a separation, in all, for a season. Nor is that exception an entire exemption from death; transformation, which is substituted for, being the substance of it. And while holy souls are inhabitants of houses of clay, their place is rather a prison than a pleasant abode. The body, though wonderfully made, is subject to divers diseases. Consisting of many both larger and lesser parts, united together by joints, sinews, &c. and covered with flesh, arteries, veins, and skin, which are exposed to the outward elements, and supported by them; hence it is that inclement climes, irregular subsistence, intense or too little labour, with innumerable other things, incident to life, render the world to most, who live in it, little better than a lazarus-house. Therefore death is both certain and desirable: Certain; for the body cannot continue in its present condition for ever.

The repeated shocks received from excesses, &c. make many, long before the natural time of dying, a wreck and ruin. And nature itself has a period which it cannot pass; for as, by the passing of the blood and juices through the vessels, earthly particles adhere to their sides, whereby the small ones are soon filled up, and the larger proportionably lessened; so, in process of time, they lose their use. And the great artery, falling a sacrifice to the same thing, can no longer propel the blood, and that brings natural death: Desirable; for who would always live? None, who have Christ for their wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification: For *we know, saith the voice of inspiration, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* And it is added, *For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven.* Hence then though so to live is good, yet to die is more desirable. And the ground, of both, is exhibited in this pertinent passage: *He that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God, who hath also given us the earnest of the spirit.* He that hath prepared us for heaven, by purifying our hearts, hath given us an earnest of it, in the gift of his spirit. And if the earnest be good, how much more the fulness! With what propriety then is it said, *We are willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.* And whether they die a slow or sudden, a painful or pleasant death; and whether by an immediate stroke of the Almighty, or through the instrumentality of other things, are circumstances of small consideration: For the longest time of dying is short, and the passage betwixt this and the other world narrow. And when, by the death of the body, the soul is set free, it expands itself, and explores the spiritual world, with which, till then, its acquaintance was inconsiderable; as it lived by faith in, and not by sight of it.

The third instance, of redemption, is the deliverance of the body from the grave. The certainty, nature, manner, and excellent effects of which are clearly taught in the scriptures: *Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead: For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* Adam was the root and representative of all other men. But being, for his sin, prohibited the privilege of eating of the tree of life, he deprived himself, and all his posterity, of immortality and an easy transition from earth to heaven: For instead of a transformation, of their

animal nature, into that which is spiritual, and a translation, of the whole man, to a celestial situation, which the fruit, of that tree, would have given them a right unto, they were sentenced to die, to dwell in dust, and to be, in body, as if they had never been. But a greater man was deputed to redeem them: Jesus Christ, the second Adam, undertook their cause, who, by dying, delivered them from the power of death, and, by his own resurrection, gave proof of their immortality, that being an earnest of it. So by all the saints, in full assurance may be sung, as grounded on fact and infallible promise, that triumphant song: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? And thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Hence, it is certain, the righteous will rise. Their bodies, though now animal and mortal, will rise spiritual and immortal. God, who made the world out of nothing, will raise them out of the ashes of their originals. He, who knows all things, knows that of which each consists; and therefore can summon their severals, collect them together, combine them in one, and give them such a body as shall seem good to himself. Then will the last enemy be slain, death will have no more dominion. Thus Jesus Christ is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, &c.

Let us now make a little use of this doctrine. And how highly favoured, are sinners, in having so sufficient a Saviour! Great was the love of God in providing them one, who is able to save to the uttermost. He sent his Son, that the world might live through him. He laid upon him the iniquities of us all, that by his stripes we might be healed. This was the price which purchased man's ransom. The fruits flowing from it are wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, &c. Benefits unspeakably great and good!

But who, agreeably to the preceding account, have received them? That they were intended for all is evident. And yet, notwithstanding, but few appear to be under their influence. The contrary is conspicuous, the majority of men being senseless sinners; ignorant of their condition, and wicked in their way. These are, generally, inseparable circumstances. Hence the true character of sinners, in the scripture, is fools: *Ye fools*, saith the Lord, *how long will ye love your folly?* It is, indeed, a proper appellation; for who is so foolish as he that offends the Lord, serves sin, wrongs his soul, and devotes himself to damnation? This is a folly,

with which all other follies cannot compare. And yet how common? Where is wisdom? Alas! if the fear of the Lord be the beginning of it, and that be to hate and forsake sin, there is but little of it among men. And yet the voice of wisdom cries every where; heaven, earth, and all creatures loudly proclaim that God is wise, great and good, and therefore to be feared. Yea, the spirit of wisdom filleth the world. God is that spirit; and all the fulness, of the Godhead, dwells in Christ, who is made of God unto us wisdom. Hence this wisdom is wide spread; for Christ enlightens every man that cometh into the world.

But what part have you in this matter? Is Christ become your wisdom? Has he convinced you of sin? Or do you suppose, that you have none to be convinced of? So to suppose, I fear, is not safe. Have you loved the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength? Alas! when did you so much as remember him? And yet what is loved is remembered, delighted in, dwelt upon, and adored. By this then you may know how you have stood affected towards him. If you loved him, your heart clave to him, you lived in a continual sense of his presence, feared to offend him, walked in all well pleasing to him, and earnestly desired to spend an eternity with him. Was it thus that you lived? Examine your self. Did you ever act without being sure that, by so doing, you served him? If you did, you sinned; for he, who doubts of the lawfulness of what he doth, is condemned. But, alas! what need to speak of doubtful things, when, perhaps, your whole life, or at least the largest part of it, has been one continued act of rebellion.

Have you not had another God? An idol? A something, that you loved better than the Lord? Perhaps money, or pleasure, or some human being engaged your whole spirit, soul, and body; and so your thoughts, words, and works, with but little intermission, went that way. Was that loving the Lord with all your heart? Was it not rather loving the creature than the creator? And was not that idolatry? And he that loveth the world, loveth not God. If then you have been enslaved to the love and pursuit of any earthly thing, that was your God, and you had none beside. The true God was not in your thoughts, you lived without him, and neither loved nor feared him. O what a wretch! What a worm of the earth! And have you no sin? Alas, I fear you have nothing else; for if your heart was wrong, your life could not be right. And have you not taken the

Lord's name in vain, by calling him to witness to the truth of what you knew to be false? Or by beseeching him to damn your soul, or body, or neighbour, or animals, or things inanimate? Or by basely prostituting it to vile purposes, mixing it with every proud, passionate, trifling, obscene, worldly discourse? Now, if you have done so, you have sinned. And will the Lord hold you guiltless? He says he will not. And you would do well to believe him, for he cannot lie; and therefore you are liable to suffer eternal torments. Have you not polluted his Sabbaths by thinking, speaking, and acting in a worldly way, which neither necessity to yourself, nor mercy to others required? And how much of it was spent in vain pleasures! What gaming, drinking, diversions, &c. were you exercised in! Alas, if you thus lived, your damnation does not slumber. Have you loved your neighbour as yourself? Did you honour your father and mother by reverencing their persons, obeying their lawful commands, and by supporting them according to your power? If not, you sinned against God and nature, and so deserve to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. Have you done any murder with your heart or hand? for he that hateth his brother is a murderer, as well as he that killeth him. Have you committed adultery in design or deed, either by lusting after or by lying with one, who was not your lawful wife, or husband? Did you ever steal another's property by taking it away, or by misemploying it, or by cheating, or defrauding? Have you borne false witness against your neighbour by designedly giving a false verdict in judgment, or by belying him yourself, or spreading the false reports of others? And did you ever covet any thing that was his by wishing for or by envying his possessions or happiness? Now, if you have done any, or all of these things, what will you do? God holds you guilty, and his word condemns you to dwell in hell. This, sinner, is your condition! And a dreadful one it is.

But are you sensible of your sin? Do you know that for so doing you deserve, and are in danger of being damn'd? This is a point of knowledge which you should not be ignorant of, in as much as, without it, you know not that which most of all things concerns you. To know ourselves diseased is half the cure. Not to know it is to be sick and insensible of it, which prevents all endeavours after a deliverance from it. How then stands the case? If you know the anger of God to be great, in consequence of your crimes, it is a sure sign that Christ is your wisdom. But what are the proofs of it?

Are you sorrowful for your sins? Does it grieve you to have been so foolish as to offend so good a God? A God, who all your life has fed and preserved you, and who is able to punish you for ever. Do you find hatred to, and is your heart set against sin? Is it now, of all other things, the most odious? A monster? A murderer? A fiend? And do you, in consequence, flee from the practice of it, as from the face of a serpent? Does the guilt of it lie heavy on you? Is your soul sinking, by the weight of it, into endless sufferings? Do you feel a hell in your heart? A guilty conscience? A sting? And do you fear a hell of fire and brimstone? Is it open to, and, in appearance, ready to receive you? And are you, according to your own apprehensions, hovering over it, hanging by the brittle thread of life, which, in a moment, may break, and let you sink into everlasting sufferings? If it is so, what a situation! what a condition are you in! Your sins have found you out, and the Lord is afflicting you for them. And now, what is so becoming as to say, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? And would you be delivered? How do you expect it? Do you see that it is not for your own sake that you are to be saved, that you are altogether unworthy of so great a favour? Have you learnt that your repentance, reformation, prayers, alms, tears, or whatever else you have, or can have, are not that for which the Lord will forgive you? 'Till you see this, there is but little hope; you must be stript of your own worth, your supposed righteousness or merit must all sink before your soul will be saved. If you are brought to this, if you can say, I am lost, condemned, and deserve to be damned; then consider whether you can find help out of yourself. Remember, Christ is made of God unto us righteousness. Here then is your only help and hope. He has discharged your debt of sin, by the price of his precious life; *for he bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that he might bring us to God.* What then have you to do but to interest yourself in it? He requires you to believe it, to depend on it, and to plead it with the Father, that you may find forgiveness.

How easy the condition! As such, what can hinder your becoming righteous? Nothing but yourself. If you believe, you are blest; *for he that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life.* But if you disbelieve, you are curst; *for he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.* Your guilt, it is probable, is great; but so is the merit of Christ, and the mercy of God for the sake of

that merit. Cast yourself upon it by believing that he is able, willing, and ready to forgive, and plead for the fulfilling of the promise. Yea, give him no rest till it is done, till with your heart you have believed unto, and with your prayer prevailed for righteousness. Then will your soul be the seat of a glorious salvation; for when guilt goes, the power of sin will go also, and peace and purity possess you. A heaven will be begun in your heart, even righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. And this will unite you to, and give you the knowledge of the Lord: The invisible will be realized to the senses of your soul: And you will taste and see how good the Lord is. Yea future things, by anticipations and earnestness, will become present: Glory will be begun in grace. Happy souls, who thus find that Christ is their righteousness.

But to whom is he made sanctification? To all, in part, to whom he is made righteousness, these being inseparable in their subjects. Yet because sanctification, in the fullest sense, is but with few perfected at first; a gradual procedure, from less to larger degrees, is the general method of being completely principled with it. To what pitch then, of inward purity, have you attained? Is your soul so conformed to the Lord, as that you find a complete and constant union with him? Do you also feel an implanted preparation for heaven, an heart all holy and happy, and willing and ready, with or without a moment's warning, to go hence? And is your soul fully set to serve the Lord, being perfectly willing and ready to execute his will, in whatever he commands, as soon as signified to, and comprehended by you? These are the properties of a pure heart, things inseparable from full sanctification. Have you attained to this excellent condition, by its being finished at first, or by future degrees? If not, either your time for, or improvement of it, has not been sufficient. Judge whether you have been as intent on obtaining this, as to find forgiveness. If you were not, what wonder that you are weak! It is the diligent hand that maketh rich. Slackness weakens the motion of the mind, and issues either in non-improvement or prodigality. But let the time pass, for so unprofitable a procedure, suffice. And if you intend to be fully conformed to Christ, by the sanctification of your soul, keep a good conscience by obeying according to your ability; and that as a condition, through Christ the meritorious cause, will give great boldness in asking for more: *For if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God; and*



*whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.* Look then to yourselves; see that you live up to your light and life, by walking, inwardly and outwardly, with so scrupulous an exactness as is calculated to continue and increase your grace. Yea, press on to perfection by believing the promise of, by importuning the Lord for, and by patiently waiting to receive it. Rest not till you are all renewed; and thereby fully united to the Lord, completely prepared for heaven, fitted for every good word and work, and clear in the evidence of all these things. And then, as the happy effect of the whole, you will be ready to be removed from earth to heaven; in which,

Christ will be your Redemption. In the interim between, while you continue in that prepared condition, your situation will be such as will make your soul stand, as it were, on tip-toe, in-order to be taken up into the eternal world. Yea, heaven will await, and, like a bride adorned for her husband, be ready to receive you. Angels too, whose charge you were, and who ministered to you in your militant state, will be on the wing to waft you to the upper world. And Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, will bid you come, and present you to a place prepared in the paradise of God. Then will your soul be incircled with the glorious light of the Lord, associated with saints and angels, honoured with the presence and approbation of God, and solaced, in every sense of it, with the pleasures that flow from so super-abounding a bliss. Your bodies too, separated from your souls for a season, and sentenced to dwell in dust, will rest in hope of a glorious resurrection to life, of becoming spiritual and immortal, perfectly resembling the glorified humanity of your living head. And, when brought to heaven, then will your redemption be complete, soul and body will be such as they should be; all the powers and parts of both will be perfect, the senses rightly adapted to, and delighted with their respective objects, the services complete, the enjoyments great, the rewards right, and all will run parallel with the ages of eternity. O what a happiness is this! Who then would not have Jesus Christ for his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption?

O glorious Lord, instead of instantly loading the guilty with curses for their crimes, thou art long-suffering! Yea, in lieu of the perpetually painful effects of thy righteous wrath,

in the punishment of the ignorant, erring, unholy, and hell-deserving children of men, thou hast ordained thy Son to be their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: Things which are of infinitely more value than all the earth. How herein, merciful Lord, hast thou magnified thy love to mankind, thy mercy in their misery, and exhibited the slowness of thy wrath, and readiness to relieve! But, alas, O Lord, how is thy favour forfeited, and all its intended benefits neglected by the multitudes of men, who live as if they lacked none of these things! So intent are they upon the things of time, and so careless concerning eternity, that the voice of wisdom, spoken from heaven and earth, in its awakening, convicting, warning, and instructive words, is little attended to, and less obeyed by abundance. So ignorance covers the earth, and sinners sleep secure, though their damnation does not slumber. But what more canst thou do to make men wise, seeing wisdom is attained only by those, who suffer themselves to be taught, and are at all possible pains to understand, receive, retain, and use, in the best manner, their instructions? Neither canst thou, consistently, compel the wise heartily to believe for, earnestly to seek, and readily to receive righteousness. Nor force the righteous to find full sanctification, and live, in the right use of it, to the end of life, that they may be redeemed from earth to heaven, and live for ever with thee. Compulsion, in these cases, thou canst not, dost not use; and therefore many, through their own free folly, sin, neglect salvation, and suffer for ever, although thy Son was given to save them. But Oh! how great must be their suffering, who thus abuse thy goodness. But thanks be to thee for thy unspeakable gifts. For though the madness of men makes light of them; yet are they not only infinitely better, but also afford abundantly more satisfaction than all sins and sensual things. How much more profitable and pleasant then, holy Lord, will they be than the torments of hell in eternity!

## 2 TIMOTHY, Chap. iv. Ver. 7, 8.

*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: And not to me only, but unto all them also, who love his appearing.*

**T**HIS, with propriety, may be termed Paul's dying speech, though it was not his last. It contains a recapitulation of his christian conduct, and a prediction of his future reward. Nor is it less certain than surprizing, that he says nothing of what had been done for him, but only of what he himself had done. And yet this is according to the nature and fitness of things; for a reward supposes a work, and the work a personal, a voluntary, a pious or charitable thing, though the power by which it was done, as a principle and superadded assistance, was derived from the Deity. In treating of which, I shall

1. Touch upon the work; and, 2. upon the reward. The work implies three particulars; fighting, running, and keeping the faith. The first supposes armour and enemies, inasmuch as a naked soldier is incapable of fighting, and armour, without enemies, is not necessary. But he had both. His armour was spiritual, not temporal; moral, not carnal. It consisted of such spiritual powers and divine graces as are the properties of rational and holy souls. And though they inhere in the heart; yet the apostle, in a parallel place, says, "put on the whole armour of God." But, as this is not a command to acquire armour, it is to be understood allusively, viz. that as soldiers, who have armour, but have it not always on, are, when it is necessary to fight, commanded to put it on: So the christian, to preserve himself from defeats,

and to put his foes to flight, must, in cases of danger, call his graces into action.

St. Paul, by his conversion to christianity, was fully furnished with every grace of the spirit; and consequently rendered capable of encountering his enemies. Yet, as man is a compound creature, and consists of contrary things, what is to be understood by the word *I*? Does it mean the whole man, or but a part of him? If the whole, then he had not his flesh to fight with. But though the flesh is a part of man, it is to be fought with; for notwithstanding that it is made of senseless matter, it is so modified as that the being, nature, and use of its appetites, its hunger, thirst, concupiscence, &c. do not depend on the judgment and choice of the soul, but have their spring in, and motion from itself, and act in an involuntary way; yet because the appetites are irrational, and do not know, in many cases, what kind and quantity of the things which pertain to them, and in what manner to receive them are the best, the soul must govern the body. Yea though the soul is also a part of man; yet its faculties, mind and will, are rather the first instruments, than the authors of actions, as is evident from his being acquitted or condemned according to his use or abuse of them. But that which uses or abuses, is not what is used or abused. There is then, in man, something superior to them; and that is his free-agency, the *property* of his nature which makes him free to understand or be ignorant, to choose or refuse, to do or leave undone; and therefore is his acting part. And it not only makes him a self-mover, but also rewardable for his works. Forasmuch then as this is the *primum mobile* in man's microcosm, the spring which moves his moral, rational, and animal powers, it may with propriety be stiled his principal part, and what is to be understood by the personal pronoun *I*.

And this, which is man's supreme property, is, in religious things, only accountable to God. In civil things it is subject to civil superiors, as the ministers of the Most High. But this civil subordination, to delegated authority, does not render it unaccountable to God in the same case. And with respect to natural actions, as eating, drinking, &c. it is supreme in the government of the whole animal system touching the matter, manner, and measure of them; and is accountable to none but the Almighty, except where it interferes with the rights of human society; and then it is answerable to the laws thereof.

Forasmuch then as *I* indicates that property which presides over all other properties, powers, and parts, let us observe how he fought a good fight. We will begin with himself, and afterwards proceed to other particulars. Now the first things, with which he fought, were his mind, will, and affections. The *mind* is the eye by which man may see, if he make a right use of it, what concerns his well-being both here and hereafter; in which, as the substance of them, is included spiritual and temporal things; and, in the use of them, to answer this excellent end, there are helps and hindrances. But to prevent, as far as possible, in so momentous a matter as man's well-being, the fatal effects of a false judgment, he must, in judging of spiritual things, in reference thereto, use all his ability in the best manner, to estimate them according to their real value. And having an immediate, direct, indispensable, and exclusive respect to the present and future felicity of man's immortal soul, they are, in consequence, infinitely better for him than all that is earthly, inasmuch as earthly things differ entirely from the nature of the soul; and therefore cannot be of any real service to it. Now the things, necessary for the soul, are the favour and image of God, a right to, and a qualification for his kingdom, the testimony of a good conscience as the effect of a right conduct, and the hope of a future reward for its works. And as they differ in nature, so also in duration; for earthly things, whatever they are in themselves, are, to men, but for a time. Nor is that time long. With many it is not a month, and with most not more than threescore years and ten. And it is all uncertain, being measured out by moments, any one of which may be the last. Whatever then there is of great, or good in any earthly thing, it has this circumstance annexed to it, that it soon sees an end. But religious things, although not immortal in themselves, but only as they are united to immortal souls, yet, when they inhere in such subjects, they may be of equal continuance with them. Neither can any thing prevent its being so, but the unfaithfulness of those, who are in a state of probation for eternal blessedness. But the possibility, of their running parallel with time and eternity, is sufficient to give them the preference to all that is perishable. Value and duration, then, are circumstances which with all, who make a right use of their understanding, will have weight enough to induce them to prefer spiritual to temporal things, and to act accordingly, whatever be the consequence, to their

bodies, estates, and characters, in this life.—Another use, of the understanding, is with respect to temporal things. These are rendered necessary by the wants of man's mortal part, being the sole support thereof. And inasmuch as they must be procured by pains or price, these circumstances oblige him to pay some attention to them.—A farther thing observable is, that the understanding, in reference to both, ought to be used in the best manner. Free-agency implies a possibility not only of using or abusing it, but also of doing either in any degree, consistently with its capacity. The right use of it then will induce him to employ, his spiritual and temporal talents, as many most conduce to God's honour, the good of men, and his own eternal advantage.

I shall now shew how the *will*, with respect to the same things, is to be used. The nature of it, as a faculty, is to choose or refuse. Yet, in so doing, it acts not independently of the understanding, but according to its dictates. If then the judgment falsely determine, what should be elected and what rejected, the will, in a natural way, chooses the one and refuses the other. Hence, when under the influence of a right judgment, it prefers the favour, image, service, kingdom, and reward of God, and the highest pitch of improvement, and the best use of temporal things before all others. But this, which is the natural, is not the necessary choice. It may possibly not be reduced to practice, as the wrong use, of man's liberty, may prevent it. However it is what ought to be, and what cannot be omitted without sinning, and being in danger of eternal destruction.

The apostle had also to fight with his *affections*. These are two-fold, spiritual and animal, arising from the spiritual and animal natures, of which man is composed. Yet though man's composition consists of contrary natures; they are not so intermixed as that his spiritual affections depend on his animal nature, inasmuch as they will subsist, in the soul, when it is separated from the body. And it is probable that animal affections depend no more on the soul, than spiritual ones do on the body, seeing that they will cease when the body dies. But though these different affections have their respective sources; yet, while they subsist together, they act in concert; And, while they continue thus, it is man's duty, as a free-agent, to give both their due. His spiritual affections have for their objects the honour of God, the salvation of men's souls, and the advantage of his own. All those then, which tend to answer these excellent ends, must be ex-

cited and encouraged; excited by reminding them of their duty, and by stirring them up to do it, and encouraged by using such means as are calculated to quicken, strengthen, and comfort them. They must likewise be limited, lest they rob the animal affections and appetites of their due. For notwithstanding their incomparable excellence above all that is earthly; yet, as animal nature is a part of man's composition, and necessary, as an instrument, to the soul in glorifying the Lord, saving souls, &c. and in answering purposes which pertain to temporal life, it demands his care, kindness, and encouragement. The spiritual affections then, to prevent such a neglect, or treatment, or abuse of the body as will render it incapable of acting its part, must be kept within such bounds as will allow leisure for the animal affections to operate on their respective objects, and for the appetites to have what is sufficient for their satisfaction and the support of the body. These will make the animal man move, with alacrity, in its instrumental capacity, to the soul, in spiritual things, and in the duties which belong to bodies and business.

But as there is a greater probability of the animal affections and appetites gaining the ascendant over the spiritual powers; and as that will produce effects extremely prejudicial to the soul, it is the more needful to guard against it. And that it may be so is evident from this: *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die*; shall forfeit the favour and image of God, and hope of eternal life. This is the necessary effect of too great a degree of animal affection, and of undue gratification of the sensual appetites: For when they become predominant, they prey upon the pure spirit, corrupt its quality, and turn all its attention to temporal things; in consequence of which, sin, by preferring the creature to the creator, is committed, and the soul made servant to the body. To prevent which the governing principle must interpose, and skilfully avoid all unnecessary animal objects and impressions: And such, as cannot be avoided, must be counteracted, and their influence prevented as much as possible: And those impressions, which are necessary to be received, and reduced to practice, must be guarded, through every stage, lest they tinge the soul too much, or give advantage to the animal part, or occasion excess in the act. And by thus keeping the mind pure, and the body under, this part of the fight will be well fought.

I shall now touch upon the temper, appetites, senses, &c. *Temper* is the constitution of the animal composition; the

ingredients of which are air, earth, water and fire. The degree of it is according to the equal or unequal measures of these ingredients. Where there is an equal mixture of them, it is of the medium kind. But where any of them predominates, either singly or otherwise, it is uneven. So where air is greatest in degree, it is light and active: Where earth, heavy and dull: Where water, cold and full of phlegm: Where fire, proud and passionate. And if fire and air predominate, as in the Scotch, it is ambitious, hot, and active: And in the Dutch, where earth and water prevail, it is heavy and cold. But neither the natures of these ingredients, nor the different degrees of them, in compositions, are sinful. Yet so far as the temper, of any composition, is from a due medium, it is subject to extremes, to over or under act in what it does, as an agent. However, free-agency can act as arbitrarily in this, as in any other case; consequently, where a restraint is necessary, it can impose it, and where the contrary is required, it can stimulate to greater degrees, of activity, than is natural to it: And by a perpetual repetition of acts contrary to nature, new habits may be contracted, and become the general rule of life. Thus Socrates, whose disposition was disagreeable, brought himself to a contrary kind of temper. And others of a timid, or slow, or dull disposition have done the same thing. Whoever then does not curb or quicken his nature, and compel it to observe due decorum, does not, in this, fight the good fight. On the contrary he, who conquers his temper, and acts according to the rules of Christianity, is so far a good soldier of Christ: And whatever is contrary thereto, and might have been prevented, is sin.

The *Appetites*, hunger and thirst, notwithstanding their animal nature, are to be contended with. They are, indeed, both natural and necessary; natural, as belonging to the body, and necessary, as by their instrumentality it is supported. Hunger is an uneasy sensation, occasioned by the rubbing together of the sides or coats of the stomach, when not enough distended. Thirst is also a sensation which gives extreme uneasiness, and arises from a dryness which is the effect of the natural heat of the body, of the atmosphere, and of unmoistened food. Now the use, of these appetites, is to supply the body with a sufficient quantity of food and moisture. But as men do not eat and drink as natural-agents only, but as free-agents also: So whatever irregularity there is in the use of them, it is not the error of the appetites, but



of the agents : And thus gluttony, drunkenness, pining, hunger, and parching thirst, when they may be avoided, are sinful.

Now the Apostle, in fighting the good fight, did not injure his soul through animal indulgences ; and, as he continued to labour, it indicates that he did not destroy his body by abstemiousness. And this is the rule to be observed by those who would not sacrifice their souls to their bodies, nor their bodies to their souls, but would preserve both to the latest period of human life, that they may be the more instrumental to the honour of God, the good of men, and their own crown of rejoicing.

Let us now take notice of the *Senses*; the eyes, ears, taste, touch, and smell. Now these, it is certain, were designed to answer important purposes ; and yet they are not absolutely necessary either for life or godliness : However, rightly used, they may be of great service to both. It is also certain, that they may be abused to the prejudice of both. And, in fighting the good fight, their use is to be promoted, and abuse prevented.

The nature, form, and situation, of the senses, are admirably ordered for answering excellent ends. They have respect to all the objects with which man has to do, and are calculated to convince him of the profit or loss, pleasure or pain, which will accrue to him in consequence of them. But though this judgment is formed by the senses ; yet it is not formed independantly of the soul ; for the senses, separate from it, are senseless ; and therefore it is by the union betwixt the soul and the senses, through the medium of the nerves, that seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling are performed. The senses are situated near the soul, and are limited to narrow bounds, except feeling, which extends to every part of the body. The eyes and ears, being the most useful, are given in pairs, that seeing and hearing may be increased and continued. The eyes receive and transmit the image of every object ; they see, to the common sensory : The ears do the same touching all the variety of sounds : The taste conveys to it the inward qualities of things : Feeling furnishes it with ideas of the roughness or smoothness, &c. of bodies : And the smell communicates the effluvia which flows from them.

Now all objects of sense, transmitted by ideas to the soul, may have a moral effect, render it more divine or diabolical. And these contrary effects flow from contrary causes ; the one

from ideas adapted to do good, and the other from such as have a different tendency; which is according to the natural course of things. But as man is not a machine, but a free-agent, who can counteract them; it is not certain that such effects will follow. And it is the part, of a good soldier, to use all the helps, and elude all the hindrances he meets with in fighting. Those ideas then, which have a natural tendency to facilitate his fighting, he must suffer to have all the effect which their natural force can give, and use them, by his arbitrating agency, in the manner most to his advantage: And such, as tend to tinge his mind with their wicked or worldly nature, and to retard his religious motion, must be repelled to prevent their effects. Now, as every soldier of Christ has a general judgment of the nature and tendency of things; objects, calculated to assist, must be sought, and those, of a contrary kind, declined as much as will consist with his service to God, himself, and others.

Other things, with which the apostle had to fight, were the *World and the wicked One*. The world consists of men and things. And men are friends or foes. Friends, in a religious respect, are calculated to help; but they are also capable of hindering. The weakness of some does not encourage, the wickedness of others discourages, and the vast variety of opinions, among professors, perplexes. But the christian soldier, notwithstanding his sympathy with the weak, his sorrow for the sinner, and pity for the perplexed, is not retarded in his course by them. He makes not such the rule of his proceeding, but animates himself by the example of the most excellent, as knowing that the crown is only to the conqueror. And he considers it as being beneath the dignity, of a divine soldier, to be conquered, whatever the contrary costs him; for which, his eternal interest, his honour, his duty to God, to whom he has sworn allegiance, and his obligation to influence all men, by his example, to act a part worthy of their rational, religious, and immortal natures, are sufficient reasons. Hence he disdains to be bound by such feeble, foolish, and unessential fetters as the weakness, the wickedness, and the perplexity of professors. His ambition is to conquer and be crowned; and therefore, with the resolution of a warrior, he cries out, "Let others do as they will, I will overcome." Nor is he intimidated by his foes. These are such as militate against him for his name, principles, and practice. A name is generally given, to every rising sect of religious people, which serves to distinguish them from

others. And if it signify neither good nor evil, it is sufficient to make them odious, and to ground an opposition upon. Another thing, which contributes to create enemies, is their religious principles. And although these may not only be innocent, but, perhaps, absolutely necessary to salvation; yet, if they have the misfortune to be out of the fashion, they are, by many, made the occasion of public or private persecution. Yea practice, if not common, though such as it ought to be, is blamed by abundance as superstitious, or singular, because it sets their own in a disagreeable light. For these things the best of men are made the butt of the worst: And this sometimes runs so high as to endanger credit, property, liberty, and life. But he, who fights a good fight, is not careful to secure them at the expence of religion; for when they become incompatible, he hesitates not to give up all, that he has, rather than sin. And, for his encouragement, he has the example of the best, in all ages, and the promise of God that his reward shall be a sufficient recompence for his loss. Hence he lets patience have its perfect work, endures all, that men can say and do, with calmness and contentment, and renders good for evil, and for cruelty kindness.

Now, to these adversaries, others are added: *For we wrestle, saith Paul, against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* Whether these different names signify different orders, of devils, is neither easy to determine, nor necessary to be known. It is enough to know that they are many, subtle, powerful, and malicious, and that to encounter and overcome them are the duties of every christian. To effect which, the Apostle says; *Take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand in the evil day: And having done all, to stand.* The evil day is the day of temptation, difficulty, and danger. *Having done all,* denotes having endured difficulties, and escaped dangers, in order to stand as conquerors and obtain a crown. To the doing and obtaining of which, he adds, *Stand therefore, in your place and station, (as soldiers do in their ranks, ready to fight) having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness.* The apostle, in these and other particulars, alludes to the defensive and offensive weapons then in use among warriors. He begins with the *Girdle*, which is to the body, what truth is to the soul. The girdle surrounds, adorns, and supports the body, and serves as a centre of union

to other parts of the armour. Truth, which is signified by the girdle, is sincerity in design, word, and work; and it has not only the most beautiful appearance, but also supports the soul with courage in all its conflicts; for, as it gives it confidence towards God, so it preserves it from giving Satan the handle of hypocrisy; and by both the soul becomes bold in the use of all the other parts of the armour, and thus truth is a centre of union to them.—*And having on the breast-plate of righteousness.* The breast is the seat of animal life; to preserve which soldiers fixed a plate upon it. The breast-plate of righteousness is to answer a similar purpose. Righteousness is a right conversation and conduct; and as it preserves the soul from sin and guilt, so it keeps it alive in the love and likeness of God, and prevents all cause of accusation.—*And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.* Feet are the instruments of motion; and when the way is rough, should be well shod. In like manner, when the soul has to pass through temptations, difficulties, and dangers, it should have all the preparation which the gospel of peace provides: The general benefits of which are peace with God, and power to do and suffer his will; in particular resolution to encounter, and patience to endure difficulties of the most disagreeable and dangerous kinds.—*And above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.* The shield covered the person and some parts of the armour, and under it the soldiers fought, and sheltered themselves from the poisoned arrows of the enemy. And as faith is a dependance on God for help, it is a shield; for it appropriates his power to its own purpose, wages war in the strength of it, and thus screens the soul from Satan's fiery darts, and disappoints his diabolical designs.—*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.* The helmet is the covering of the head, which, being the principal part of the body, requires the greatest care and best defence. The helmet, of salvation, is the hope of the salvation promised to all, who overcome, in the christian conflict. And as the literal helmet, by securing the head, rendered the soldier bold in the day of battle; so the hope of salvation is to preserve the soul from despair, and to encourage it to fight the good fight, that it may lay hold on eternal life.—*And the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.* The spirit, it is probable, is the holy spirit of man, that being the ground of all his armour, all graces inhering therein. The sword, of the spirit, is the

word of God; which furnishes him with reproofs, instructions, promises, &c. whereby he may defend himself from the devil, and be delivered from danger.—*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with perseverance, and supplication for all saints.* Paul's last piece of armour is prayer. *Praying always*; as often as need requires. *With all prayer*; public, private, and mental. Prayer is an ardent address to the Deity for divine things, and whatever else that is necessary. *Supplication* is humble petition. *In the spirit*; with the understanding, desire, and power of the spirit. *And watching thereunto*; to discern the necessity of prayer, and to guard against what would prevent it. *With all perseverance*; from day to day, and to the end of days.

This is the armour of God; which, being put on by actual exercise, makes the Christian proof against all opposers: For, being armed cap-a-pie, from head to foot, how should satan gain any ascendancy over him? To such an one he may come, but findeth nothing in him; no hypocrisy, unrighteousness, impatience, unbelief, or fear; no want of the word, no restraint of prayer, nor unwatchfulness. On the contrary, being honest in all things, and living according to the rule of righteousness; using patience in suffering, and relying on the Lord for assistance; having a high hope of heaven, and the word of the Lord as a sword; and abounding in prayer, and guarding every avenue of the heart, he may defy all the powers of darkness, and in despite of them finish his course and keep the faith.

*I have finished my course.* The course, of a Christian, is his continuing to fight the good fight: And the continuance is as necessary as the commencement; for it is not|with the soldier who puts his armour on, as with him who puts it off, in as much as the one has to do what the other has done.— Now the length, of the christian course, is the term of his future life; as the promise, of a crown, is only to him who completely conquers. Nor will a less degree of faithfulness, in fighting, serve for the continuance of this course, than is for the commencement of it. The reason of it ariseth from the nature of the foes, with whom he has to fight; none of which will die prior to his death: For his soul and body, the world and the devil will continue till the time of his departure. And as being conquered, by all or any of these enemies, will deprive him of his armour and preparation for the paradise of God; so if he is not faithful, in fighting, till

he has finished his course, he can neither be finally saved, nor receive a crown of reward.—The Christian soldier, then, must not only keep his armour on, but also continue to use it; and, like racers, who resolve to win the prize, must never turn back, never go out of the way, never abate his speed, but run, with the greatest degree of swiftness, to the end; that with confidence he may say, when he dies, I have finished my christian course.

*I have kept the faith.* By the faith is intended the doctrine thereof; not only all that ought to be believed, but more especially the fundamentals of christianity; in particular that there is no salvation, for sinners, but by Jesus Christ; that faith, in him, is the ordinary mean of finding it; and that the ends, to be answered by it, are glorifying the Lord, doing good to men, and being saved and rewarded hereafter. Now St. Paul, as is manifest from his practice, preaching, and writing, kept all these and whatever else, it was his duty to do, pure in themselves, and undefiled by other things; and therefore could assert, with the greatest sincerity, that he had kept the faith.

II. I shall now take notice of the second part of the subject. *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also, that love his appearing.* With what propriety does this follow the preceding particulars! He had fought the good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith; and, as a consequence, with confidence foretels his future fate.

*Henceforth*; from the time he had finished his course, he considered himself as entitled to a crown. In which is implied the assurance of his future and final salvation, and of being rewarded according to his works. *There is laid up, prepared, appointed, and kept in safe custody for me, not such a corruptible crown as the victorious fighters and racers, in the Grecian games, were entitled to, but a crown of righteousness, an high and heavenly reward for my righteous works; which the Lord, the righteous Judge, whose soldier I am, under whose banner I have fought, and who judgeth righteously in proportioning rewards to works, will give me, for what I have done and suffered for his sake, at that day in which he will judge the world, and in which, by the raising and re-uniting of my body to my soul, I shall be rendered capable of receiving a reward of a spiritual and immortal*

nature; for then the Judge will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

*And not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.* St. Paul, notwithstanding his super-excellence, in doing and suffering the will of God, generously confesseth his faith, in the future rewards of his fellows, in the glorious cause of christianity. And the mark or character, by which he describes them, is so far above the imitation of all, who are not of that order, that it can hardly be counterfeited: It is, as he tells us, to love the Lord's appearing, as judge and rewarder of men. But, who can do so without a proper preparation for it? Without that the thought, of Christ's coming, must be extremely disagreeable. A soul, conscious of sin and apprehensive of suffering for it, does not love the last day; it is of all things what it most dreads, and would keep at the greatest distance. Hence then, though senseless sinners dare to die, and consequently come to judgment; it is their blindness which makes them so bold: Yea, though some sensible sinners, like Judas, die by their own hand, it is their degree of distress, and not love to Christ, which is the cause of it. His criterion, then, is of the certain kind; for who, but one who has fought the good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith, can love the person and appearing of his judge, the time, the place, the manner, and the end of his judgment? And who, that is thus, can do less than love them? He finds so much sweetness and satisfaction in his love and likeness, so full a hope of heaven, and so great a confidence, from the testimony of his conscience, of being rewarded according to his works, as makes him love and long for the coming of Christ, that he may receive a crown of righteousness.

I shall conclude with a word of use.

Now in this prologue, to St. Paul's passing out of the world, we have the model of a complete christian. For, though he says nothing, of the redemption and salvation of Christ, yet his christian conduct supposes them: As, if he had not been redeemed with price, and saved by power, he could not have conquered and obtained a crown. Nor was it proper to mention what Christ had done for him, when he was going to give up his accounts, in as much as his own works only could give him a right to a reward. And what St. Paul was, with respect to christianity, every one should be, capable of keeping the commandments of God, and of

acquiring a crown. None can fight without armour; and armour issues from a holy heart. Now all, who have not these, have a sinful soul, the armour of satan, fight a bad fight, run a wrong race, keep unbelief, love not the Lord's coming, and are entitled to a crown of contempt. This is the condition of all the unholy, and is the most calamitous that can be conceived, being fraught with every evil, both in possession and reversion. But he who has all graces in a divine disposition, has a heaven in his heart, and a taste of eternal glory; by which he knows that God is his father, Christ his saviour, and the Holy Ghost his sanctifier; that he has a right to, and a preparation for heaven; and that, dying in his present condition, he is sure of living with the Lord in glory everlasting, this being an earnest of it. This then is the ground of the graces, whereby men may fight the good fight: And the graces are those excellent properties, which, in fighting, are used according to the pleasure of the possessors of them.

But who can say that his soul is, as it ought to be? That the whole disposition of it is good, and that he is as willing to leave the world as to live in it? This, indeed, by many, is supposed to be an attainment sufficient for the longest life. But such know little of the design of life; for is it not lent to serve the Lord in? And is he not to be served in holiness and righteousness? But who can do so without a pure principle? None. With what propriety then can an impious one, whether in whole or part, be pleaded for as what must run parallel with life? The inconsistency of such a supposition, with the design of life, is apparent, inasmuch as it defeats, so far as it prevails, the purpose of it. Let none then suppose that life, which is a time of probation for eternity, is properly employed but in serving the Lord, that being the principal end of it: Consequently the qualification, in order to answer that end, should commence prior to the end to be answered by it. If it does not, that service, by reason of unavoidable inability, cannot be done, and unpunishable sin, as the effect, will be necessarily committed, it being wrong to punish for impossibilities. Nor do any perish, who die prior to personal sin. If then grace be early enough given to preserve them from perishing; it is given soon enough to prevent the living, if they rightly use it, from prostituting themselves to evil purposes. And although corruption, both of principle and practice, is exceedingly common; yet as sin, in the scriptures, is considered as an inexcusable thing, the



non-necessity of it is supposed. The corruption then, so common, is the consequence of committing sin without necessity; and therefore man, being the author of his own evils, is justly condemned to dwell where the worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched. Yet where sin and corruption are, on becoming conscious of them, the necessity of being saved, by Christ, will be seen; and by depending on his merit, and earnestly contending for the benefits of it, pardon, purity, and power will be received, which will qualify to fight the good fight. But, sinners, while you are out of this condition, how great is your evil and danger! Alas! so sinful is your soul, that you cannot fight, while you follow its evil inclination, against your foes, the world, the flesh, and the devil, but against your friends, the Lord, yourselves, and others. And you run, by every step you take, in this way, towards endless ruin. And whose faith, as offenders, do you keep, but Satan's? Disobedience to God is his doctrine; and this you faithfully obey: You do his will on earth as it is done in hell. And if you conclude as you have long continued; ah, what will follow? why, the Lord, the righteous judge, whom you offend, but do not fear, will give you a crown, the curse of unrighteousness, for serving Satan, in flames sulphureous for ever. How great then is your danger! Alas! every moment, whether you wake or sleep, you are on the brink of endless burnings. Ah, what a situation! How insecure! What then will you do? Continue there, till the Lord says, go ye cursed? What! will you not fear hell, before you feel it? What pity! who can sufficiently lament your case? O that you were wise! That you would consider the shortness of life, the nearness of death, and the length of eternity! Open your eyes, and see all that concerns you. O see your danger, and flee from it! Make haste! Delays are dangerous! It may be now, or never. Rest not then till your soul is saved from sin, and ready to fight, run, and keep the faith, that you may love the Lord's appearing, and obtain a crown.—And let the christian, for it nearly concerns him, be mindful of his conduct. To this purpose, remember your pattern, St. Paul; and, as he followed Christ, so follow him. Remember too, as a matter of great moment, your agency, signified by the word *I*. Your principle is free, that your practice may be so; and therefore as you, by your arbitrating agency, use your powers, you will fight, run, and keep the faith, or not. It lies at

your own option to do or leave them undone. None can do them for you. None but yourself can prevent their being done: So you make or mar yourself. Keep it therefore continually in mind, that you stand or fall as you freely do well or ill. By a right use of your agency, then, put on your armour; call into action, in all times of duty and danger, your graces, that you may stand in the evil day, and having done all that you should do, may stand as conquerors, and obtain a crown. Judge then truly, prefer spiritual to temporal things, and make the best use of both. Govern well your affections, and let both kinds have their due. Guard also your tempers, appetites, and senses, that your soul may not be ensnared by them. Beware of men, whether friends or foes, and be not, through them, moved from your steadfastness. Nor forget that you are surrounded by subtle unseen enemies; to the defeating of which be sincere, righteous, patient, have faith and hope in God, use the word as a sword, abound in prayer, and be watchful.—Remember too the time of their continuance: Less than the whole of future life will not suffice. Prevent then the sin, the shame, the curse of beginning in the spirit, and ending in the flesh; of being a young saint, and an old sinner. Do not outlive your religion; make it last your life, lest the apostate's portion, the blackness of darkness, or double damnation be your's.—Keep the faith; maintain the truths of the gospel; hold Christ as your redeemer, justifier, sanctifier, assister, and glorifier. Contend for faith in him, and diligently use the means, of grace, as the way to obtain his salvation. Maintain too the right use of salvation; glorify the Lord, do good to men, and procure for yourself a crown of righteousness.

Gracious Lord, how few can say, with the sincerity of thy servant Paul, when they are leaving life, that they as men, or ministers, or both have faithfully fought, run, and kept the faith! Small is the number of those, who thus, in a voluntary way, act their part in life. Many will not be at the pains to judge truly, choose wisely, and act faithfully in what concerns thy service, their own salvation, and that of others: and therefore judge, choose, and act as animals and devils, in a sinfully sensual, and spiritually evil way, and die, in consequence, condemned to be damned. And some, who have thus fought, &c. fearing, through mistake, that they should rob thee of thy right, have been afraid to own it. But thy servant Paul was not more faithful than free to confess it, having not learnt of thee, from whom he re-

ceived the saving truth, that thou canst be robbed by a right use of thy graces and gifts, which thou impartest to prepare men to praise thee, and commandest them to abound in the use of, to answer that end. But how long, O Lord, will men fail to be faithful? Till thy word is well understood, and thy servants deny themselves of whatever would prevent their progress, in purity, of principle and practice, and give all diligence, in the full use of all they have, in thy ways, to grow in grace, to bring forth much fruit in being ambitious to please thee, profit others, and prepare themselves for a crown, that continueth for ever. Mighty Lord, to facilitate these things, instruct thy creatures in, and excite them to this excellent practice, that carelessness may not bring a curse upon them, but that all may urge their way, inwardly and outwardly, with a full exertion, of all their mental and animal powers, to the end of life, that a crown, of glory, may be the blessed consequence.



## PHILIPPIANS, Chap. ii. Ver. 12, 13.

*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure.*

**T**HIS text affords three particulars: The first of which is salvation; the second, the reason for working it out; and the third, how it must be done.

Now, it is certain, the Philippians were in a state of salvation prior to the time Paul wrote this epistle. Hence he styles them *saints in Christ Jesus*. But as salvation is progressive and perpetual, the possession of one part of it, did not render the other part unnecessary. The part then, to be wrought out, may imply the following particulars: 1. The preservation of themselves from sin; 2. their spiritual improvement; and, 3. their final felicity.

Now the first of these is clearly taught in the context : *Do all things without murmurings, and disputings: That ye may, be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.* The being blameless and harmless, in point of practice, as a preservative from apostacy, is absolutely necessary to answer that purpose : For what but a practice corresponding, in all the particulars of it, with the commandments of God, can preserve men from deserving blame, and from being hurtful to others and themselves? Other methods, in this case, of answering these excellent ends, there is none. This then is one sort of salvation to be wrought out.—Another seems to be signified by, *Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded.* The apostle, after recounting his pedigree, privileges, and practice as a Jew, and shewing their insufficiency to save him; and having renounced them all for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and obtained the righteousness of God which is by faith, and fixed a firm resolution to follow on to a fuller attainment advised others, in the same circumstances, to form a similar resolution : As if he had said, we, who are far advanced in the divine life, and perfectly prepared to proceed for more; let us, like racers, forget the ground we have already run, and have our eye only on that which is to come, that we may, by making a sufficient proficiency in grace and good works, be prepared for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus.—A farther thing, signified by salvation, is the *resurrection of the dead.* The general sense of which is, that glorious resurrection which all, who die in the favour and image of God, will witness in having their bodies fashioned like the glorious body of Christ in brightness, beauty, and immortality, and in being reunited in soul and body, glorified, and rewarded according to their works. The particular sense is, the resurrection of the martyrs and the most eminent saints. This, it is presumed, will precede the general resurrection of the just. And St. Paul, having abundance of laudable ambition, resolved to rank with them, if doing and suffering the will of God, in the highest degree he was capable of, would entitle him to it : For, he says, *If by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead.* These then are the several parts of the salvation, which were necessary for the Philippians to work out.

II. I shall now shew why salvation must be wrought out. And the reason assigned by the Apostle is, *For it is God, who*

*worketh in you both to will and to do.* As if he had said, for as much as the Almighty is so mindful of, so condescending and kind to, as to contribute all, that he consistently can, to save you, let your part be as well performed; lose not, through laziness, or the want of that labour which is necessary to secure it, so important a prize as the salvation of your soul.—But what is implied in his working in us? Is it to be understood of the principle, of grace, wrought in the heart, which implies both a will and a power to work? Or does it mean his present immediate working, to will and do? The original words, *το θελειν* and *το ενεργειν*, do not clearly determine this, because, with latitude of interpretation, they may be understood of either. The analogy of faith, then, must be the clue to guide us through this maze. And if the principle, of grace, be formed to furnish man with a power to will and to work out his salvation, the present working is so far superfluous. On the contrary, if the present working be the cause of all our willing and doing, the use of the inward principle is thereby superceded. And if “the Lord, (as one says) breathe into us every good desire, and bring every good desire to good effect,” man’s part, in working out his own salvation, is also rendered unnecessary. But that is impossible, because it would make the apostle contradict his own doctrine. It must, then, mean such a working as consists with man’s working. And the sense seems to be, that the principle of grace, which God worketh in man, is the principal cause of his willing and doing, and that the Lord also assists him by his operation, without or with means, as his case requires, and as seemeth good to himself. *It is God that worketh, ενεργειν*, gives energy to. And his spiritual working is generally expressed by the word *ενεργειν*; which means no more than that he gives men grace to act, and energy to their actions. Agreeably to which, the apostle says, *work out your own salvation.* Thus, because the Lord works in us, we must work.—A farther reason, for the same thing is, that neither past nor present salvation is sufficient; that, if they do not preserve themselves from sin, grow in grace, and be faithful unto death, they cannot be finally saved. Yea, so necessary is future salvation, that if it be not added to what is already obtained, it will not only be rendered abortive, but greater punishment will be the portion of its possessor. Let us then inquire how this is to be done. Which is the third thing to be taken notice of.

III. Now this, the apostle says, is to be *with fear and trembling*. But first, let us observe what it is to work. *Κατεργάζεσθε*, rendered *work out*, properly signifies, *to procure by labour and pains*. To which purpose, in working out salvation, man must concur with his Maker in willing and doing, whatever is necessary, to answer that excellent end. In particular he must guard, with the greatest diligence, against all that would counteract his inward principle, prevent the divine influence, wound his conscience, and bring blame upon his conduct. Nothing less than a scrupulous exactness, in discharging his duty to God, himself, and others, can prevent these evils, and continue him in his present condition.— And what can promote the prosperity of his soul, and bring it to that pitch, of purity, so necessary for its present and future well-being, but imitating the apostle in *forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before*? Whatever then his present attainments are, if they be not proportioned to his necessities, they are not to be rested in as sufficient. And if not used, in the highest degree, in proper applications to God for spiritual blessings, and in the use of all means, calculated to promote the inward principle of grace, that end will either never be answered, or not so soon as it should be. That then the indispensibly necessary duty, of growing in grace, may be done, the mind must continually advert to God as a preservative from unprofitable employments, and as a preparative for profitable ones. And to render itself and all it does acceptable to him, it must, in every thing, intend and endeavour to please him. This will give it confidence, through Christ, in asking those things which will more fully conform it, in the divineness of its disposition to the Lord; and confidence will increase its access to God, and bring it into such nearness and fellowship with, as will make prayer a sensible, divine, and ardent address unto him. And what can prevent the success, of such a supplication, if continued in? Surely, while the heart is thus kept up to and confers with God, he will save it from its remaining sinfulness, and work into its constitution a fulness of the divine nature. And this is not only the never failing effect, of a right exercise of mind, but all, who thus *press toward the mark*, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, are *presently* prepared for it.—And when prepared; in order to possess it, the last part of salvation must be wrought out. And the method, the most conducive to this, is to be *faithful unto death*. Now faithfulness supposes that something

is committed to our care, for which we are accountable. This is life and what belongs to it, both temporal and spiritual. Faithfulness, then, has respect to time and talents, as they refer to God, ourselves, others, and eternity. Time must be used to the purpose of pleasing God, profiting our souls, advancing the well-being of others, and increasing our crown of rejoicing. Talents of every kind, as grace, wisdom, riches, authority, &c. must also be employed, in the most perfect manner, to answer the same excellent ends. And this method begun, continued, and ended in will infallably, at the hour of death, bring the soul to the celestial city, and the body, at the last day, to the same glorious place, to be embodied with the blest, to bask in the beams of divine love, and to sing hallelujahs to God and the Lamb for ever.

Let us now observe working with *fear and trembling*. *ᾠδὸν καὶ τρέψαντες*, fear and trembling, shew the difficulty of the work, and the danger of not doing it. Neither is this without cause, for the work is great, the time is uncertain, hindrances are many, the prize is eternal life, and the loss of it everlasting death. The greatness of the work consists in a continuance in well-doing, in gaining all the image of Christ, and in abiding, in both, till time be lost in eternity. And what is life? Alas! how short, and uncertain! A moment may be its future bound. And how much depends on the right, or wrong use of this uncertain space? A boundless ocean of bliss, or burnings without ease and end, will be the portion of all, as the last shred of time is well or ill spent. Standing then as on an isthmus, a narrow neck of land, betwixt life and death, time and eternity, heaven and hell; the greatest care, and the most arduous labour, should be accompanied with fear and trembling. And because man's mind is cloathed with a body of flesh and blood, although there is a consistency betwixt them, yet the care and labour, necessary for the well-being of the body, endanger the peace and purity of the soul. And notwithstanding that animal love, fear, hope, joy, sorrow, &c. consist with the same sort of spiritual affections; it is difficult so to order them as that neither shall err and injure the other. The various worldly objects also, which strike upon the senses, tend to form ideas and a disposition agreeable to their nature; which, by how much they are done, renders salvation difficult to be wrought out. Spirits too, of a malignant nature, militate against the salvation of the soul; and, consequently, throw weight into the scale of difficulty and danger. And the constitution of man,

as a free-agent, is sufficient, without great care, to disconcert the order of God's working, and to prevent salvation. If then man may fall self-tempted, and if many other things tend to turn the scale the wrong way; his danger is such as requires his greatest diligence to escape. With what propriety then does the Apostl: say, work out your salvation with fear and trembling! As if he had said, your salvation is of more value than many worlds; but it depends on yourselves, for you must work it out. And because it is difficult to do, your danger is great. However, as it is possible to be done, apply to it; and work with that care which will make you fear a miscarriage; yea, be so concerned for it, as to tremble for fear of a failure. And, to increase your care and concern, consider how much the Lord is concerned for you, when he works in you both to will and to do. Take example from him, who thus interests himself in your advantage. And because he works, work ye also; work diligently, carefully, and with fear and trembling. So shall you be preserved from evil, grow in the loving likeness of the Lord, and rise to a glorious reward in the world to come.

I shall now make a little use of this doctrine. But, who is capable of working out his future salvation? None can, who have not a present salvation. And who, with propriety, can be called the sons of God, as the Philippians were? This character is incompatible with the condition of sinners; for a sinner is the reverse of a saint, and is a child of Satan. A saint is saved from the practice, the guilt, and the power of sin; has a witness of his acceptance and sonship; the love of God is shed abroad in his heart, and the spirit of God bears witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God; and, as a consequence, he has a right to, and an earnest of heaven, and rejoices in hope of it. Have you then these things? If not, you are either no christians, or but nominal ones. And, if so, how great is your danger! For if saints have need to work with fear and trembling, what should sinners do! Alas, such are in circumstances too dreadful to be seen without horror, fear, and trembling! Make sure then, sinner, of the blessed state of a saint, or you will never be able to work out your future salvation. And the end of that will be the worm that never dies, and the fire that cannot be quenched! But are you capable of it? Have you a conviction of your condition? Do you know the necessity of being saved from your sins? Of repenting, being pardoned, and purified?



Alas! if you cannot say that you are a condemned, hell deserving sinner, you have out-lived your light, and do not discern your danger. In which case, salvation, from sin and hell, makes no part of your care: Your soul is neglected. And yet you sometimes say your prayers, although you neither know why, nor for what. And to keep your credit as a christian, you join in the public duties of religion; but when you neglect them, the state of your soul is the same: So you neither gain nor lose thereby. Awake then, sinner, and see your danger. O see how you have slept on the brink of endless burnings! And if you had died so, where would you have opened your eyes? Alas! hell had been your habitation. There you had found yourself amidst many plagues, and without any prospect of pleasure. But you are yet alive. The Lord's long-suffering has preserved you from perdition. Will you not then flee from the wrath to come? Why should carelessness, or company, or covetousness, or the love of pleasure, or any other thing keep you from what you will, one day, wish had been done? For when afflictions fall upon you, or death looks you in the face, or the judgment is drawing near, what will these things do for you? Miserable comforters you will find them, for they will all flee from you. And if the Lord be your enemy also, which he surely will, if you neglect to seek and serve him, where will you find a friend? Alas! when the world is gone, none will envy or pity, but all will blame you. Consider then the shortness and uncertainty of life, reflect upon what is past, and see how vain are the pleasures of the world, how trifling its profits, and that there is nothing good for a man, under the sun, but that he acquaint himself with God, get into a state of acceptance with him, and work out his future salvation. This is that for which a sinner should live and die, that he may find the good fruit of it for ever. Gain then this point of knowledge, and all the good things, you will thereby see the want of, may follow. But, if you suffer not wisdom to enter your heart, instead of finding acceptance with God, and working out your salvation, you will be rejected of him, and work out, by wickedness, your damnation. The thought of which, it being the greatest of evils, should make you fear and tremble. With this the most calamitous condition, incident to life, is as nothing. Yea, a million of lives made up of miseries, would be next to nothing compared to eternal torments. For what then would any neglect the beginning

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of so great a salvation? What amazing stupidity, yea, what extreme madnes would it argue!

But I will suppose some are willing to have a present, that they may work out their future salvation. Yet how do you hope to be so highly favoured? What method will you take to know you are accepted of God through his Son, and that your name is written in the lamb's book of life? Your need of them is evidenced by your own experience; for you see and feel that, without them, you can neither be safe nor happy. And whence is it that you so see and feel? Is it not from God's awakening, your sleepy soul, by the mighty working of his Spirit, word, and providence? But, will he give what you want without working? An important question. He says, work for the meat which perisheth not. And what is repentance, faith, prayer, and the use of all the means of grace but working? Will you not work then? What! have your sins rendered his salvation necessary, and will you not work it out? That would be to add idleness to evil, unbelief to sin, and increase the cause of your condemnation. Alas! is it so that you requite the Saviour for dying for your sins? How must he thereby see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied? All the satisfaction which he can receive, will be to punish you for neglecting his salvation. But he has no pleasure in the death of a sinner. Work then, for it is for the life of your soul. And be sure that nothing, but the want of working, can make you fail of finding it. It would be to give the Lord the lie, to suppose that sincere seekers do not find. The only reason, then, why some are not saved is, because they do not seek salvation in the manner prescribed. This witness is true, inasmuch as he says, *every one that seeketh, findeth*; which must mean every one, who seeketh aright. And whoever will not, deserves double destruction. However it is your highest wisdom to seek, till of sinners you become saints, and can say, from sensible experience, that your soul is saved from the guilt and power of sin. Then only will you be able to work out your future salvation. A thing not more necessary than profitable; and yet absolutely so. For what can it signify to be saved in part, if not perfectly. The apostle was so sensible of this, that, notwithstanding their being saved in the first sense, their danger was still so great as to render working, with fear and trembling necessary. And that this was the effect of necessity, must be believed, or St. Paul erred in judgment, and imposed rigid rules, when easy ones would have answered the

same end. But this is an impeachment inconsistent with an apostle's character. And moreover, what he prescribed to others, he practised himself; for, he says, *forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before, I press toward the mark, &c.* Now both these are confirmed by a contrary character; *for many so walk as to be the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction.*

Nor is it possible to assign a sufficient reason why any believer falls into sin, or does not grow in grace, or is not faithful to the end, but what is to be resolved into his own remissness or wilfulness. Yea, every degree of inward diminishing, whether of the witness or fruit of the spirit, is the effect of man's own folly; for whatever is received may be retained. And it is also equally certain, that every necessary thing may be received. What other purpose can the promises, of God, answer than to encourage men to contend for the things promised? And if what is promised be necessary, for the present time, it cannot be withheld, if rightly fought. That then, which keeps many in a poor, low, lifeless condition of soul, is their inactivity or idleness. They will not work with that degree of diligence, in seeking salvation, which they should do. Or, if some do, it is only by fits and starts, and so is not effectual. Others, perhaps, do it constantly for a considerable time; but not continuing, their activity, till all spiritual evil is destroyed, they fail of finding all the fulness of God. Whoever then would be brought into a perfectly right, rich, glorious, holy, happy, and hopeful state, must work, in the most laborious, careful, and constant manner they can, till it be thus with them.

And when it is so, the whole of salvation is not secured; for, prior to that, there must be perseverance to the end. Nor is it so easy as such a state of mind would indicate, inasmuch as the animal man, notwithstanding its natural innocence, is the cause of continual danger, and consequently renders care and labour absolutely necessary. All the animal senses, appetites, affections, &c. remain, in full force, after the entire sanctification of the soul. And are not these the common occasions of sin? But few sins are so spiritual as neither to receive their rise, progress, nor completion from them. Or if a few philosophical men are more in danger, of sinning, by an improper use of their souls than of their bodies; yet, it is nevertheless certain, the majority, of men,

are in much more danger from their bodies than their souls. And, it seems, St. Paul, in his own case, was apprehensive of this; for, he says, *I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.* Paul was a man of much refinement of mind and manners, and, perhaps, as little inclined to seek sublunary satisfactions as any. But, notwithstanding, he was sensible of the influence, of earthly objects, on beings surrounded and supported by them. For which reason he resolved that prudent care, in respect of himself, should prevent all their evil effects. All indulgences, then, are dangerous, inasmuch as they have a direct tendency to sensualize the soul, and indispose it from delighting in objects of a spiritual nature. The effect, indeed, will not be so soon felt as in a more manifest way of offending; but yet all, who thus *live after the flesh, shall die.* And what, but keeping the body in proper subjection, can prevent this? The greatest degree of grace, without a good use of it, will not. If indeed grace destroyed the senses, &c. of the body, or if it acted of itself, or without man's agency, it might be so. But as it does not; the appetites, affections, &c. of the body, whose spring of motion is in themselves, and which act independantly of the soul, (except that dependance which flows from their general union) are the effects, of animal nature, under certain modifications. And while these modes remain, their effects will continue; that is, while the senses, appetites, and affections of the body abide, there will be hungerings, thirstings, and desires for worldly things.

Now he who, in all circumstances of life, whether prosperous, or adverse, or medium, governs his body aright, neither abridging nor indulging it too much; orders his understanding, will, and spiritual affections in the most agreeable manner; lives in the best discharge of his duty to God and all relations in life; and continues therein to the end, secures, beyond a possibility of defeat, his final salvation. And who, for his own safety, the honour of God, and the edification of others, would not thus work out his own salvation? So let it be done by all, who are capable of it, that all these excellent ends may be answered.

How great is thy kindness, O Lord, in assisting thy servants to save their souls! But such is thy nature, for goodness, that thou delightest to do them good, yea to prevent them with good things, that they may be incited to, and assisted in working out their salvation. Yet thy wisdom and justice prevent such a prostitution of thy goodness, in the benefits of

it, as not to suffer thee to save those, who will not be stimulated, by thy working, to perform their part. Yea it is impossible for thee, without destroying their liberty, to preserve them, who have the management of their own powers of action, from sinful practices, if they do not use them to that purpose, by a sensible, designed, and constant exertion, in resisting evil and doing good.—Neither canst thou purify their inward principle, if they do not concur with thee, in seeking, receiving, retaining, and using thy blessing, inasmuch as if their hearts are not kept up to thee, by their free force, they wander off, forget thee, and contract new, as well as retain old evils; for such is the quality of a spirit, that, whatever it freely converseth with, it receiveth the nature of.—And were men possessed of perfect purity, their free and faithful perseverance could only be performed by themselves, it being the right use of their time and talents, which none can do for them, or make them do.—And when thou commandest men to work with that degree, of care and diligence, which makes them fear and tremble, lest they should fail of effecting their salvation, how great is their danger, and how much does it depend on themselves to escape it! But who, O thou searcher of hearts, and observer of the ways of men, proportion their care and labour to the difficulty and danger attending, and the great importance of their salvation? Alas, thou knowest, but few do so; for the world abounds with those, who do not keep their hearts with all diligence, nor use violence to overcome evil, to get, and to do good! And thus, though thou workest in men, yet because they will not work, as their case requires, thy labour is lost upon them, and their laziness brings them to beg a drop of cold water, to cool them, in the fire that cannot be quenched. How fore an evil! But it is their own, because they choose it, by choosing the way to it. Gracious Lord, how cruel are men, to themselves by sinning, and by neglecting salvation from it! A double, and a destructive evil! And O! what painful effects follow, to soul and body, forever! Surely men, by making themselves thus miserable, are extremely mad! O that they would be wiser! Would either not sin, or work out their salvation from it, and be faithful unto death!

G. 3

## 2 P E T E R, Chap. iii. Ver. 11.

*Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?*

**P**ETER first mentions a future matter of fact, and then draws an inference from it. The fact is, that which shall be dissolved; and the inference, what manner of persons men ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness.

The things, which shall be dissolved, are specified in the preceding part of the chapter, beginning at the first verse.—

*Ver. 1. This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. A second supposes a first: Agreeably to which, Peter, prior to this, wrote an epistle to the same persons and purposes. But being exceedingly concerned for their safety, he sent them a second. In both which, he says, I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. Things must be known before they can be remembered. And, it is more than probable, they had been taught, the substance of these things, by the preaching of some of the apostles. But, that they might neither forget, nor forfeit the benefit of them, he sought, by repeated precepts and impressions, to assist their memories, and to secure to them success. Your pure minds. This is the internal character of a christian, and implies a present salvation, and supposes a past cause of it. They were freed from the guilt and power of sin, and prepared for the paradise of God: *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* The cause of which he points out in the preceding epistle, chap. i. ver. 3, 4. *Blessed be the God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.**

They were begotten again by being delivered from the evils of their old condition, and by being brought into a new state of mind: Of which *the abundant mercy of God*, in pardoning their sins and purifying their souls, was the immediate cause, and *the resurrection of Christ*, who was delivered for their of-



fences and raised again for their justification, was the remote one. And hence, as an happy effect, they had a *lively hope of an inheritance in heaven*: For, being alive to God in themselves, and their hope having everlasting life for its object, it was lively, vigorous, and active: And therefore they rejoiced in hope of the glory of God. This was the state of those to whom Peter wrote his epistles. A state which all should be in, it only being sufficient to answer the good purposes of time and eternity.

Ver. 2. *That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour.* The prophets and apostles agreed in foretelling the end of the world, the general judgment, and the great conflagration. These he wished them to be mindful of, as a serious consideration of them tends to make the world look like itself, *magnum nihil*, a great nothing; and, consequently, to diminish it in their esteem, and induce them to give all diligence to be ready for the Lord's last coming.

Ver. 3. *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days, scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.* Last days, in scripture language, signify all the days betwixt Christ's first coming and the end of the world. These, by reason of the clearness of the gospel revelation, may, with great propriety, be called the best days. And yet, notwithstanding, the worst of sinners, viz. *scoffers*, live in them. Now these ridicule revelation, religion, and religious persons; treating the first as a fable, the second as a fanciful affair, and the third as foolish for regarding them. *Walking after their own lusts*; regarding no rule, of judgment and practice, but their own vitiated desires, how contrary soever to the commandments of God. And, not satisfied with scoffing at sacred things, and rejecting the council of God, they question his coming to judgment, saying, *Where is the promise of his coming?* How does it appear that he will come? What proof is there of it? On the contrary, they insinuate that he will not come; for, they say, *since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation*; hitherto the world has known no change, and therefore never will. But this is false in fact; for Peter proves that the world had not continued in the same condition, that the earth, by a flood, had suffered exceedingly. *But this, he says, ver. 4, 5, 6.*

*they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water, whereby the world, that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.* What greater proof, than this, can be given, that all things, as scoffers affirm, had not continued in the same condition? But this is a lesson which they are not willing to learn; for if they allow that the Lord once destroyed the world, for its wickedness, they cannot be confident that he will not do it again. Hence he charges them with being *willingly, not necessarily ignorant, that by the word of God, spoken to Noah of the coming of the flood, and which was exactly fulfilled, not the starry, nor the planetary, but the aereal heavens which were of old, before the flood, and the earth which was then standing out of the inclosed waters, or abyss in the bowels of the earth, and in the water, probably the sea which covered a part of the exterior globe; (for there was a great extent of sea before the flood, though, perhaps, not so much as since) whereby, through the waters of heaven and earth, used as an instrument, the world that then was, all living things, especially men, women, and children, save Noah and his family, being overflowed with water, perished; and by which the surface, of the earth, was also much altered:* therefore scoffers have no cause to say, that all things continue as they were from the creation. And thus, by that destructive flood, the Lord avenged himself of those, who had corrupted their way, and would not, like Noah, be perfect in their generation, and walk with God. And from this tremendous judgment of God, upon sinners, the apostle infers what will be in future time.

Ver. 7. *But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.* Of things awful and momentous, to the sons and daughters of men, we have here a prediction of the greatest. *The heavens and the earth which are now; the present system of sublunary things, which have subsisted from the flood, and will subsist to the end of time, are reserved unto fire.* The Lord, in punishing the antediluvians with a flood, did not intend to put a period to the natural state of the earth; and therefore, though it suffered in its surface, &c. it retained its natural essence and action. But its being reserved unto fire, will have a different effect; for fire destroys the form and principle of every vegetable, and renders them unfruitful for ever. And this will be the fate, of the vegetable world, at the last day, inasmuch as fire

will pass through and consume the surface of the earth, whatever may be done to the substance of it. *Against the day of judgment.* It is probable the judgment will precede the burning of the world. But whether it precede or succeed it, there will be a close connection betwixt them. The day of judgment! A day to which all other days tend as their end, and in which, according to what men have done, they will be dealt with. God, who sent his Son to save the world, will judge it by him; and therefore men will be judged as moral and natural agents, and as believers or unbelievers. The rule of right (for the law is holy, just, and good) will be the measure according to which, in judging and rewarding men, he will proceed. If then men sin, by a wrong use of their free-agency, in preferring moral evil to good, (for both are set before them) that will be one cause of condemnation. And being natural agents, and stewards of a temporal portion, if they prostitute them to trifling, or profane purposes, they will be dealt with accordingly. And if they refuse to repent, and to believe in Christ, or that which their dispensation requires, for the pardon of sin, that also they will be condemned for. Hence then, whatever sins, misuse of temporal things, and unbelief men live and die in, they will be sentenced to eternal sufferings for. On the contrary, if any, like Samuel, serve the Lord from early infancy, and continue therein to the end, their reward will be proportioned to their work. And if some sin and corrupt themselves; but repent, and by faith find forgiveness and the grace of God's spirit, and die therein, they will be dealt with agreeably to their converted condition, and to what they do in it. Seeing then that all, who live and die in sin, will be doomed to dwell in hell; (for, according to the prediction of the apostle, the *ungodly* will go to *perdition*) there they must live in flames sulphureous, in a lake burning with fire and brimstone. In which deplorable condition, a guilty remembrance of their sins, impenitence, unbelief, neglect of the Lord's salvation, &c. will perpetually prey upon them, and God himself will be to them a consuming fire. To which evils will be added the eternity of their torments: A circumstance above all others to be dreaded; for, were their torments ever so intense, if they would but come to a period, hope would spring up in hell. But it is impossible, seeing the smoke, of the sinner's torments, will ascend up for ever. O calamitous condition!

Now the apostle having confuted the folly of those, who deny our Lord's last coming, and predicted the general judg-

ment, the burning of the world, and the perdition of ungodly men; he then addresses the christians, *ver. 8, 9. But, beloved, be ye not ignorant of this one thing; that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* It is probable the apostle, in saying *as some men count slackness*, means those who say, where is the promise of his coming. Yet some understand it of a part of the primitive christians. But the reason assigned, by St. Peter, for what some maliciously or mistakingly call slackness, is a clear indication of the Lord's loving kindness to mankind; for he *is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* When men sin, and prepare themselves for perdition; the Lord not only defers the last day, but permits them to live, that they may have time to repent. *Not willing that any should perish*; for he made no man, with design, to be damned, but, on the contrary, *that all should come, notwithstanding their sinfulness, to repentance*; to see, feel, be sorrowful for, and forsake sin, and to obtain, in the present time, every spiritual blessing necessary to prepare them to live, and die, and rise to the glory of God, and their own everlasting good. This is the Lord's grand design in his long-suffering, and answers to all, who make a proper use of it, the most excellent ends. And thus, in opposition to that madness which makes men sin, and which renders long-suffering necessary, he contributes all that he can to prevent their perishing. Nor is this more agreeable to his manner of working, than it is to his nature; which renders him long-suffering without the pain of impatience, and his way of working prevents all inconveniences attending long-suffering; for *one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*; that is, he can do the work of a thousand years in a day, and he can be a thousand years in doing the work of a day; so that swifter, or slower, is the same to him. Hence it is, that impatience does not provoke him to destroy sinners as soon as he might, and he is long-suffering, without slackness, in respect of his promise.

Now the apostle having shown, by incontestible evidence, the absurdity of supposing that the Lord will not come to judgment, and assigned sufficient reasons for deferring his coming; he adds, *v. 10. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away*

*with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.* The day of the Lord will come. How bold and abrupt is this! Long-suffering will see an end; time will come to a period; and eternity will commence. The day of the Lord. All days are his, but this in particular. Other days he lends, to men, to act a part for eternity in. But this day he takes to avenge himself on his adversaries, and to reward his faithful servants in. The manner of its coming he compares to the coming of a thief in the night. Thieves, notwithstanding that their nature gives a general notion of their coming, apprize none of the particular time of it. In like manner, although the Lord has foretold his coming, the precise time of it is not so. His coming then will be sudden, unexpected, and surprizing! It will, in an instant, surprize all the inhabitants of the earth, and fill them with greater fear, than thieves do those they seize in the night. And with many it will be literally in the night, it being always night with a part of the earth. And when the heavens pass away with a great noise, who will not hear and fear? Loud thunder awakens the world. What then will the passing away of the heavens do? They, who sleep, sleep in the night; but none will sleep then. The sluggard will shake off his sloth, the sleeper his slumber, the giddy and the gay be attentive, the miser and the man of business let go their traffic and gain, and all orders quit their hold of the earth, and attend only to what that great noise will awaken them to a sense of. And what can they be insensible of, under the sound of so great a noise? And how great must it be when the whole heavens pass away! for the lower part being composed of air, clouds, sulphureous matter, &c. their motion, it is probable, will set them on fire, and produce a noise, by running through the whole, incomperably great, and not a little increased by the whizzing motion itself. *And the elements shall melt with fervent heat.* These are not the heavens, nor the earth, they having a different fate assigned them, for *the heavens will be on fire, and the earth shall be burnt up.* Nor are they air, earth, water, and fire; for neither air nor water will melt. And what is there besides, but the sun, moon, and stars? It is probable then, that these are signified by the elements. The sun, it is certain, is an immense body of fire. And both it, and the other planets, may have their form and use destroyed by being melted with fervent heat. *The earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.*

There can be no difficulty in this; for as fire is one of the four elements of which the earth is composed, it may, by him who created and compacted it, be made to burn from its own bowels. Immense magazines also, of that furious element, are in several parts of the earth; which, through the agency of the Almighty, may do great execution. And if the rays of the sun, in its collected condition, and when they pass through a thick medium of ether, air, clouds, &c. are sometimes so powerful as to kindle combustible matter; what will they do when that medium is removed by the passing away of the heavens, and when large quantities, of them, are brought nearer the earth by the dissolving of the sun? For greater effects will follow then, than do now. When then the incorporated, the collected, and the extraneous fire meet without a cooling medium; the earth, the surface of it, and the works, of nature and art, will be burnt up: The fire will consume the whole. Then will a period be put to this sublunary scene, and all the things, which men and women admired, idolized, and disquieted themselves in vain for, will be as if they had never been; and the greatest lovers of, and delighters in them will say, vanity of vanities, all earthly things are vanity!

II. *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in holy conversation and godliness?* What manner of persons! This is the inference from the foregoing instances. Peter does not inquire whether they were converted to God, and qualified to keep his commandments. These queries, in their case, were unnecessary, being begotten again to a lively hope of heaven. Hence, being thus principled, and looking for the momentous matters already mentioned, he says, what manner of persons ought ye to be in holy conversation and godliness? Conversation seems to signify man's moral conduct, his words and works, and to have special respect unto men. And these should be such as have no tendency to make men immoral. Words, as they are the professed signs of inward sentiments, should always be agreeable to them; for to say one thing, and intend another, is a species of dissimulation; and when detected, cannot fail of bringing the speaker into discredit: Consequently, if it did not concern the conscience, it could not be used by persons of a holy conversation. Nor are they patterns, of this, whose speeches tend to form irreligious ideas in others: Loose language, which has no determinate end; licentious,

which tends to relax the mind from religious strictness; and sensual, which feeds the flesh and corrupts the spirit, are no parts of a holy conversation. Those speeches too which have a natural tendency to raise wrong passions, cannot, with any degree of propriety, be called parts of a holy conversation. For though all the passions have a right use, yet when improperly raised, they are prejudicial to the possessors of them. So, if anger be agitated by an unnecessary speech, it is contrary to a holy conversation. And the same may be said, of every conversation, that is not good to the use of edifying. Nor is it any objection to this, that some discourse, touching temporal things, is necessary, inasmuch as it may be ordered to edification, as well as a man may eat and drink and do all to the glory of God. But if it be begun, or continued without cause, it may have a contrary effect. On the contrary, a holy conversation is sincere, has a good end in view, does not unnecessarily grieve or give pain to any, and is calculated to give general edification. And this is not only contrary to every wrong conversation, but also to silence, or saying too little in regard of a right one. For though it may be a less evil to say no good, or too little, than some, or much evil; yet it is what ought not to be, forasmuch as men are moved, by discourse, to good as well as to evil. Speech then being intended for the edification of others; persons of a holy conversation should so speak, in respect of the kind and degree of it, as that none may have cause to accuse them. And this must extend to temporal and spiritual life; it being the design, of a holy conversation, to prevent all the evil, and to promote all the good that can be, both to body and soul.

But works, as well as words, are a part of a holy conversation. And these, in the general, are justice, mercy, and charity. Now justice is not only contrary to robbing and over reaching, but also to covetousness and too great a degree of carefulness. For he, who would get all, and give nothing, would not act an equal part. Yea he, whose circumstances will suffer it, should give as much as he gains, or his conversation is not without covetousness; for having enough, he should desire no more, lest, like the fool, he lay it up only to leave behind him. But justice is also concerned with characters, seeing that to rob a man of his character, and thereby of his credit, may be a greater act of injustice, and prove more prejudicial than picking his pocket, as it

may prevent his procuring a temporal support, and enjoying the privileges of society. Nor is it enough not to rob; it is only sufficient to give every one his due, in all that concerns him.—A holy conversation also includes works of mercy. To forgive offenders, especially when they confess their offences, or, where it is necessary, make satisfaction, is an indispensable duty, let their sins be ever so many. And it must not terminate in the act, but be signified, to the sinner, for his satisfaction, and for the credit of the forgiver. And where sins are neither confessed nor satisfied for, yet they must not prevent the exercise of good will; that evil, if possible, may be overcome with good. This is being merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful; whom to imitate, in the greatest degree, is man's incumbent duty, and highest honour.—Works of charity too are comprehended herein. Now these have for their objects not only the poor in a temporal respect, but also the well-being of all the world in a spiritual one. And as touching the first of them; what have men more than enough for, but to answer that purpose? Not for themselves, but others. Nor are superfluities in eating, drinking, dressing, &c. to be preferred before the poor. Nor yet conveniences, in many cases. Perhaps all that is generally necessary, is not particularly to be reserved for a man's self, before he gives any thing to others, because some have not so much. In a word, charity, as it concerns the body, is doing all the good which consists with a man's duty to himself; as it concerns the soul, it implies an excellent example, doing every thing in the most inoffensive and edifying manner, to prevent a propagation of evil, and to promote a contrary practice; and, as occasion requires, reproofs, instructions, consolations, and whatever else, that tend to answer the same salutary purposes, must also be imparted. To which he adds,

*And Godliness.* This has a direct reference to God, he being the proper object of it. Godliness is a service due to the Deity, and consists of such acts as are agreeable to his nature and government. His nature is spiritual and holy, and his government temporal, spiritual, and moral. And being the author of all temporal benefits, gratitude, for them, is an indispensable duty. A daily succession, of such things as serve to support and satisfy the body, loudly call for this. For to be unthankful for them, is, in effect, not to own them to be his, and to act as if independent on him. To be ungrateful then is to be ungodly. And if, as a Heathen observes, that to "call a man ungrateful," in respect of a human



benefactor, " is to say of him all possible evil in one word ;" what is it to be ungrateful to God ? Perpetual gratitude then, to him, for daily benefits, is one branch of godliness. Another is, to glorify him for his excellencies, his essence, holiness, wisdom, power, goodness, truth, justice, mercy, &c. Now some of these are seen in the works of creation and providence, others are revealed in the scripture, and right minds contain them all in miniature. And as they are the most excellent in themselves, and right and just in their actings, and the way in which all benefits are communicated to mankind ; they are the greatest, the most honourable, and the worthiest objects of adoration. Hence it is meet, and right, and the incumbent duty of all, who would answer the end of their creation, redemption, and salvation, to have a high sense of these excellent things, and by proper expressions to praise, honour, and magnify him for them, and thereby imitate those above, who continually cry, Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God Almighty. Another thing, signified by godliness, is living a god-like life ; a life, in all things, resembling the life of Christ, as far as it is possible. And a sameness of natures, subsisting betwixt Christ and genuine Christians, renders a familiarity of sentiments and services possible, in a great degree. Nor is piety, in the intention of it, to be limited to those things which have an immediate and direct reference to God. For though many internal and external acts, of piety, may be performed to the Lord, which have no direct reference to men ; yet all actions, which primarily respect the advantage of men, must ultimately tend to the honour of God, forasmuch as his honour, in all things, is to be aimed at. Godliness or piety, then, implies the being grateful to God for his benefits, praising him for his excellencies, and doing whatever he enjoins as a duty to himself, and having an eye to his honour in all things.

But the apostle says, What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness ? What manner ! As if he had said, though you should be always holy and godly ; yet when you neither know how soon, nor how suddenly the heavens may pass away, the elements melt, and the earth be burnt up ; how superlatively holy and godly should you be ! The highest degree, of them, should continually be ; that, come when he will, you may be ready to be received into everlasting habitations. But this is as difficult as necessary ; for to live in the most exact, exemplary, profitable, and pleas-

ing manner, to prevent a guilty conscience, the prejudice of other persons, and the dishonour of the Deity, is a work which calls for the best use of all the wisdom and strength which the grace of God can furnish men with. However the profit is proportionate to the pains; for the more conformable the life is to the Lord's law, there is the greater degree of a good conscience; and, by necessary consequence, the less cause of shame, and the greater cause of confidence at his coming, and of a reward in the future world.

Let us now improve upon these particulars. Now who, that hath sinned, can say his sins are forgiven, and his heart is so cleansed, by a divine inspiration, as to love the Lord? This is the condition of all, who can, with propriety, be called Christians. Except then some have never sinned, nor been unqualified for the kingdom of God; without these, they are only counterfeit christians. 'Tis true there may be a work of contrition, prior to these. But as it neither makes men's minds pure, nor gives a hope of heaven; it is far from being an exception to this. Who then, I say, has a pure mind, and is prepared for the Lord's last coming? Without holiness, it is said, no man shall see the Lord. And what is holiness but a heart filled with the knowledge, fear, and love of God, and which has a hundred times more delight in spiritual than temporal things, and from which flows a lively hope of heaven, with a life agreeable to his law.

Now whoever is not thus prepared, for that awful day, cannot stand in the judgment of God, but must fall a sacrifice to offended justice. A dreadful consideration! But prove yourselves. What then has been your life? Has it been spent to please God, profit your soul, and propagate good among men? If not, how can you meet the judge, but as a guilty creature? Is not the Lord the law-giver? And are not these the ends of the law? And will living to a worse purpose suffice? Be sure that he is in earnest, whether you are or not. It being then your duty, in the days of your youth, to do his will; did you delight to perform his pleasure? Alas! if your life was spent in a pursuit of vain diversions, flesh-pleasing follies, and what had no tendency to answer any spiritual purpose; you began with offending God, pleasing Satan, and destroying yourself. And if your beginning was bad, what has been your progress? Better or worse? Have you forsaken your sins, or added others to them? If greater sins, by some of you, have been added to your youthful ones, and by others the evils of old age also, how unprepared must

you be for the great day! Alas! if persons, of pure minds, must abound in a holy conversation and godliness, to escape the evils of it; what will the sinner and the ungodly do? Oh, sinner, you must have a pure mind, or perish for ever! Heaven cannot admit unholy hearts. Get then a lively hope of heaven, or to hell you go, to be tormented with the devil and his angels for ever. But can you endure to be damned? Has remorse ever taken hold of your heart? If it did, then you felt something like the worm that never dies. Has fire fed upon your flesh? If so, it was an emblem of the fire of hell. Were you easy under them? If not, be afraid; fear him, who can destroy body and soul in hell. Consider eternity too. What is the length of it? Ah, if the damned could tell, then would hope spring up in hell! But it knows no end. Sinner, what wilt thou do? Lie in the fiery lake for ever? Be stung every moment with a mind all remorse? Alas, how thou wilt roar, tofs, and curse thyself! But none will pity. Yea, all will augment thy misery: God will laugh at thy calamity, devils will delight to torment thee, and those thou hast helped to hell, will accuse thee as one cause of their coming. Consider then those things before it be too late, and let a respite from punishment lead thee to repentance. It is better to repent than perish. Repentance may cost thee sorrow for sin, but that will be nothing to eternal torments. Sow then in tears, that thou mayest reap in joy. O let thy heart break at the remembrance of a mispent life; for consider how great things the Lord has done for thee! He has not only given thee life, and breath, and all temporal things, but his Son to suffer for thy sins. He has likewise been long-suffering. If thou hadst had according to thy deserts, where wouldst thou have been now? In hell. Thither thou mightest have gone long ago. But thy merciful preserver has had no pleasure in thy punishment. Do not then defer to turn to him. To-day, lest to-morrow thou art in eternity. Remember, he once sware in his wrath, that some should not enter into his rest. And why, but because they hardened their hearts, and refused to repent? O do not provoke him to enter into judgment with you! If he begin, he will soon make an end. In the twinkling of an eye, he may send you to the tormentors. Instantly then turn to him, and pray that he may give you a pure mind. Nor rest till it be done. This is the principle of practical obedience. You never can be holy and godly in conversation.

and conduct without it. And remember for whose sake it is given. Jesus Christ procured it, and he lives to pray that you may partake of it. How soon then may you receive it? And surely the sooner the better. For what if you die without it? Alas! What? why, ruin to soul and body for ever. The present then is the critical moment on which so much depends. As such, let a firm dependance on Christ, and a full exertion of soul be made for mercy and the grace of the spirit. Nor can these be done in vain, he being more ready to give than men to receive. Venture then, on the strength of the promise, for the performance of it. And if you have not an immediate answer, wait for it; for it is written, every one that seeketh, findeth. And what a contradiction would it be to Christ's suffering for sinners, and to the service of the Lord, if salvation were not given to the one, and a qualification for the other to those, who rightly seek them! But such inconsistencies, with the Almighty, are impossible, inasmuch as his justice, truth, and goodness are against them. Whoever then does not find this fruit of Christ's passion, and qualification for a holy conversation, must charge themselves with being the cause of it. And then not only their old sins continue, and thereby the want of a preparation for serving the Lord, but they also increase the number of their sins, the sinfulness of their soul, and the degree of their guilt and future damnation. Which to do is of all evils the greatest; and, continued in till death, admits of no remedy, but remains an eternal cause, of proportionable punishment, in the fire that cannot be quenched. How great then is the madness of men! How cruel are such to themselves! What a foundation do they lay for future ruin! And how will their evils be recompenced upon them! God, who cannot lie, has said, has sworn that he will be avenged of them. And what is the vengeance of so great and so holy a God? Tongue cannot tell: For who can define the torments of hell? But, surely, it is such as will make men completely miserable! It and its effects are figured by fire and brimstone, gnawing worms, storm and tempest, blackness and darkness, pain, shame, sickness, sorrow, and whatever that is disagreeable and tormenting to human sense. And to this faint resemblance, of man's future punishment and pain, is added the perpetualness of them. A circumstance which not only fixes, but, in effect, for ever renews them, without hope of mercy or mitigation of misery.

To prevent which, let time and eternity be compared. And how short and uncertain the one, and how long and sure the other! Time may soon and suddenly end in eternity. Those, who are now alive, may not be so one moment more. Death may suddenly seize them; and then, as they lived, their everlasting condition will be. If death find them full of a holy hope of heaven, it will usher them into the unveiled presence of God, the society of saints and angels, and the divine, harmonious, sweet, and never ceasing songs and services of the celestial city. But, if it meet them unprepared for paradise, they will instantly be plunged into perdition, to suffer the punishment their disobedience to God, cruelty to man, and neglect of themselves subject them to. And when the day of the Lord comes, the Judge will appear in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel. O! what will the wicked do? Their faces will turn pale, their hearts will heave, fearfulness will take hold of them, and they will cry to the mountains to cover them. Nor will they find any relief; for all will be against, and nothing for them. Now, who would not be prepared for so solemn a time? Consider too, how well it will be with the righteous. With what boldness will they meet those things! The time of Christ's coming, they delightfully anticipate, and hasten on by crying, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Nor will they be afraid when he appears; for he will be admired by all that believe. And being already acquitted, and qualified for his kingdom; the sentence, pronounced upon them, will be a cause of joy and rejoicing, and their reward will be according to their works. And when the wicked are hurled into hell, the heavens pass away, the elements melt, and the earth is burnt; with what astonishment, wonder, and joyful acquiescence, as assessors with him in judgment, (for he will judge the world by saints) will they say, Just and righteous are thy judgments, Lord, God Almighty! Now consider these things, ye who are not begotten again to a lively hope, and cry to the Lord for his blessing. O give him no rest till, for the sake of his Son, he has saved you from sin, freed you from danger, and qualified you for a holy conversation.

And let those, who are thus, consider the obligation they are under to answer this excellent purpose. O consider what great things the Lord has done in making you alive to himself, and giving you a lively hope of heaven! This is what cannot be sufficiently prized, nor equalled by all other things.

For what is all the world without a pure mind and a title to eternal joys? Alas! it is incapable of affording true comfort, nor can it deliver from death. And when the great day comes, it will be burnt up. Abound then in a holy conversation and godliness. Live as persons ordained to die, as looking for an universal change of (outward) nature, as probationers for eternity, as appointed to propagate good among men, minister to the honour of God, as accountable for your conduct, and rewardable for all that is well done. Be then, in what pertains to the Lord's praise, the profit of men, and the good of your own conscience, careful, constant, zealous, active, and unwearied to the end of your life, that you may die in peace, rise glorious, receive a reward, and be for ever with the Lord.

Glorious Lord, this round, terrestrial world, with heaven, sun, moon, and stars, being made by thee; when they have served thy purpose, in their present state, thou wilt put a period to it, and give them, by thy refining operation, a more celestial nature and use. But being principally designed, in a secondary sense, to minister to men, and men to thy praise; when all things shall be dissolved, men, for whom they were made, will be raised, judged, and rewarded; and therefore they should, as probationers for a better world, abound in all that is profitable to each other, and pleasing to thee. And this duty, (which supposes a power to do it in the most perfect manner) they, as free-agents, may either not do in any, or in the least, or in a larger, or in the largest degree. But when their practice keeps pace with their principle, they do thy will on earth as it is done in heaven: By which, when thou comest to judgment, they will be found of thee in peace, without spot, and blameless; and will, as the happy effect of it, enter into thy joy, and receive a suitable reward for their services.—But with the wicked, especially the scoffers, it will not be so; for, having sinned, and refused to repent, they will perish. And being brought before thy bar, judged, and condemned; the noise of the heavens, the melting of the elements, and the burning of the earth will so affect as to make them ready to leap into hell for relief. And the angels, the executors of thy righteous wrath, will hurl them head-long into the burning lake, there to abide and to be burnt for ever.

## ROMANS, Chap. ii. Ver. 11.

*But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth,  
against them which do such things.*

**W**ERE it possible for God not to judge the world in righteousness, sinners might have some hope of escaping punishment. But it cannot be. Sooner will the Lord cease to be, and better were it to have no God, than an unrighteous one.

The things, to which the text refers, are contained in the preceding chapter, and are a catalogue of as diabolical deeds as ever were done. *Being filled with all unrighteousness*, of disposition and design, which rendered them ready to every evil word and work; *fornication*, carnal commerce betwixt single persons, or all illicit acts of love; *wickedness*, troublesome, mischievousness; *covetousness*, immoderate fondness for earthly riches, desiring more than enough, idolizing those uncertain and unsatisfying things; *maliciousness*, a temper disposed to do acts of cruelty for the sake of so doing, or without any advantage to itself; *full of envy*, repining at the superiority, or prosperity of others; *murder*, sacrificing the lives of those, who stand in their way of profit, or pleasure; *debate*, dispute, or contentious quarreling; *deceit*, fraud, artifice; *malignity*, a cruel or hurtful disposition; *whisperers*, secret defamers of others; *backbiters*, those who speak against others behind their backs, what they would not do before their faces; *haters of God*, having a strong aversion to his holiness and justice, as being contrary to their evil inclinations and ways, and accusers of his providence, when it does not suit their designs, or frustrates their purposes; *despiteful*, malicious, full of spleen, or spite; *proud*, haughty, full of themselves, highly conceited of their persons, parts, performances, possessions; *boasters*, of what they are, have, and do, to gain applause, profit, or preferment; *inventers of evil things*, studious of new fashions, ceremonies, ways of profit, pleasure, cruelty, oaths, &c.; *disobedient to parents*, paying no regard to their authority, commands, and councils; *without understanding*, of what most concerns them, particularly of their

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**W**ERE it possible for God not to judge the world in righteousness, sinners might have some hope of escaping punishment. But it cannot be. Sooner will the Lord cease to be, and better were it to have no God, than an unrighteous one.

The things, to which the text refers, are contained in the preceding chapter, and are a catalogue of as diabolical deeds as ever were done. *Being filled with all unrighteousness*, of disposition and design, which rendered them ready to every evil word and work; *fornication*, carnal commerce betwixt single persons, or all illicit acts of love; *wickedness*, troublesome, mischievousness; *covetousness*, immoderate fondness for earthly riches, desiring more than enough, idolizing those uncertain and unsatisfying things; *maliciousness*, a temper disposed to do acts of cruelty for the sake of so doing, or without any advantage to itself; *full of envy*, repining at the superiority, or prosperity of others; *murder*, sacrificing the lives of those, who stand in their way of profit, or pleasure; *debate*, dispute, or contentious quarreling; *deceit*, fraud, artifice; *malignity*, a cruel or hurtful disposition; *whisperers*, secret defamers of others; *backbiters*, those who speak against others behind their backs, what they would not do before their faces; *haters of God*, having a strong aversion to his holiness and justice, as being contrary to their evil inclinations and ways, and accusers of his providence, when it does not suit their designs, or frustrates their purposes; *despiteful*, malicious, full of spleen, or spite; *proud*, haughty, full of themselves, highly conceited of their persons, parts, performances, possessions; *boasters*, of what they are, have, and do, to gain applause, profit, or preferment; *inventors of evil things*, studious of new fashions, ceremonies, ways of profit, pleasure, cruelty, oaths, &c.; *disobedient to parents*, paying no regard to their authority, commands, and councils; *without understanding*, of what most concerns them, particularly of their

duty to God, themselves, and others, judging and acting unworthy of rational, religious, and accountable creatures; *covenant-breakers*, keeping them no longer than suits their convenience, making no conscience of their conduct, nor regarding their credit; *without natural affection*, to their own children, exposing them to perish by hunger, or cold, killing, or not taking that care of them which is due from parents to children; *implacable*, not to be appeased, revengeful; *unmerciful*, forgiving no injury, shewing no compassion to any creature, whose case requires it; *who knowing the judgment of God, that they, who commit such things, are worthy of death*, deserve an untimely, terrible temporal death, and eternal destruction; *and not only do them, but also find pleasure in those that do them*. This shews the diabolicalness of their disposition. A man may be hurried by his own passions, or provoked by the practice of others, to do things he does not delight in; but he, who finds satisfaction in the sins of others, loves sin for the sake of it, and by thus making them his own, increases his condemnation.

*But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth, against them who commit such things*. This supposes a possibility of not committing them; for the judgment of God cannot be according to truth, in punishing for impossibilities. Nor need there be any other proof, of that possibility, than is in this and the foregoing chapter. “For when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law; these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean-while accusing, or else excusing one another.” The apostle, in this passage, gives both a general and a particular account of the condition of the heathens: A general, in that some of these things were applicable to all really, and others possibly. 1. To all really, inasmuch as they all had a law written on their hearts, restored to them by the Lord Jesus Christ, which was in substance the same as the Jewish law written on tables of stone. 2. To all possibly; for if some, by the inward law, did the things contained in the outward, all might have done. 3. The conduct of all produced some consequence; for according to the use or abuse of that law, their consciences acquitted or condemned them. And, agreeably to this, the apostle, in the preceding chapter, tells us that the Gentiles did know God; *For what is to be known of God is manifest in or to them; for God hath shewed it*

*unto them.* Having moralized their reason, by the light and life of Christ, it was their principle and rule of religious and moral practice; and, to assist their understanding in, and excite their wills and affections to worship and serve him, he exhibited himself to them, as the sole object thereof, by his outward works; *for the invisible things of him, viz. his eternal power and God-head, are clearly seen by the things which are made,* the visible world; so that having an inward guide and rule to, an outward proof of, and assistance from him; *they were, if they did not glorify him, without excuse.* But, 2. he says, *Though they knew God, they did not glorify him as God;* did not make him the one object of their adoration, but made and multiplied gods, *and served the creature more than the creator.* Thus what was due to the one uncreated, living, and everlasting God, they gave to created, dead, and temporary deities. *Nor were they thankful,* for his benefits; which was, in effect, to deny him to be the author and dispenser of them; than which, a greater mark of ingratitude could not be. Now these were voluntary evils, such as they were under no necessity of committing; and therefore they were justly chargable with them. Hence, 3. as an effect of their free folly, *their wilfully foolish heart was darkened;* their moral and rational light, by unexcused disobedience, became darkness. And having cast off the creator, as their immediate and ultimate object of worship, and embraced the creature, madly made into gods, as both; *he, as the consequence of their criminality, gave them up to vile affections,* whereby they became more brutish than beasts, in the abuse of their bodies. And because *they did not like, or chuse to retain God in their knowledge,* or to acknowledge him as God; to punish them by a just retaliation, he *gave them over,* by suffering them to do as they would, *to a reprobate, a mind void of judgment, to do things not convenient* either for body or soul, time or eternity. Thus the apostle accounts for the abandoned condition of the Gentiles. And the account clearly indicates that it was not the want of the knowledge of God, nor ability to serve him, that rendered them thus. It was the abuse of their abilities, which brought them into this deplorable state.

And how wonderful is it, that they, who had the law of God for their guide, and God himself for their object, should become adorers of so many fabricated deities! The not having a divine revelation will not solve the difficulty, nor make the wonder cease; for has not the same been done by almost all the Christian world? Heathen Rome was not more

idolatrous than Christian Rome. Neither the want of a revelation then, nor the having one, is either the cause of, or is sufficient to deter men from idolatry. To what then must it be attributed? To themselves; for “they glorified not God as God, neither were thankful; become vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened; changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image; did not like to retain God in their knowledge, &c.” Now all these are personal things, and charged upon them as the reasons why God gave them up. As then St. Paul, in the case of the heathens, knew no cause of sinning, and of being forsaken of God, but their own voluntary choice, and the justice of God in punishing them accordingly; other causes, producing the same consequences, are not to be supposed respecting any creature. If then none can prove that either fate, or original sin, or the want of a law within, or all of them, or any other thing, but the wrong use of man’s reason, moral disposition, and animal powers, is the first cause of sin and the consequent curse of God; assigning other reasons is an error, and militates against the justness of God’s method in governing and judging the world; which, St. Paul says, is according to truth. And indeed to suppose sin and suffering to be the consequences of not keeping a law, which cannot be kept, greatly derogates from the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God. But it is impossible for him to require, and to punish for impossibilities. Judgment then, against all who err and do evil, is according to truth, sin being a voluntary evil, and suffering proportioned to it. Whoever then has been guilty of any, or of all the fore-mentioned, or any other evils, will be justly judged by the Lord, and punished proportionably to what they have done.

And what an awful consideration is it, that sinners should be brought before the bar, of an holy and just God, to answer for all their evils, and to be sentenced to eternal sufferings for them! A thought of this, one would think, if men were not asleep in sin, or determined to commit it whatever be the consequence, should be sufficient to awaken their fears, fill them with guilty horrors, and make them tremble. How much do men fear, when they are to be tried by an earthly judge, especially if they have been guilty of sins for which the law condemns to die! Who, in such a case, can come without terror? Alas! not long since, one prisoner was so affected, by hearing the trumpet sound before the Judge, as to lose her senses! And others, when the sentence of death was passing

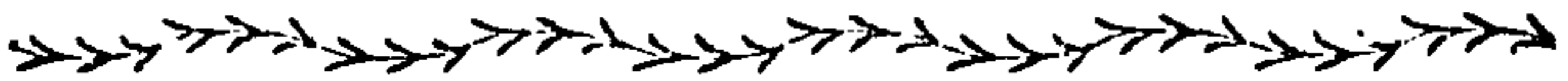
upon them, sunk to the ground. And some, in fearing one, have died a thousand deaths. If then the hearts of men fail before a man, how will they be affected with the awful majesty of God, when he compels them to come before him? O what will they feel and fear? Stung with a guilty conscience, they will anticipate the torments to which he will condemn them. But ah! when he opens the cause, and lays all their wicked life before them, what confusion, what distraction will seize them! Then will the wretches begin to roar. And when their consciences have compelled them to confess their sins; God, whose justice cannot then spare them, will say, It is enough, out of your own mouths I condemn you. Then, O then their cries will be doubled, and differ little from those of the damned! And that they may feel the full effect of his justice, with a tremendous voice he will say, *Go, ye curs'd, into everlasting fire, prepar'd for the devil and his angels!* Thus careless and wilful sinners fall a sacrifice, in suffering, to their own inexcusable sins; for we are sure that the judgment of God, in their sentence and suffering, is according to truth. And if the heathens, who had no revealed law, for acting contrary to the law of their minds, divine suggestions, and the light of creation, and for corrupting themselves, and sinning more abundantly in consequence of that corruption, were justly condemned to be damned; how much more christians, if they be guilty of similar sinful practices? Surely their superior assistance, in this case, will only serve to subject them to greater sufferings. This will be the consequence. And a dreadful one it is.

You then, whether you are old or young, rich or poor, and whether you live at ease, and laugh away your time, or eagerly and constantly employ your heads and hearts about worldly gain, or live for no other delights than eating, drinking, sleeping, sporting, playing, and other sensual things afford, or curse, swear, lie, break sabbaths, &c. and pay no more willing regard to God, his worship and service, your own and your neighbour's souls, death and judgment, heaven and hell, than brute beasts do; have not you, by thus madly mispending your time, changed the glory of the God, whom you should have loved and served, into some earthly or evil thing, seeing you adore and delight in nothing else? And yet, to the reproach of Christ, you are called christians, who are much more like apes, animals, and devils. And if the Lord has not given you up to sensual sins, and to so erroneous a

judgment as may bring you to poverty, disgrace, pain, death, and damnation; take care lest, by persisting in these things, you do not soon provoke him to do it; for, as sure as he does, you will not only live a mad, falsely called a merry life, but will weep, wail, and gnash your teeth for ever after in hell-fire. Beware then, sinners, for you must come to judgment. O spare yourselves from punishment! Remember the length of eternity! never, never will it have an end. Can you endure everlasting burnings? How did Dives endure? Was he not tormented in that flame? Can you bear it better? No. Flee from it then by forsaking sin, by trusting in Jesus Christ, by making your peace with God, by getting your hearts renewed, and by serving the Lord sincerely all your days.

Righteous Lord, thy judgments are just; for though thou art not fettered by fate, but free in what thou doest, yet thy perfections prevent injustice in all thy judgments. Therefore if thy creatures, (like the ancient Gentiles) who know, but do not glorify thee, by praise and prayer, as the only object of divine adoration, nor are thankful for thy temporal and spiritual blessings, and become, in consequence thereof, vain in their imaginations, observing no rule of judgment, which concerns thee, thy service, themselves, and other things, but what their own perverted minds produce, and so, as the effect of this free folly, darken their minds till they cannot see their duty, but, instead of delightfully adoring thee, inwardly and outwardly, adore the creatures, by letting loose their affections upon, and eagerly pursuing them for profit, or pleasure, or honour, or all; and if, for these irreligious, immoral, irrational, and sensual pursuits, thou givest them up, by withholding the restraints of thy grace and providence, to the full power of blind and unbridled sensual desires, and to all the misguidings of an injudicious judgment, and thereby to be filled with all unrighteousness, thou art just; for they force thee by these free, horrid, and hell-deserving evils to forsake them. And thus, O thou righteous judge, thou punishest wilful by giving them up to judicial wickedness. And when thy grace is abused by sinning, and thy mercy is neglected by impenitence; thy justice is glorified in punishing them in time, as the forerunner of eternal punishment. How sore an evil then, O Lord, to sin till there is no place for mercy, and nothing remains but a fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation for it! Who then, to please thee, profit themselves, and prevent these potent evils, would not, while

they know thee, glorify and be thankful to thee? Display, merciful Lord, before men proceed thus far in folly, thy mighty power to provoke them to abandon forbidden things, and ardently to pursue the salvation of their souls and thy service; for such is the madness of many, in preferring temporal and temporary trifles to spiritual and eternal excellencies, that they seem determined to be damned. Save, gracious Lord, if it be possible, these distracted and murderous men and women from thus raving themselves. Abate, by thy mighty working, that blood-thirstiness with which, by sinning and neglecting salvation, they pursue their souls and bodies to perdition.



## ROMANS, Chap. ii. Ver. 6.

*Who will render to every man according to his deeds.*

**T**HIS is the general proposition. The particulars follow: *To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality; eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every one that doeth evil.*

No sacred writer, it is certain, ever ascribed more, than St. Paul did, to the love of God for giving his Son to save sinners, to the sufferings of Christ as the meritorious cause of their salvation, and to the holy Spirit as the effector of it by justifying, sanctifying, and assisting them. But, though all these causes concur, and contribute their part to accomplish this important particular; yet salvation, from sin, is not fully effected without man's faith, seeking, and reception of it. Neither was the apostle so injudicious, imperfect, and erroneous a writer as to suppose that men can, if they have time for it, continue in a state of salvation, and be finally saved, without the use of good works: and therefore he says,

to them, who by *patient continuance* in well doing, eternal life will be given. Now *well-doing*, as it supposes the acceptance of the person, and the purity of the inward principle, so it implies a good use of them. And, it is evident, that these are absolutely necessary in order to act in an acceptable way, and to obtain eternal life. For if the same works, with respect to matter and manner, could be done without them, they would neither be agreeable to God, nor answer the same excellent end, inasmuch as the acceptableness of works, and their issuing in endless life, depend not only on what they are in themselves, but more especially on the disposition and design of the doer. Works, however good in themselves, done accidentally, or without a right, or with a wrong design, want that which constitutes them good in the account of God. Doing good then implies a good agent, a good action, and a good end. Well-doing, including all the particulars of it, is a right discharge of duty to God, our neighbours, and ourselves. To God in doing whatever he requires with willingness, readiness, and cheerfulness; in particular *praising* him for his excellencies, his spirituality, immortality, and universality, his omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience, his holiness, justice, and truth, and his wisdom, greatness, and goodness; the being *grateful* for his benefits, temporal, spiritual, and eternal; and the *thinking, speaking, and acting*, in all things, as may most tend to the honour of his name, nature, and service. Well-doing has, likewise, respect to mankind, to the promoting, by all possible means, the well-being of their souls and bodies, in time and in eternity. And, also, to ourselves, as it tends, instrumentally and efficaciously, to our continuance in a good condition, the testimony of a good conscience, the increase of grace, credit among men, confidence towards God, and an eternal reward. *Continuance* in well-doing is the practical progression of it, a going on, in all its particulars, in the same way, without intermission or defect. *Patient* continuance implies, if not difficulty and danger, the absence of the end, an expectation of, and a waiting for it till it comes. And to them who, in the way of well-doing, seek for the *glory* of heaven, the *honour* that cometh from God, and the *immortality* of the body, *eternal life*, the living for ever with the Lord, in soul and body, and in unspeakable happiness, proportioned to the nature and number of good works, as the way to, and end of them.— Who then would not be prepared for doing well? And who, that is, would not excel in it? To acquire earthly comfort,



though perishable, many men think highly deserving of their greatest ambition, care, and labour. What then does eternal life deserve? Is there any comparison, in nature, degree, or duration, betwixt them? They differ in kind, as heaven does from earth, in degree, as a mountain from a mole-hill, and in duration, as a million of years from a moment. Here then is an object of infinite value, and incomparably more deserving of man's best ambition, and most ardent pursuit, than all other things. O what an inducement to well-doing! What a stimulus to patient continuance therein! Let those then, who are capable of acquiring this, be zealously affected for the glory of God, their neighbour's good, and their own everlasting greatness. The more good they do, the greater will be their reward. Let time and talents then be employed, in the best manner, that they may be to the best purpose, in time and in eternity.

*But to them that are contentious,* given to dispute about unprofitable things, quarrelsome, or litigious, not making, but breaking peace, and so neither promote the Lord's praise, their neighbour's profit, nor their own prosperity; *and do not obey the truth,* according to their ability, in well-doing in all the relations of life, giving, by great assiduity, the most prompt, perfect, patient, and perpetuated debt of duty to God, others, and their own souls; *but,* knowingly and designedly, *obey unrighteousness* by prophaning God's sacred name, by contemning his nature, with sinning, when seen, surrounded, and supported by him; opposing, by their spiritual impurities, injustice, and lies, his holiness, justice, and truth; and, by their foolishness, self-dependence, and ingratitude, disregarding his wisdom, greatness, and goodness: In short, by living without loving him, and by acting the part of enemies to him. And, with respect to men, opposing their interest, honour, and ease; their interest, by acting an unequal part, seeking all to themselves by robbery, or theft, or overreaching, or unfair dealing, or covetousness, or too great a degree of carefulness, reversing the rule of doing as they would be done to; their honour, by bringing contempt upon their persons, or parts, or performances, through lies, disparaging speeches, and by not giving them their due; and their ease, by injuring them in their persons, or estates, or credit, or by doing any thing which gives them unnecessary displeasure, or puts them to pain. Nor, with regard to themselves, answering any profitable purpose for time or eternity, in-

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asmuch as they neither save their souls, nor serve the Lord, nor prepare, by holiness of heart and life, to live with him for ever. And to them, as the consequence, who thus continue to disobey the truth, and obey unrighteousness, *indignation*, the highest degree of God's displeasure in this life, and *wrath*, the effect of it in the life to come; *tribulation and anguish*, the fruits of that wrath in the fire of hell, which continually burns, but never consumes them.—Thus Paul, the prince of the apostles, has pointed out, in plain terms, that the cause of men's committing sin is their unnecessary contention, free refusing to obey the truth, and willing subjection to unrighteousness; and that, as a necessary, an inseparable effect of men's madness in so doing, God, the righteous judge, according to the degree of their wicked doings, is highly displeased with, and hurls them into hell, where they have trouble and anguish for ever. A dreadful state!

I will now make a little use of this doctrine. And of what importance is it to be in a right state of mind! It is the first personal cause of all good designs and deeds: For though good designs, more immediately and properly, produce good deeds; yet good designs are formed from a good disposition. This then must be, or no good work can be. But a possession, of it, does not prevent its being prostituted to bad purposes, to contention, disobeying the truth, and obeying unrighteousness. But who, that have corrupted themselves, see the nature and necessity of this? Who see, by the tendency of their souls, that they are earthly and evil, desiring and endeavouring only to obtain worldly and wicked things, and pay no regard to the salvation of their souls, and the service of God? But, alas! what is the earth of which they are so fond, by which they are so fooled, and for which they seem determined to damn their souls? It should, one would imagine, from the multitude of its admirers, adorers, and eager pursuers, be something superlatively great and good. Yet to the just reproach, shame, and confusion of men be it spoken, it is no more than the portion of a brute; for its best things rise no higher than the body, being of a nature which will not incorporate with the soul, and with which the soul can hold no correspondence but by the organs of the body. And yet for this poor, perishing thing it is, that many make themselves more brutish than beasts, pierce themselves through with many sorrows, and drown themselves in destruction. And, as a greater proof of men's madness herein, the soul, their superior part, receives no benefit by it; for a king, an emperor

cannot be content if the earth is his only portion. Yea, were one man possessed of the whole of it, his soul, notwithstanding, would be an empty aching void. Why then this idolatrous, destructive love of, and delight in it? And what is sin, of every sort, but that which makes man an enemy to God, a friend to the devil, and an heir of damnation? These are the certain, the inseparable effects of it. Forasmuch then as all the earth cannot satisfy, and sin destroys the soul, who would serve such masters? Alas, such have no happiness, no hope, no right to heaven! And what is their life? A span for length, a wave for stability, a tumult for peace, and a scene of labour and sorrow! And, after living a little, then comes death, the king of terrors, the conqueror of all the ages from Adam, and with a sudden, or a gradual stroke mortally wounds the sinner, and sends his soul to Satan to lament its madness in preferring earth, or evil, or any other thing to God, grace, and glory. And, at the great day, this mortal body must put on immortality, and suffer, in hell, for all the sins it was instrumental of. When, lo! a ghastly company of accursed creatures, angels and men, will be its associates in sorrow, lamentation, and woe! There their fate will be fixed for ever! There they will lie in flames sulphureous, burning without ease and end! There Conscience, the great arbitrator betwixt them and the eternal God, and which reproved them for sin, and apprized them of danger, till, by repeated wickedness, it was feared and rendered silent, will be to them an eternal tormentor! There the great God, whom they disregarded, whose laws they made light of, whose mercies they overlooked, and whose judgments they feared not, will convince them, by intense torments, that he is a consuming fire! There Jesus, the lover of lost mankind, the friend of sinners, the bleeding sacrifice, the interceder and saviour, whose salvation they were willingly ignorant of, or despised, or neglected, or abused, will shew them no favour; but, as they did, he will do to them, despise, neglect, and destroy them, because they would not be saved by him! There the Holy Ghost, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, and who transacted the business of both, with them, by convincing them of sin, of the curse of God, and the want of Christ, by exciting them to repent, reform, and flee from the wrath to come, to believe, pray, and seek salvation, &c. but was slighted, or resisted, or grieved, or quenched, or done despite unto by them, will help them no more, and whose former helps will aggravate their eternal torments! There devils, whom they de-

lighted to serve by living in sin, will mock, laugh at, and execute the wrath of God upon them! There they will look up and see a lost heaven, but look in vain! There they will cry, roar, and rage, being full of the fury of the Lord, and tormented in that flame! There happiness and hope will never come, but misery and despair will prey upon and be their portion for ever! Wretched creatures! Dear bought contention! Sad effect of not obeying the truth! Dreadful fruit of obeying unrighteousness!

Who would not then obey the truth? And, to that purpose, have his heart renewed, yea filled with all the fulness of God? Less will not suffice for patient continuance in well-doing. Secure this then. It is God's gift, through his Son. He has promised it. And will he not perform? He cannot lie. Look then unto him by faith, prayer, and in the use of all other means. Derive a heaven of holiness into your heart. You cannot fail of finding it, but through your own fault. If it come at once, well; if not, have it by degrees. Blessed are they, who are thus. But more blessed, who daily praise the Lord for what he is, thank him for what he does, and live with an eye to his honour in all things; who labour to promote the temporal, spiritual, and eternal happiness of men by a conversation and conduct scrupulously exact, being full of sincerity, truth, justice, charity, zeal, and long-suffering; and who, by retaining grace and a good conscience, keep themselves in a good condition. To them, who thus live, and by so doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality, eternal life shall be given.

O thou, who, through thy Son, hast qualified the children of men, by a seminal or personal conversion, to keep thy commandments, and thereby to obtain eternal life; but hast not so constituted them as that they cannot corrupt themselves and break thy laws, for then they would not be free to serve, or to sin against thee; and would, in consequence, be incapable of receiving a reward according to their works. But though (as well as in reason, holiness, and rule) thou hast made man an image of thy self, in a liberty to do well or ill, and with a perfection which, well used, would prevent all pernicious things; yet, without that use, will not; and therefore, being free, his voluntary virtue, in patient continuance in well-doing, or vice in obeying unrighteousness, determines thee to deal with him accordingly. And thus, by the use or abuse of his ability, man makes or mars himself. And when thou sayest, *Well done*, what other cause, of commendation, is there

*than good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord? And when thou biddest the cursed depart to hell, it is because they are free workers of iniquity. Thus, righteous Lord, thou rewardest men according to their works. Who then, that would see good days, die in peace, rise gloriously, and be largely rewarded with thee, would not serve thee freely, fully, and patiently to the end?*



## ROMANS, Chap. ii. Ver. 12, 13.

*For as many as have sinned without the law, shall also perish without the law; and as many as have sinned under the law; shall be judged by the law.*

**T**HE Gentiles had not the law of Moses, nor, indeed, any other written law from the Lord. But they had a law written on their hearts, which, as it contained the general sense of the Jewish law, was to them, in point of direction, what that law was to the Jews: "For when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law to themselves; which shew the work, of the law, written on their hearts." Nature and the law signify the same thing, and mean the moral image of God, the properties of which are a light to discern, a will to choose, and a power to perform their duty. Neither did the want, of a revealed law, render them incapable of doing their duty; for a law is not a power to act, but a rule of action. Their rational, religious, and moral spirit, actuating their inward and outward animal powers, was their principle of action. And their spirit, in all these properties of it, and to all the purposes of them was, as a law, assisted by creation, providence, and internal teachings.—And all, in every age and place, who have lived without an external law, shall, at death and the last day, if they have sinned, and die therein,

*also perish without one, be punished for acting contrary to, destroying the law of their heart, neglecting the assistances given them, and for all the sins committed in consequence thereof.—And as many as have sinned, by omitting their duty, or doing things contrary to it, under the Jewish law, shall be judged, tried, and condemned by the law, in order to their being punished for sins committed under it.—If then the sinful Gentiles, under their inward law and assistances, were punishable; how much more the Jews, who had the same things, and their own law added to them, which, as it rendered their duty easier to be understood, increased their obligation to do it; and therefore, if they sinned, their sin was by so much the greater, and necessarily subjected them to a proportionable degree of punishment. These are the rules by which the Lord will proceed, with Gentiles and Jews.—But as christians are favoured, above them both, by having the gospel added to the Jewish and natural laws, their obligation, to a right discharge of duty, riseth higher; and, by necessary consequence, if they fail of performing it, will sink them lower in suffering.*

And yet, notwithstanding the different degrees, of light, in these outward dispensations, the law of the mind has been the same in all ages and places; Gentiles, Jews, and Christians having been upon a par in this particular. And, indeed, it would be absurd to suppose that God gives, to the same sort of creatures, different degrees of the same thing, in order to answer the same purpose. And that one moral end was intended to be answered, by all, is evident from this, that the service, required of his creatures, must agree with himself and the quality of their souls. But we are sure that the Lord is holy, and may be equally sure that he never gave, to moral agents, any other than a holy heart. And hence, as an happy effect, the heathens, who made a right use of what they had, did the things contained in the law; the substance of which was loving the Lord with all the heart, &c. If then the quality of the human heart, as coming from God through Christ, imply the property of holy love; was there ever a dispensation, from God, which did not require this as a duty? It could not be that there should, the consistency of God being too great to give in principle, what he does not require the effect of in practice. Either then there have been some to whom he never gave holy souls, or all souls have had such a disposition as to be capable of loving according to his commandment. Nor can the doctrines, of either different kinds



or degrees of holiness, be admitted, inasmuch as the first supposes the Lord to give an inferior and a superior sort of grace, and the second that the capacities, of the ancients, could not contain as much, of the divine quality, as these of later days. The passages of scripture, then, which ascribe greater things, to the christian age, than to any other, cannot, with consistency, signify internal grace, but only external privileges. And it is easy, as a proof thereof, to produce instances of as good men in ancient, as in later days; of which Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Job, &c. are a specimen. From which this doctrine, with the greatest certainty, may be deduced, viz. "That however different the outward dispensations, of God, have been, the principle of grace has been the same, in quality and quantity, in all:" And therefore all nations, in all ages, have been capable of serving God, and of being finally saved.

And herein appears the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God's government. And, indeed, without a possibility of obeying, and of being saved, his government would be inconsistent with the well-being of his creatures. But its excellency appears more especially in its being, as indeed it ought to be, in every one's power to act an independent part; to be religious whether others will or not, and in opposition to all outward and inward force. This accounts for extraordinary cases; for some, amidst many of a contrary mind, and full of cruelty, have been devout, and, rather than sin, suffered themselves to be deprived of life. Others, who lived in the most voluptuous courts, with seducers of every sort, preserved their purity, and adorned their profession. And some, in every lawful way of life, have lived well; which shews, that religion is compatible with every lawful condition; and that the reason why some are religious, and others not, is, the use, or abuse of their abilities. Nor is this contrary to, or inconsistent with the nature of man, who, as a free-agent, is under no necessity to act, or to be indolent, but what is imposed upon himself by his own voluntary choice and motion. Or, if there be motives to both the one and the other, from visible and invisible things, they are not such as destroy the use of the understanding and liberty of the will: and while these faculties remain, and retain any measure of their moral disposition, the self-determining property, of the soul, (which is the essence of a free-agent, and the only cause of its being accountable for its conduct) may use or abuse these abilities by acting right in opposition to temptation to do wrong, and

wrong in despite of inducements to do right. It can likewise concur with a sense of its duty, and comply with prohibitions from evil. Such is that property, in man, which renders him free in, conscious of, and rewardable for his own works. And, agreeably to this, the apostle tells us that the consciences, of the Gentiles, bore witness, and their thoughts accused or excused them. Now conscience is that sense, which the soul has, of the good or evil of its own actions; and, according to it, the thoughts acquit or condemn. Thus conscience, which is a witness to, and a judge of man's works, evidences that the Gentiles were free-agents, and that their inward, and consequently outward actions, were made good or evil by them, as they freely used or abused their powers of action.

Here then is a law written, on the heart, in moral characters, correspondent to the quality of that engraven on tables of stone, and commensurate with the remotest antiquity, and the ends of the earth. And this law is sufficient for all the purposes of piety, truth, justice, charity, &c. Yet to this, for its illustration, other things are added, some of which are evident to all; for the Lord's invisible power and God-head, by the greatness and goodness of his visible works, are clearly seen by all. And so far the Gentile, the Jew, and the Christian are equally favoured. The unequal and extraordinary privileges, of some, are the Jewish ritual, including the moral, ceremonial, and judicial laws, and the christian's clearer code of commandments. And if the consciences, of the Gentiles, accused or excused them in consequence of the nature and degree of their conduct; how much more should the consciences, of the Jews and the Christians, accuse or acquit them? Proportionably, to their inward and outward light, should the witness and sentence of their conscience be. Moreover, if the Gentiles perish for breaking their inward law, what punishment will be inflicted, on the Jews and the Christians, if they sin? Better will it be for Sodom than for more enlightened lands, if their sins are only equal in themselves. Should not this then be deeply considered by the Christians, whose outward light is the brightest?

But who is a christian? He in whose heart is the law of God, who knows he is his child, has an earnest of heaven, rejoices in hope of it, and longs to leave the world and go to it. These are some of the excellent things which enter into the composition of a christian. Have you then these things? What is the law of your heart? Is it that by which you can keep the commandments of God? Do you fear, love, and

delight in him? Is his service sweet to you? Have you no greater joy than to think, speak, and do what will please him? If it is not so, you are but a heathen in his worst estate: You have not retained God in your knowledge, your foolish heart is darkened, you are given up to vile affections, yea, perhaps, to a reprobate mind. Does not your whole soul confirm this? What say your understanding, will, affections, conscience, and memory? Do you know God, by his spirit, as your God? And can you, as a consequence, call him Father? Do you know whether you are fit for heaven or hell? If you do not know these things, whatever else you know is of small signification. What do you will? Any thing but the world and wickedness? What do you love, delight in, hope for, fear, &c.? If earthly objects are any thing to you compared to heavenly ones, it is proof enough that you are carnally minded; which is death. And if evil objects are agreeable to you, it is a sure sign of a sinful soul. What are you conscious of? When you sin, does your heart smite you? Or can you curse, lie, get drunk, break sabbaths, whore, pick, steal, cheat, deceive, talk obscenely, sing foolish songs, play at cards, go to horse courses, balls, plays, and live, in all things, as if you had not a soul to save, nor a God to serve, and without any measure of remorse? If you can, in what a condition is your conscience? It is seared and senseless. And what do you remember? The Lord? your latter end? the last day? your duty to God, yourself, and others? your salvation? If these are not remembered unspeakably more than all other things, it shews the depravity of your principle; for what is frequently forgotten is foreign to us, and what is most remembered is our principal portion. And what is the issue, of all these things, in your words and works? What end have you in view in speaking and acting? Do you intend the honour of God, the edification of your neighbour, and the advantage of your own soul? Now if your whole life is not ordered to answer those ends, you act at random, and do not care what will be the consequence. And is this your christianity? Alas, you rank among those, who did not retain God in their knowledge, and whom he gave up to a reprobate sense!

But, remember, you are to be judged by the law, the substance of which is to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and your neighbour as yourself. Now, if you have not done so, what will you do? And what is

more certain than that you have not, except that, having sinned, you must suffer for it; for God will not clear the guilty. And what will be your sufferings? Tongue cannot tell the torments of hell. They are past description. Fire, brimstone, and gnawing worms are emblems of them. But by how much spirit is more sensible than matter, by so much will your torments be intenser. Consider then how you have sinned; and be sure, that if you have, and die therein, you will not go unpunished. And the more sin you have been guilty of, the greater will be your punishment. If then they be blessed, who die in the Lord, how cursed will you be, who die out of him! So, when you lie on a bed of languishing, ready to take your leave of all that you loved, if your conscience be awake, Oh what terrors will take hold of you! You will reflect on all your former follies, and will see what a mad life you have lived; that, instead of serving the Lord by fearing, loving, and delighting in him, by praising him for his excellencies, thanking him for his daily benefits, and devoting yourself unto him, in all well-doing, you have served sin and Satan by all sorts of evil; that though you should have helped others to heaven, you have, by your example and influence, helped many to hell; and in lieu of working out your salvation, you have wrought out your damnation. And how will your reflections, on former follies, throw you upon a sight of what you have to suffer! You will see hell ready to receive you, and devils waiting to conduct you to their kingdom. And when the judge says depart, ye cursed, the pit will ring with rejoicing at your going: Well done, Satan will say, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the sorrow of thy Lord! Then will all the accursed crew gaze upon their new comer, by whom their number will be increased, and with whom they must suffer for ever. O dreadful state! Prevent it, sinner, by a speedy repentance, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and by being faithful unto death.

How wonderful, O Lord, art thou in wisdom and justice! By thy wisdom thou devisest different dispensations for the instruction and government of men; and by thy justice, in judging them, thou dealest accordingly. But though, to some, thou only givest an inward law, which is written, in the heart, in rational and moral characters, and renders them capable, according to the discoveries thou makest of thyself, of knowing, choosing, and serving thee. Yet to all such, beside inward revelations, thou art revealed in thy works of

creation and providence, which declare to all, in a clear manner, the infiniteness of thy wisdom in devising, of thy power in creating, and of thy goodness in adapting them to the advantage of all sensitive creatures. But to some, who have these in common with all, thou addest an external revelation, by which thyself, works, will, service, and the way of salvation are made more manifest. Yet when those, who have not that law, sin, (which, being a voluntary thing, they need not) and die therein, they shall perish by being punished according to the nature and circumstances of the law they lived under, the one being proportioned to the other; which, righteous Lord, is a right procedure. And when such, as have that law, sin; (which is also voluntary, and aggravated by that additional light) thou wilt judge by that rule, and condemn them to greater punishment, in hell, than those who more dimly discerned thy will. And thus, thy blessing, through man's misuse, is turned into an eternal curse. But thy righteousness remaineth, and none will have just cause to complain of their punishment, themselves, by their unneccessitated sin, having been the cause thereof. Yea sinners, in that awful day, will second thy sentence by saying, just and right are thy judgments, Lord, Almighty, though we suffer intense and eternal torments! And thus as all in heaven will glorify thee for thy mercy, so all in hell will glorify thee for thy justice. How great then is thy goodness, truth, and justice! So great, gracious Lord, are these, that though, to the glorified, goodness as a property of thy pure nature, and as the effect of that property in temporal, spiritual, and eternal benefits, sought, received, and improved by them, will be the basis of their perpetual and eternal praise, gratitude, and glorying, yet they never can sufficiently adore thee for it; nor will those, in hell, who neglected and abused thy goodness, and whose pain, by punishment, will be proportionate, and run parallel with eternity, accuse thy justice as the unrighteous cause of it, but confess, to the glory thereof, that they justly suffer for their sins.

## ROMANS, Chap. viii. Ver. 28, 29, 30.

*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. For whom he foreknew, he also predestinated, to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. And whom he predestinated, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

**T**O love God is not only an indispensable duty, but also the most excellent exercise. That it is a duty the nature of man, and the commandment of God fully evince; for man is a dependent, a rational, religious, and accountable creature: and therefore his relation, to the Lord, is such as obliges him to it, in the highest degree he is capable of; and subjects him, in case of failure, to the severest punishment.—The causes, productive of love, are man's natural and moral powers, governed by his arbitrating agency. The natural power is his heart; a spiritual, intelligent, and affectionate principle. His moral power is the holy quality of it, or the divine nature in perfection. His arbitrating agency is that property, of his nature, which presides over, and by which he may use his powers, according to his pleasure.—To love God is to have the highest degree of complacential affection for, and delight in him. And inasmuch as he is the best of Beings, it is also to prefer him to all other objects of love, and to do all things with a design to please him.

*To them that are called according to his purpose.* This is not only a new character of those who love God, (all things working together for good, having respect to the persons signified by both) but προθεσιν properly signifies a purpose, or intention, or design in God of calling men in general, Gentiles as well as Jews, to salvation. The effect of which purpose was found,

in fact, in those Romans who had been Gentiles, but, by the preaching of the gospel, were become Christians. Now as the calling of the Jews and Gentiles, by the gospel, had been revealed in the Old Testament; there is a great propriety in speaking of them as persons called according to the purpose of God, as they would thereby see that their being called was not a casual, but a designed thing.

*And when he did fore-know* (προγνω, to know before, or to fore-approve) as embracing the gospel, and receiving the benefit of it, *he did predestinate*, προορισε, fore-appoint, as the consequence of their receiving the gospel, *to be conformed to the image of his Son*, in holiness and glory, as the model after whom they should be made, that he and they might have the same holy disposition of heart, and, as the effect, love God as he did; *that he might be the first born*, or chief, *among many brethren*, as partaking of one common nature, he of their animal and spiritual, and they of his holy nature; that they might be one in respect of humanity, as he and his Father are one in regard of divinity. To the effecting of which, *whom he predestinated, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* Those whom he purposed, to be conformed to the image of his Son, he called, by the gospel, to repent, reform, and seek salvation: And whom he called (they obeying the call; for many do not, *Mat. xxii. 14.*) he also justified, by forgiving their sins and accepting their persons: And whom he justified, (they persevering to sanctification, and in his service to the end) he also glorified, by giving them an inheritance among the saints in light. This is the method, which the Almighty makes use of, in bringing men to glory. Betwixt which and his purpose, (that they should be conformed to the image of his Son) there is a perfect correspondence. For how should a sinner become a saint, but by being saved from his sin? And how should a sinner be saved from his sin, but by being called to seek and find salvation from it? And as his purpose and practice agree, so does the end with both; for how can men become lovers of God, and be glorified, but by being so saved, from sin, as to be conformed to the image of his Son?

The happy effect of which is, *that all things work together for good to them that love God.* All things. This must not be taken in the largest sense; (though some have so taken it) for that would suppose sin to work for good; and then the

inference would be, the more sin, the more good accrues to the lover of God. That this is not the sense is certain, inasmuch as that, while a man loves God, he does not sin; for this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. The meaning then is, that whatever consists with, accompanies, and is the consequence of loving God, will have a good effect, this love making all things good. Hence riches or poverty, health or sickness, honour or dishonour, persecution or peace, &c. will do good to those who love God, having thereby a sanctified use.

Forasmuch then as the purpose, the way, and the end, with all attending circumstances, conspire to bring men to glory; the wisdom and goodness, of God, are wonderfully displayed in this whole procedure. A sense of which produced this rapturous interrogation, *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?* It was astonishing to Paul, that the goodness of God should be so great; and his confidence, in it, made him challenge all adverse power. To confirm this, he mentions a fact, and draws an inference from it: *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* Here the apostle argues from the greater to the less; as if he had said, having given his Son, the greatest and best of gifts, how shall he withhold inferior favours? This is the purport of it, and sufficiently proves that the method, taken by the Almighty, will produce the most excellent effects, if not frustrated by the folly of men.

But notwithstanding God's foreknowledge of, and predestinating men to this excellent end, and his calling, and justifying, and glorifying them to answer it; yet it cannot, without contradicting many passages of scripture, be supposed that these respect, in an unconditional sense, a small and certain number of people, exclusive of all the rest, inasmuch as his foreknowledge respects men's receiving the gospel as a mean of their salvation, and his approving of them as being thereby prepared for glory. And the same may be said of predestinating, as he cannot appoint any man to perdition, but for his own sins; nor for them, if it never was in his power to prevent them, and practise the contrary things, as he never punishes for impossibilities. If then sin suppose either a past or a present power to please God; his first appointment, of all men, was to a conformity to the image of his Son. Or if foreknowledge and appointment refer to the different effects of their future call; that was determined by themselves: *For*



*many are called, but few are chosen.* And what reasons does our Saviour assign for this difference? Only such as need not have been, and as he blamed them for: For some, when called, *would not come*: Others, *made light of it*: And some, *slew his servants*. The consequence of which was, he condemned them to die. Now, who was the cause of their conduct? Themselves? Or was it the effect of foreknowledge and appointment? To say that God ordained them to do so, would be to make him the cause of their crimes, and to charge him with being the author of a severe sentence, for sins they could not but commit. But his resentment was too right, and his sentence too just for him to be any part of the cause of their sins. So themselves, not God, were the authors of this evil. It is clear then that all, who are called, are not justified.

Neither is it absolutely certain that all, who are justified, will be glorified. This depends, first, on being fully conformed to the image of his Son; the having neither spot of sin, nor wrinkle of imperfection. But that all justified persons are not so is certain; and therefore, though they are intitled to glory, they are not completely qualified for it. And if they continue, in that condition, till they die, but do not improve it to a full preparation for glory; is it certain that they will not be punished as unprofitable servants? That a man may receive a talent, and retain it till he is called to give up his accounts, and then be deprived of it and punished, the scriptures testify. Nor will any man, who makes the scripture his rule of judging, say, that all justified persons continue in that condition, inasmuch as we read of one, who had much forgiven, but because he would not forgive a little, he was condemned and punished for the former forgiven debt. And notwithstanding that it is a comparison, yet it is equivalent to a direct doctrine; for our Lord neither made impossible, nor unnecessary suppositions. And his application, of it, renders it impossible to be otherwise understood; “for so, saith he, will my heavenly Father do unto you, if from your hearts you forgive not your brother his trespasses.” Forasmuch then as some, who are called, are not justified; and others, who are justified, may not be glorified; that connection, conceived by some, betwixt being called and glorified, is of the uncertain sort; and consequently, what is said of the Lord’s foreknowing, predestinating, calling, justifying, and glorifying does not exclude the conditions, which, though not specified, are implied, or may be

supplied from other places. The being glorified then depends on obeying the call in order to be justified; and, being justified, on improving it to a full conformity to Christ, and continuing therein to the end.

And notwithstanding that the Lord is the most amiable of objects, and love the most excellent exercise, and that it flows from a full conformity to Christ in holiness; yet such is the mutability of man, (flowing as well from his free-agency, as from other causes) that some are charged with leaving their first love; and others with having it grown cold. And indeed the cause, of spiritual love, is of such a nature as renders the continuance of it uncertain. This is the moral disposition of the mind; which is changeable. And as the cause is, so is the consequence; for love increases or decreases as its cause does. And that, according to the nature of things, which changes in one degree, may in another, as no bound can be put, to such a principle, but its highest pitch or utter extinction. Nor is that, by which the cause of love continues, viz. a right use of all man's powers in serving God, himself, and others, more certain; for only by being a good steward, of God's grace, can it be continued. But the possibility of being a bad one, as the effect of a wrong use of free-will, renders this continuance uncertain. Nor can the Almighty prevent this, consistently with his rewarding men according to their works. The continuance of love, then, being uncertain, the being glorified is equally so; consequently the connection, betwixt being called and glorified, is conditional.

Who then, to prevent danger, would not obey the call? And who, that has obeyed it, would not believe for, seek, and find salvation from sin? Yea who, that has been so favoured, would not retain and improve it to a full conformity to Christ, keep it to the end, and be glorified? The possibility of not obeying the call, and of forfeiting the favour of God, render these absolutely necessary. And, surely, this is a method more to be depended on, than a supposition that these things cannot be separated.

And what have they to do with that supposition, who have none of these things, except the first in an ineffectual way? They have been called; (and who has not, that was capable of it?) but if they have not obeyed, it proves there is a possibility of disobeying. And what is done at one time, may be at another, and so on to the end. And, doubtless, many would conclude thus, if they were left to their own con-

sciences. But the leaders of men make them err; for how many have taught, that if men can but prove their calling, they may be confident of being glorified. And those, who have neglected their salvation, being glad to find something to support them, lay hold on the first, but broken link of this chain, (for they have not obeyed the call) and hope to be drawn to heaven by it. To confirm this, (although the Apostle commands men to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure) a distinction has been devised betwixt the *being* of a man's calling and election, and his *being sure* of it: As if the substance could be without the sense of it. But these and their fruits being experimental things, it is impossible to have the one without the other. Moreover, by making them sure, the Apostle does not only mean present, but also future assurance, by retaining them for the purpose for which they are given; which is to bring men to glory. That this is the sense is evident, it being an assurance which depends on, and is the fruit of giving all diligence; and therefore pertains to the future existence of them. Which is abundantly confirmed by its contrary, where he says, *he that lacketh these things, which come by diligence, and which tend to preserve assurance, is blind, and hath forgotten, hath lost both the substance and sense, that he was purged from his old sins.* Now this not only shews the absurdity of contending for the substance without the sense; but also that where both are, without giving all diligence, they will not be retained; inasmuch as he says, *if ye do these things, you shall never fall*: Which implies, that if they are not done, they will fall. And then how will they be glorified? It is then absolutely certain, that there is no such connection, betwixt being called and glorified, as cannot be broken. What dependance then is to be placed on being called, unconnected with the other parts of a qualification for glory? None, it having no more connection with glory, than the first round of a ladder has with the last; and if the first never be, or only be taken, the top will never be attained to. And if many be called, but few chosen; then the being called and justified are not inseparable. And if those, who are justified, may forfeit that favour by not forgiving others their offences; it is also evident, that justification and glory are not inseparable. Betwixt being called and glorified then, there is no connection but what depends on obeying the call, believing unto justification, and abiding therein to the end; which are

personal performances, and depend on man's pleasure to do or leave undone.

How grateful, O holy, good, and gracious Lord, should men be to thee; for not only thy benefits, especially spiritual ones, are superlatively excellent, but even thy service, loving thee in so pure, perfect, and perpetual a manner, as, in consequence, continually to keep all thy commandments, is the greatest, best, and pleasantest duty in life; and, moreover, makes all afflictions occasioned by, and consistent with it, work eventually, one way or another, for good to those, who are exercised therein, both in time and eternity! But, glorious Lord, how art thou to be adored for thy wonderful wisdom in foreseeing, from eternity, and foretelling, in the Old Testament, thy purpose to call the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, by the gospel! And likewise that those, whom thou didst foreknow would be thus called, thou didst, as necessary for, and to make it exceedingly profitable and pleasant to them, resolve to conform thereby to the image of thy Son, to be like him in holiness and glory; that he, by assuming human nature, and they by partaking of his purity and privileges, might be one church, he the head, and they the members, that he might care for, sympathize with, and not be ashamed to call them brethren. And, to reduce thy purpose to practice, thou didst, when the time foretold was come, call them, by the gospel, to partake of the blessings and privileges prepared for them: And whom thou thus calledst, they obeying, thou didst, agreeably to thy design in calling, justify them from all their former offences; and continuing in that condition, by being faithful unto death, thou didst glorify them with thyself for ever. But, holy Lord, how lamentable is it, that so many have mistaken this momentous matter, that what thou hast said, by thy servant Paul, to convince both Jews and Gentiles, that the calling of the Gentiles, to the fellowship of the gospel, was not a casual, but certain thing, being foreseen and foretold, has been perverted, to purposes extremely prejudicial to men's minds and immortal state, by making their salvation and destruction depend on thy unconditional decree: By which the elect, so called, run no risk by any length they go in sin, nor can the reprobates prevent their perishing, let them do what they will. And so, as men suppose themselves to be of the one sort or the other, a liberty is given for all manner of licentiousness, because it cannot, as they imagine, make void thy decree. Yea, how many believe that all, they do, is or-

dained by thee, to accomplish that decree! And thus, by making thee the author of all that is, they confound good and evil, right and wrong, make men unaccountable, and unrewardable for their works. But some, ashamed to say so much, affirm that men are free to do well or ill, and yet deny that ill-doing will destroy the elect, or well-doing save the reprobate, and so make the effect differ from the nature of the cause, and contradict the sense of their own assertions. But, holy Lord, though thou dost unconditionally elect and reject, in things irrelative to salvation; as choosing Isaac and Jacob to be the progenitors of the Jews, all the Jews and professing christians for the visible church, the twelve to be apostles, the seventy for preachers, &c. and didst reject, in the same sense, Ishmael, Esau, all the heathen nations, disbelievers of the gospel, preachers, and disciples; yet thou savest no personal sinners but those who, according to their inward powers and outward privileges, repent, believe, and obey, nor rejectest any but such as will not do so.



## GENESIS, Chap. xix. Ver. 28.

*And lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.*

**H**OW dreadful are the judgments of the Lord! And yet how just! The men of Sodom had long and largely sinned against him, and yet seemed to be secure. But the Lord, a strict and jealous observer of the ways of men, being moved with indignation, determined to punish them. And, to render it unexceptionable, he represents himself as coming, from heaven, to take a survey of their sins, *chap. xviii. ver. 21.* But Abraham, having compassion for the righteous, Lot in particular, expostulated with him on their behalf. And though, for the sake of ten, he would have spared the city; yet, the number not being found, he proceeded to punish them. And having dismissed Lot and his family, (for he would not punish the righteous with the wicked) he rained fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and all the people of the

plains. And lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace. So did the Lord consume them for their sins. And, to perpetuate the remembrance of it, that fruitful plain was turned into a lake of stagnant water, which remains to this moment. Thus, where sin abounded, the judgments of the Lord abounded also.

Now what an awful emblem is this of the last day, when all the world will be on fire! And what a figure, are both, of the fire of hell, the tormentor of the children of men! Nor is this more mysterious than material fire, nor less an object of faith than it is of sense, it not being more difficult, to the Deity, to create spiritual bodies, and make them produce all the effects material ones do. And that material fire has tormenting effects, on sensible bodies, it is not in the power of skepticism to deny. Seeing then that the Almighty represents the future misery, of man, as being by fire, it is to be believed as a faithful saying. Nor is any thing, in material nature, so tormenting as fire. If then "pain is perfect misery," what is the effect of fire? And when the eternity of the torment is added to the intenseness of it, it surpasseth all description. What then is that which makes the Almighty thus punish men? His wisdom and justice prevent a disproportion betwixt sin and suffering, for he can neither err nor act unjustly. As then the effect is not greater than the cause; how great is the evil, which subjects sinners to intense and eternal torments! Great indeed; for though sin is but finite in itself, yet being against an infinite God, the punishment is proportioned, in the nature, degree, and duration of it, accordingly. What a madness then is that, which makes men sin! Alas, they do not consider what it is to endure the damnation of hell! But eternal torments will teach them.

And though the burning, of the sinners of Sodom, abstracted from their spiritual punishment, was but of a temporal and temporary kind; yet as the life of Lot had been much better than theirs, so was his portion in this particular, seeing the Lord sent him to a place of safety. So doth he preserve his servants from temporal sufferings. But what are temporal sufferings to eternal? Alas! What? The comparison is almost infinitely unequal; for the one affects the body only for little more than a moment, and the other the soul also for more than millions of years, even for ever. Yet, though this beggars all description, a gulph fraught with fire and brimstone is their place and portion. Who then would persist in

sin? Is any sin worth being plunged into the pit for? Ah, sinners, could you hear the damned deplore their condition, you would see that all the sins, in the world, are ten thousand times too little to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire for: For how short is the pleasure, and how long is the pain of them! Sin is no sooner committed than the pleasure of it is past; but its pains are perpetual! Hear then, sinner, how they howl in hell! Hear a sufferer say, "I am tormented in this flame! O for water to cool my tongue! I had, out of hell, all that the world could give; riches, honours, pleasures. But what have I now? Ah, all is lost; for riches I have poverty, for honour contempt, for pleasure pain. O sin, what hast thou done? The earth has cast me out, heaven is shut against me, hell holds me, and will hold; for here is my portion for ever!"

You then, who do not love the Lord, take no care of your soul, live in sin, and for no greater than temporal good; remember Sodom, the hour of death, the last day, eternal torments, and think whether you can endure to roll on a bed of fire, to drink the liquid flame, to dwell with devils, to bear the upbraidings of your conscience, to weep, wail, and gnash your teeth, to have no mitigation of your misery, and to be without happiness and hope for ever! O torments intense and eternal! Eternal! ever running, but never run out! Will you then, for the sake of sin, suffer all this? Why will you? What does sin do for you? It is the worst of evils. It makes you enemies to God, and friends to the devil; destroys conscience, credit, and constitution; brings pain, shame, and loss; makes you a foe to your fellows, and a factor for the fiends, by slaying souls and sending them to endless sufferings; and, in the end, as the reward of your work, you must enter on an unchangeable and everlasting punishment. So will you be served for the sin, which the Lord neither willed you to live, nor to die in; for you need not have sinned, and might have been saved from it.

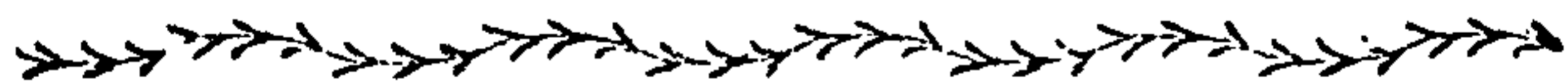
But why this double evil? Why did you sin? Was it well to forget God, to live without his fear, and to do things disagreeable to him? And is it well to neglect the salvation he sent his Son to procure for you, and has promised to give on condition of turning to him? For the first, of these evils, you may find a remedy in his salvation, if you will make a proper use of it; but, for the second, there is none save ceasing to be guilty of it: For who can profit by that which

he either never uses, or abuses? The neglect of it, then, renders the sinner's case remediless; he rivets his sins upon himself, and renders his damnation sure.—Now what can prevent this impending danger? Nothing but ceasing from the cause of it. Sinners turn then, why will you die? What pleasure can you find in pain? Turn instantly, for delays are dangerous. Sodom was secure in sin, but suddenly set on fire. How soon may it be your case? Your house may burn over your head, or lightning consume you to cinder. And then your soul enters on endless sufferings. Stop then sinners. Do not defy damnation. How can you endure it? Do not provoke the Lord any longer, lest he suddenly slay you. O, sinners, if you love your souls, spare them from punishment! Prefer not hell to heaven. Why should you perish, when you may be pardoned. If it was not possible to be saved, despair might make you persist in sin. But, while it is, carelessness or wilfulness only is the cause of it. For which there is no cure, but changing your course. Seeing then that it depends on your own pleasure, while your time of trial endures, whether you will be saved or lost; how much does it concern you, the matter being of the greatest moment, to consider well the nature and consequences of both. See the infinite good of the one, and the infinite evil of the other! Let wisdom then govern you in this important particular, that salvation, not destruction, may be your portion. O see its incomparable value! Prize it, prefer it, choose it, pursue it, possess it, use it, and retain it for ever. So will your life be instrumental to the Lord's honour, the edification of men, and your own everlasting advantage.

How great, O Lord, was thy displeasure at the sinners of Sodom! And yet how just; for they were many in number, and great in the degree of their sin! So many, that ten righteous men were not amongst them; and so great, that to excesses in lawful things, and other evils, were added unnatural courses. But why were the men of Sodom greater sinners than others? Did not thy Son redeem and deliver them, from original sin, equally with others? And did not thy grace, which teaches sinners to live soberly, righteously, and godly, appear to them, in quality and quantity, as unto others? Surely thou didst to them, as to all others, in these respects. Why then had they no equals in iniquity? O thou judge of the earth, who canst not err, if thou hadst known other cause, of their criminality, than their own voluntari-



ness, thine eye would have pitied, and thy hand have spared them! Thou wouldst neither so soon, nor so suddenly, nor so plenteously have rained fire from heaven to consume them: For thou hast no pleasure in punishing those, who oppose thee. But, alas! the measure of their sin was as well full, as the way of it had been free; and therefore, with propriety, thou couldst not permit them to live any longer. And so, from thyself, thou didst send fire and brimstone, in great abundance, upon the cities, the people, and all the plain; and not one sinner escaped. What a burning, O thou glorious Lord, was this! What a temporal token of thy displeasure! Yea what an emblem of eternal torments! Great God, thou art a consuming fire! Who would not fear thee? Who would be objects of thine anger? But, alas! what is the fire which burns bodies to cinder, to that which will burn souls for ever? And thou, O Lord, hast said, thou wilt kindle a fire in thine anger, which shall never be quenched. Ah, who can endure it? Lord, save from the hell which burns with fire and brimstone! But what canst thou do to sinners? If they will not turn, they must burn. Thou canst not save them in their sins. Thou wilt not clear the guilty. Thou canst not take the unholy to heaven. Their disposition, desires, doings, and deserts forbid it. Of necessity then thou must punish the impenitent; for thou, the judge of the earth, wilt do right.



## GENESIS, Chap. xxviii. Ver. 17.

*Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not.*

**T**HE circumstances preceding, and which were the occasion of this, were surprizing. Jacob, being on a journey, was overtaken by the night. And having neither house to abide in, nor bed to lodge on, “he lay down on the ground, and put a stone under his head for a pillow. And while he slept, he dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the

top of it reached unto heaven; And behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And the Lord stood above it. And Jacob awaked out of sleep, and being afraid, said, how dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." By the house of God, it is highly probable, he alludes to some particular place, where the Lord, when he was at home, usually manifested himself. And by the gate of heaven, that intercourse which those manifestations made. How dreadful is this place! The presence of God and the angels made it so. And though they were seen while he slept, yet the impression, made on his mind, was in his memory when he awoke.

"Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." But why did not Jacob know this; for is not the Lord in every place? Can any hide himself, saith he, that I cannot see him? It cannot be, inasmuch as his essence is every where. And where his essence is, there is his eye; for he is *totus oculus*, all eye. How boundless then is his being! And how great his understanding! Hence, being every where, he can, at once, be as attentive to every thing, as to any one thing in particular. Was Jacob insensible of this? As a man of God, it could not be. It is more than probable then, he means, I knew not that the Lord would make this the place of his appearance; that he would, in so wonderful a manner, reveal his will to me here. This seems to be the sense. The ladder, the angels, the Lord, the revelation of his will, promises, &c. were things he looked not for in his way to Padam-Aram.

And how wonderful is this, that let a man be where he will, he is where the Lord is: For the Lord is every where! Jacob was forced from his father's house, was going a long journey, and had no friend to converse with and accompany his tedious steps: But the Lord was with him. Being a pious man, he had as well the spirit and presence, as the essence and providence of God for his guide. The essence and providence of God are with all. His spirit and presence are peculiar to some; for the wicked have not the one, nor any sense of the other. Hence they think, speak, and act as disorderly, diabolically, and destructively as if he were absent. Yea, a sinner is one in whom the image of Satan is, his spirit has all the properties of those in the pit: Enmity to God, ignorance of his presence, hatred to his service, want of his fear, love to, and joy in him are some of them. And as a sameness of disposition, and a similarity

of sentiments subsist betwixt satan and such, he has access to their souls, and they have fellowship with him: For *he works in the children of disobedience*. Hence he teaches them to know, and excites them to do his pleasure. And so conformable are they to his commands, that they do his will on earth as it is done in hell. This is the unhappy condition of all the unholy.

But with the holy it is not so, their hearts being the habitation of the holy one; for by a divine disposition he dwelleth in them. So they are capable of conversing with, and of being instructed by him, having senses adapted to divine things. Their spiritual eye, ear, touch, taste, and smell being restored to a right state; God and heavenly things are as natural to, and as necessary for them, as external things are to the senses of the body. Hence they correspond with things above, and sensibly perceive the influence those objects have upon their hearts, with the profit or pleasure which accrues to them in consequence. Thus they place their affections on, and seek the things above; they sit in heavenly places in Christ, and their conversation is in heaven, and look and long for the Lord's everlasting kingdom; for their present anticipations assure them of the reality, and give them an high hope of that immortal glory. And this assurance and expectation, of glory, is only the natural result of a right preparation for it; for grace and glory differ not in kind, but degree: They have the same nature, flow from the same fountain, produce the same effects, and the one cannot be without the other: None can have grace without a right to glory, nor a right to glory without grace. Thus these excellent things are inseparably connected. Happy the heart, which is possessed of the one, and has hope of the other.

O thou glorious Lord, who canst be present, and yet, to human apprehension, as absent; how incomprehensible is thy essence, which, though every where, is no object of outward sense; and so all, in this respect, are equally ignorant of thee! Nor can souls, which are spirit, if contrary to thyself in quality, discern thee. So men sin, and perceive not that thou seest them. But thou, O Lord, art ever present, and every thought, word, and work are known to thee. And all those, in whom thy spirit dwells, and by which they have fellowship with thee, know it; for they see, as the mind seeth, that thou art ever with them, and they have

access to thyself for all that their case requires. And it is easy unto thee to make extraordinary discoveries, especially to those whose moral senses are sound, and exercised to discern thy teachings from the motions of their own minds, and from Satan's suggestions. Such thou dost instruct in things of which thy written word says nothing, and from which they could have no intimation of thy pleasure. And because the world is full of thee, and thou art every where the same; thou canst by dreams, visions, outward voice, &c. reveal thy will to those less capable of immediate mental teaching. But, to the more perfect, thou speakest with a still small voice, which is audible to the inward ear, and clear in sense and sound. O fellowship divine! Heavenly converse! Blessed anticipation of eternal talk with the father of spirits and fountain of felicity! Gracious God, to prepare for this, purify immortal souls from sin. O cleanse them from impure disposition, temper, affection, and desire, that, by their care and conduct, they may be kept capable of conversing with thee. The pure in heart, thou sayest, shall see thee; see thee in thy works and word, but more in their own minds, as being the greatest semblance of thyself, and more still by the discoveries thou makest of thyself to such. And, when faith is lost in sight, thou wilt be more clearly seen; for then all the pure in heart will fully behold thee. Till which, eternal Lord, give a pure principle, and instruct as may seem good unto thyself.



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**GENESIS, Chap. xxxii. Ver. 26.**

*I will not let thee go unless thou bless me.*

**A**LTHOUGH these words have a literal, yet their correspondence with other scriptures, in a spiritual sense, is manifest. And were men but sensible of their wants, what Jacob did literally, they might do spiritually; wrestle till they prevail. Indeed where sin has so far darkened the mind

as to render it insensible, prayer is but impertinence, or mockery of the Most High, especially when made for things which concern the mind; of which, in that benighted condition, there is no knowledge either of the nature or necessity of them. But if a degree of that light and life, with which Christ enlightens and enlivens every man, remains in principle and use, wants are seen and felt; for thereby the senses, of the soul, give a consciousness of its condition. Such then may pray with the Spirit and with the understanding, with desire and discernment. And what should hinder a reception of all they want? The Lord will not, and Satan cannot. And yet how many ask, and do not receive! To what then is it to be attributed? To themselves. Other causes there cannot be. Man lies at the Lord's mercy only, who is more ready to give than he is to receive. The reason then is, he does not wrestle with that unremitting importunity which is commanded. The Lord saith, *seek and ye shall find*; and confirms it by adding, *for every one that seeketh, findeth*. But it is not every sort of seeker that findeth, inasmuch as he says, *many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able*. Many shall take methods either contrary to, or short of that which they should do; and, consequently, not accomplish their end. To prevent this, and to promote the salvation of souls, he adds, *strive, as in an agony, to enter in at the strait gate*. And so the Saviour himself supplicated; for he prayed as in an agony, and offered up strong crying and tears. The successful seeker then must firmly believe, earnestly pray, and persevere therein till he prevails. Jacob wrestled with the angel, and prevailed. But if he had not begun, or had desisted when half the night was gone, or when the morning began to appear, he had gone without his blessing. In like manner, if souls never seek, or seek insincerely, or desist before they have found, they will be lost everlastingly. Yet know, for your encouragement, that as the Lord has promised to forgive sin, and to cleanse from all unrighteousness, as things which are absolutely necessary for present salvation, his own service, and a preparation for paradise; it cannot be that he, who is goodness itself, should withhold them from such as are duly disposed to receive them. To do it would be to counteract himself in giving his Son for sinners, in promising salvation to seekers, and in making man for his praise. But a Being, of infinite wisdom, goodness, justice, and truth, cannot act so inconsistently. Whoever then does not find, these indispensably necessary things, may be sure that some-

thing, in themselves, is the cause. Should not these then, to prevent their perdition, imitate Jacob, exert themselves and say, "thou shalt not go except thou bless me." Delays are extremely dangerous. Death is at the door, and that will cast the dye for ever. Who then would live without being prepared to die? For what may a day do? That which cannot be undone for ever. You may die in a day; and dying unprepared, you perish for ever. Is it right then to live amidst so much danger? Alas, it is daring the damnation of hell! Sinner, beware! Thou knowest not the moment thy soul will be required. Ah, how soon may it be! And then, with thee, time commences eternity. From which moment no change will pass, but from bad to worse. This will be the portion of all the impenitent. Oh dreadful effect of human folly!

But, surely, life, though short and uncertain, was lent to secure a state more sweet than words can signify. 'Tis wrath God did not create his creatures; but to obtain salvation through his Son. No pleasure, he says, he swears, has he in their punishment. And cries, why will ye die? O that men would therefore fear the Lord, and seek his saving benefits! Then would it be well with them; God would be their God, grace their portion, and heaven their future home. Then would all earth's tinsel'd toys appear ten thousand times inferior, in nature, use, and duration, to things eternal. Their nature is gross, being but a composition of the corporeal elements; their use, only the support and satisfaction of the animal man; and their duration, the short term of man's continuance on the earth. But heavenly things are more pure than spirit itself, being rather the quality than the substance of spirit; their use, as inhering in the heart, is the ground of union and communion with God, and of all acceptable service; and their duration is to the days of eternity. Now these being the most sublime in themselves, they afford the most seraphic joys. And when spirit, soul, and body are refined to a pitch, of purity, capable of conversing with spiritual, holy, and everlasting objects, their converse will be suitable to every sense and appetite of the whole, and far exceed whatever can be conceived of the most refined friendship, the sweetest sensations of sensual things, and the highest human honours: Unmixed, uninterrupted, and everlasting will be their delights. O what a portion of unspeakable pleasure is this! Who then would not prize, choose, pursue, and possess it!

Surely, O Lord, thou never saidst, to any of the sons of men, seek ye my face, in vain. Thou, who hadst no motive, for making men, but thy own glory and their advantage: Thou, who, when thy work was marred, didst send thy Son to renew it: And thou, who hast prepared for sinners, a salvation from every sin, but that of their finally rejecting salvation, canst not keep, from them, that which their well-being, in both worlds, renders necessary for them to receive. To distrust thy goodness, then, would be, in effect, to disbelieve what thou hast done, or to make thee contradict thyself in giving thy Son for sinners, and not, for his sake, giving the salvation he purchased for them. Such a method of proceeding, O thou who art wisdom, justice, truth, and goodness, would be too unwise and wicked for those, the reverse of thee, to be guilty of. But thou, as thy promise is, wilt give all good things to them that ask, or so much of thy heavenly grace as will, well used, make men do thy will on earth as it is done in heaven; and, without the galling goad of sickness, or pain, or poverty, or old age, make them loath life, die willingly, and be as sure of heaven as if already seated there. But, alas! priests of all professions are too much alike, and too little teach the need there is of a fulness of the divine nature. Or, if some so teach, yet how few shew the way to find it? A few do it in part; fewer perfectly; and very few shew, that continual earnestness is absolutely necessary. And of the people, few will be at the pains to act in all things, according to their understanding, in order to receive what thou, Lord, has to give. And thus error and idleness prevent, the most of men, from profiting by the provision which thou hast made through thy Son, in whom all fulness dwells. But wilt not thou, O righteous Lord, punish these evils both in priests and people? Surely thou wilt not, for ever, spare the priest, who preaches for hire, and has no sense of the way of salvation: The formalist, who recommends a rule of life, without a religious principle: The ideal man, who deals in truths he does not experimentally know: The half experienced, who lays a foundation, but goes not on to perfection: Neither he, who does not teach that none are kept, who do not keep themselves: Nor he, who urges not the need there is of doing, all things, in the manner most agreeable to thee, and for the good of men, nor excites to good works by the hope of rewards. Neither wilt thou spare, but punish those who will not lay aside, for the sake of salvation, all weights which pre-

vent their full pursuit of spiritual things, nor so guard against sins, to which they are most subject, as not to be, in any degree, subdued by them. Surely, O Lord, notwithstanding thy forbearance now, the time is coming when thou wilt reward all, as their works have been.

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E X O D U S, Chap. v. Ver. 2.

*I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.*

**I**GNORANCE, instead of being the mother of devotion, is a common cause of its contrary; for because Pharaoh did not know the Lord, he did not obey him. And as "he that loveth not, knoweth not God;" so he that knoweth not, loveth not God. Ignorance of God's existence, essence, and attributes is a natural and necessary cause of disobedience; for who can serve a God of whom he is wholly insensible. Nor is that knowledge, which is but by inference from the outward works of God, sufficient as a ground of religious service, inasmuch as it is not so properly to know the Lord, as to know that there is a God. And whatever inducement the consideration of God's wisdom, greatness, and goodness, conspicuous in the works of creation and providence, may be to adore him; the first and principal cause, of adoration, is the knowledge of himself in the soul: For, without this, whatever is done, is done to a god unknown.

Now the knowledge, of God, arises from his image in, and his presence with the soul. His image consists of a spiritual nature, the properties of which are mind, will, and memory; and of a moral disposition, containing holy light, love, power, &c. which agree with God's spiritual and moral nature. But the moral properties are the principal ones, as they not only represent the goodness of God, but also distinguish good men from bad, which the others do not, being common to all. But though the natural and moral image, of God, are the best glass wherein to behold what is to be



known of him ; yet they afford but a reflective, not a direct view of him. However, though his image is not himself, it is to the soul the senses by which he may be known, as thereby it tastes, sees, feels, hears, &c. the Lord as sensibly, as the body does the things which belong to it.—Nor are these senses and their respective objects separable; for as the Lord is every where, so is he manifest to all, who are capable of conversing with him. Hence holy souls, on earth, have the same sort of union and communion with him, which the inhabitants of heaven have. Forasmuch then as the evidence of sense, reason, and religion combine to give the knowledge of God, and that evidence is corroborated by the connection which subsists betwixt the Lord and holy souls, and is increased and confirmed by the mutual communications of light, love, power, peace, &c. on the Lord's part, and by praise, gratitude, affection, &c. on man's; it is easy, for all, to know the Lord. It is likewise absolutely necessary, as there is no knowledge of God, no power to do his will, nor sense of the way of serving him sufficient, but what is implied in his image in (and presence with) the soul, that being the first principle which *may* produce a practice well pleasing to him. And yet ability, to obey, does not imply an absolute certainty of obeying, because practices flow only from principles as they are used by their possessors; which may not be at all, or may be in any degree.—And as Pharaoh did not know the Lord, he had not that ability; and therefore, though he did let the people go, it was not a free, but a forced obedience. Nor can any obedience, which has not the divine nature and the free choice of its subjects, be otherwise.

How excellent then is that knowledge, which is the root of obedience! And how happy are they, who both know and obey! This is to live on earth the life of heaven; to be, in principle and practice, as the angels: With which nothing can compare, in point of profit and pleasure. For what is profit but the riches of God's grace, the abundance of good works, peace of conscience, and a prospect of final felicity? And what is pleasure but serenity of soul, and rapturous joy; the result of the fore-mentioned profitable particulars? Now these are the most certain, solid, and satisfying things in the world, as having no dependance on matter, states of life, degrees of health, strength, age, riches, poverty, or any other thing of a temporal nature, being compatible with every lawful condition. Wherefore being of a spiritual,

holy, and immortal kind, and having God and the happiness of heaven for their object and end; earthly riches, honours, and pleasures are but poverty, contempt, and pain in comparison of them: For if a man had the whole world, and could extract the spirit of all its peculiar properties, and apply them to his several senses and appetites; being sensual, they would minister nothing to the salvation and satisfaction of his soul; and the utmost bound, of their duration, would but be the continuance of his relish for, or the period of his partaking of them; which could only be for a short and uncertain season. Such is that good which this world gives! Alas, how poor and perishing! How little then to be loved, courted, and depended on! And yet, for this, how many sacrifice all their interest in the Creator, Saviour, and Sanctifier; in the transcendent excellence of a holy, happy state of mind; the incomparable service of God, the testimony of a good conscience, the joyful expectation, and happy possession of heaven!—Ah, how unwise and wicked are such! Alas! who can sufficiently lament their case! Their God, their good, their all is the world! To the grace of Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost they make no pretence. Or, if any, a senseless, or hypocritical one. And what do they hope to have hereafter? If any thing but hell, it is because they know nothing of the nature of heaven. For how can heaven, which is a place of spiritual delights, and such sensual souls agree? But the ignorance, or the madness of many reconciles them. Yet, alas, it is only a reconciliation which makes them secure in sin and danger! O for a conviction, then, of their condition! O that they may see, and feel, and confess that they know not the Lord, nor obey him! Then would their baseless hope, of heaven, vanish away, and hell would appear ready to receive them! A sight not more shocking than necessary and profitable: Necessary, to awaken their fears, and make them flee from the wrath to come; and profitable, in preparing them for, and exciting them to seek the knowledge of God by the grace, witness, and revelation of his Spirit, that they may have union and communion with him, and do his will on earth as it is done in heaven. Happy they, who are thus; for a heavenly nature and service is begun, which, if they obey, will abide for ever.

Gracious and merciful God, how is it that thou art so little known? It is not because thou art remote from men; for thou art every where. Neither for not giving them

evidence of thy existence ; inasmuch as thy works declare thee. Nor yet for that they have no sign of thy spiritual and holy nature ; seeing, that though thou art invisible, thou givest, by judgments, evidence of thy indignation against evil. Nor because they have not senses suitable to thyself ; having, by a spiritual, rational, and immortal soul, endowed them with thy natural image, and, by giving thy Son to be their light and life, with thy moral image also. And when, by disobedience, they become dim and dull ; how often does thou, by many means, call them to seek thee, that they may know thee by adoption and grace ? Why then do not all know thee ? Thou knowest. But infants are ignorant of all things ; and as thy beloved Son was to “ eat butter and honey ” till, by age and understanding, he could know, “ and refuse the evil, and choose the good,” so is it with the sons of men, they know nothing till age and experience give them understanding ; and then, if thy word be true, they can remember thee, and be trained up in the way they should go ; and, like thy servant Samuel, serve thee all their days. But parents, tutors, teachers, preachers, and all orders of men, generally, do less to prevent evil than to promote it, and instead of shewing others, by precept and practice, the way they should walk in, point out, by word and deed, a way they should not walk in ; and so, in lieu of keeping a qualification for thy kingdom, they are corrupted, and rendered incapable of it, and cannot, but by a birth from above, inherit it : And then their salvation is extremely uncertain. But, surely, O Lord, though example has great influence, yet none need do wrong ; for thou hast made all able to act an independent part. If children would but walk in the light and life of thy Son, which thou hast given to every soul, then would they not only know, and refuse the evil, and choose the good, but also be led, by that inward guide, to thyself : For not more certainly does the sun’s beam, followed by the eye, guide to its body, than thy light, conscientiously and constantly walked in, leads to thee. But thy creatures will not be at the pains to pore upon their own minds, and to look up to thee ; they will not walk in the spirit, but follow their fleshly senses and appetites, and spend their time in making provision to satisfy the desires of them. And thus they prefer the creature before thee the creator. Nor will they attend to thy teachings ; for thou, who fillest the universe, by immediate motions from thyself, and meditate ones from many things, instructest,

But so impatient of controul, so full of worldly thought and care are the most, that no more than a partial and transient attention is paid to them. Neither are thy outward works considered; for who, by these evidences of thy essence, wisdom, greatness, and goodness, are led to learn thee? Alas! O Lord, notwithstanding that thy Son enlightens all by a pure principle, that thou usest many means to make men know thee, and that the world is a visible sign of thee; yet few, very few know and obey thee! This, O Lord, is a sore evil, and cannot be sufficiently lamented! For what is all knowledge but that of thyself! Not to know thee, by a divine union, is not to be one spirit with thee, and to want thy fear, love, and likeness. And what is all beside? Earthly and evil. How necessary then to know, and obey thee! By thy mighty working, gracious Lord, excite men to seek thee.

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# PREACHERS DESCRIBED,

AND THE

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**C**LEARLY to understand the nature, perfectly to possess the principle, and compleatly to practice the precepts of the Christian Religion and Morality are infinitely better than to possess the greatest abundance of the best earthly benefits, inasmuch as the safety, satisfaction, honour, and glory of men, in time and in eternity, depend on them. But as neither human nature, nor the government of God, compel men to judge truly, chuse wisely, and act properly; and their own voluntary actions, in these things, being generally either wrong directed, or imperfectly performed; therefore it is that error, folly, sin, and imperfection abound. And of the causes which contribute to impede the progress of, and prevent men's prosperity in, these incomparably great and good things, the principal is, that many, who are appointed to teach them, are, contrary to what is common to all teachers of temporal things, entirely unacquainted with their spiritual and holy nature, excellent effects, and the necessity of them to distinguish men from, and to elevate them above animals, as well as to difference them from devils, in the divineness of their nature, understanding, will, affections, ideas, and devotion to the service of God, that, according to their capacity, they may, by the best use of it, as sincerely, perfectly, and perpetually glorify the Lord on earth, as angels do in heaven.

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Others

Others, who teach these invaluable things, are so imperfect in their descriptions of them, so partial in respect of the persons they propose them to, and so adulterate them with erroneous and dangerous doctrines, as have, through their natural tendency, man's ignorance, indolence, and other fault-finding things, a destructive effect upon many. And others, who though they preach a more perfect doctrine, and apply it to all men, as having, through Christ, an equal right to it; yet err so much in respect of the time and manner wherein grace is first given, and the nature of the instructions necessarily to be inculcated upon children to prevent evil, and to prompt to good; and are so defective in the knowledge of a right use of man's free-agency in regard of regaining lost, or receiving future grace, and of retaining, and bringing forth the fruits of it in serving the Lord, doing good to men, keeping a good conscience, and laying up a crown above, as prevent, in a great degree, the benefits of it. And although a ministry, which is, in many parts of it, false and defective, is not the whole cause of men's corruptions of principle and practice (every man, either with or without the gospel, while the day of grace endures, being a free agent;) yet it is one cause of there being so few complete christians; for, generally, men's faith and practice agree with their preaching: And therefore an error or defect in doctrine may be of much disservice.

Now the first sort of these erroneous teachers, and whose errors are the most in number, and the worst in nature, are many, making, it is manifest, in this nation, especially in the established church, a great majority of those, who minister in holy things; and who, as they do not preach the doctrines of salvation by Jesus Christ, justification by faith, the new-birth by the spirit of God, &c. but only the moral duties, are generally stiled Moral Preachers. But the practice of the greatest part of them is evidently immoral; for not only cards, horse-courings, plays, and many other vain diversions are pursued by them, but also the grosser sins of swearing, sabbath breaking, drunkenness, gluttony, whoredom, covetousness, and whatever else that is contrary to, or inconsistent with, loving and serving the Lord, and doing all possible good to men; which every man, but especially ministers, should do. And if a few, among many, to preserve their credit, or constitution, or for other civil or natural reasons,

reasons, abstain from such sins as clearly denominate the doers or them to be of the devil; yet their doctrine and immoral state of mind may not differ from theirs, whose practice is of the profligate kind: And then their sobriety, strange as it may seem, will chiefly serve to make them deceive others with more success, and with a better grace; the wolf being covered by the sheep's cloathing.

The doctrines generally taught by them, are, that as men, at their baptism, became christians, sons and heirs of God; so in they do their duty to God, themselves, and others, they will be saved. But how plausible and promising soever this is, yet, in the case of many, who are thus taught, it cannot possibly be, inasmuch as they are incapable of doing their duty; for, by their past sins, they have not only rendered themselves guilty before God, but also corrupted their hearts, and contracted such sinful habits as have left them neither knowledge, will, nor power sufficient for it. Which shews, in a clear light, the delusiveness of the doctrine, as being contrary to the condition of their hearers, and the absolute necessity of such hearers being taught to repent, to put their trust in Christ for, to seek with all diligence, and to obtain the pardon of their past sins and a pure heart, to prepare them to perform their duty. These, in this case, are indispensibly necessary. And they, who do not teach them, are astonishingly mistaken, and destructive to their hearers in teaching the contrary, a false doctrine having a direct tendency to deceive and destroy their souls. Nor can any thing, but being set right in this respect, prevent their perishing; as, if they never see their sin, danger, and insufficiency, they cannot repent, seek salvation, and find power to please God: and consequently must continue incapable of doing their duty, and will, as farther effects of it, add sin to sin, and suffer for ever. How dangerous then is the doctrine which misleads in this momentous matter! It is highly satanical, and the sinful, destructive effects of it are seen in the general ignorance, carelessness, and wickedness of the people, in every parish, where such ministers only are.

And to the delusiveness of the doctrine, as a farther cause of the same destructive effect, may be added the spiritual deadness of the preachers; for having forsaken the Lord in heart and life, and lived in secret and open sin, their hearts are become corrupt, and proportionably dead to divine things.

things. And as the divine energy, by which the word does execution, is from the holiness of the speaker, and the help he receives from the Holy Ghost; so, these ministers having little or none of these things, their word is dead, dull, and ineffectual; conveys no light, life, nor power; is not sharper than the two-edged sword, does not pierce, cut, or controul men; it neither convinces of, nor condemns for, nor deters from the practice of sin; prepares not for pardon, peace, and purity; brings not to the favour and image of God and an earnest of heaven: And therefore all such may say, according to the time of their being in the ministry, as one said some years since, "I have preached fifty years to this congregation, and do not know one soul turned to God." O what a specimen of the effects of moral preaching to sinners! See then the impropriety of preaching in an unprepared estate! Alas, morally dead ministers do not, cannot quicken dead souls! Causes and effects correspond: Yea, their delusions and deadness deceive and destroy living souls. O what friends to, and factors for fiends! How are the regions of darkness peopled by their preaching! But what will such ministers do in the hour of death, in the day of Judgment, and in eternity? O the fiery torments which will follow such a delusive, lifeless, and destructive ministry! Who then, for worldly profit, or pleasure, or honour, or all, would enter into an office, which must, through the want of qualification for it, issue in endless ruin? O ye carnal ministers, what a curse are you bringing upon yourselves and others! And such of you as, like Sodom, declare your sin, in effect say to all, who see you, follow us, we love sin, live in it, serve Satan, hate God, break his laws, and dare him to do his worst, to damn us, if he will. This is the language of your life. Alas, where is conscience, fear, shame, &c. ?—But, if these are gone, consider, if you can, the consequence, the curse before it comes upon you. Eternity is long, awful, unchangeable, and the torments of the damned are intense! Awake, and sin not, lest the Lord smite you suddenly. But, if your death is delayed, it will come. And when the Judge makes inquisition for the murder of your own and many other souls, O what a scene of sin, and neglect of salvation will open as an evidence of one cause of your condemnation! And your ignorance of religion, deadness to it, carnal views in commencing ministers, consequent delusions, dullness, and other evils will rise up as witnesses, in that aw-



ful day, of your causing many to err, sin, and idle away hour of life to their everlasting undoing ; which will greatly increase your condemnation. But, who is moved by these things ? Oh, eternity, eternity, must thou only make the teachers of men wise, when wisdom will not profit, but pain and punish them for ever ! May they be wise to work out their salvation, serve a gracious God, and excite others to do the same things ; or cursed, doubly cursed must they be eternally.

The second sort of preachers, and next in guilt for contributing to destroy souls, are the Calvinists. These, indeed, preach Jesus Christ as a Redeemer, Saviour, Assister, and Glorifier. But their doctrine, notwithstanding, is, in many respects, defective, delusive, and dangerous, inasmuch as, according to their creed, Christ neither died for, nor would have the greatest part of mankind to be saved, but ordained, before they were born, that they should sin and suffer for ever. They likewise teach that a few, among mankind, are chosen to present and final salvation, without any condition which depends on their own pleasure to perform, and therefore they must be saved let them do what they will. Indeed they say, that those, whom the Lord has reprobated, sin freely, and so it is their own fault. But this is false, they sin necessarily, they cannot avoid it, for though they may, in some sense, chuse what sort of sins they will live in ; yet, let them live as they will, they must sin, because they have not grace wherewith to serve the Lord. They likewise say, that the Elect, like good trees, will, by a kind of necessity, live good lives. But this is false also, as those, who have grace, may either make a good or bad use of it, as is evident from the instances of David, Solomon, Peter, and many more, who, though believed to be elected, yet sometimes lived loose lives. Seeing then that the horrid doctrine of reprobation makes most men sin and suffer unavoidably, and the doctrine of unconditional election naturally tends to licentiousness ; how ill calculated are they to make men hate and forsake sin, and seek and serve the Lord sincerely, when not one soul, more or less, can be either lost or saved, let them do what they will. So though the Calvinist ministers preach Jesus Christ, yet Calvinism, as a doctrine, directly tends to destroy all the good effects of it ; and which nothing, but opposing it in practice, can possibly prevent. For which reason men should

take heed how they hear, lest the diabolical doctrine of reprobation make them desperate in sinning, or that of election secure in their sins. And whatever the moral of such ministers may be, their creed contradicts his, who would have *all men to be saved*, and to *work out their own salvation with fear and trembling*. And how daring must they be, who deal in such doctrines, seeing they neither fear destroying men's souls by them, nor the judgments of God upon themselves for them. But, if Ezekiel, by not warning the wicked, to prevent their perishing, would have brought their blood upon his own head, what will be done to those, who, in effect, teach men to sin, and prepare them for suffering? Neither can a Calvinist, consistently with his creed, sincerely warn any sinner, seeing it would be to oppose God's decree in respect of those whom he has unconditionally ordained to sin and be damned. And the salvation of the elect (they say) is so sure, that they cannot fail of finding it, and so need not be warned of the danger of being destroyed for their sins. And, if men are not machines, it is absurd for a Calvinist to say, that the Lord has ordained the use of means in order to obtain salvation, seeing, as free-agents, their use of them is uncertain, and consequently the salvation which depends on them is equally so, and therefore does not consist with unconditional election. But men are free agents, may serve the Lord or sin against him; which property of their nature clearly confutes Calvinism, inasmuch as there cannot be a decree which is contrary to man's constitution, without involving the Lord, the author of both, in a contradiction; which would be to blaspheme him. And as the true sense of Calvinism is, that most men, without any condition, are ordained and necessitated to sin and suffer, and that a few, though free in themselves, are unconditionally chosen to, and cannot fail of final salvation; who, that would not be deceived, would not abhor it as the doctrine of hell; and consider the teachers of it as dangerous guides in a matter of so great moment as the salvation of the soul? For whatever weakens the religious and moral spring of the soul, and prevents its action, has a direct tendency to destroy it: But believing that a great majority of men were made to sin and suffer, as it weakens the hope of success (which is the spring of action) in seeking salvation, and strengthens the fear of not finding it, (which causes inaction) has this effect. And the belief of an election of some

to everlasting life, the accomplishment of which cannot possibly be prevented, calls the soul into a false and fatal security, by which it becomes inactive, neglects salvation, sins against God, slides into insensibility, and perishes. Dreadful effects of a doctrine directly contrary to the scripture, the freedom of man's will, accountability for his conduct, and the being judged and rewarded accordingly ! Let then the predestinarian preacher take heed, lest, by preaching doctrines of a destructive tendency, he cause many to err in faith and practice, and thereby to perish. Yet, if he would be acquitted in the day of account, as being free from the blood of all men, let him renounce the doctrines which are inconsistent with doing his duty, that he may, as the happy effect of it, sincerely, earnestly, and constantly inculcate upon sinners the evil and guilt of their sins, the danger of being soon and suddenly destroyed for them, and the absolute necessity of repentance, reformation, and faith in Christ for pardon, peace, and purity ; and, in the case of believers, show the need, use, and benefit of a voluntary and perfect obedience, according to their present ability, to the commandments of Christ, both inwardly and outwardly, as the only way of retaining grace, growing in it, being preserved from sin, serving the Lord, doing good to men, continuing faithful to the end, ascending to heaven, and receiving a reward for their works. But, if he will retain his principles, he must either neglect his duty in warning men, whereby they may perish, and he be punished for it ; or, in doing it, contradict his principles by his practice in hypocrisy, as he cannot do it consistently therewith and in sincerity. And to this horrid scheme is owing many, who are desperate in sinning, and also lean, lifeless, scandalous professors ; which indeed are the natural effects of it. O ye predestinarian preachers, how will you answer, at the last day, for the destruction of those souls which you hindered from *striving* to enter in at the strait gate, and being *faithful* unto death ? O what an evil will you find it to have contributed, in so direct a way, to the damnation of many ! Hear, fear, and do so no more ; for the Lord is a consuming fire to destroyers of souls.

A third sort of ministers, but less erroneous than the former, are the Arminians. These include all, who believe that Christ died for all men ; that saving grace is given to all ; that all, who die before they commit actual sin, are finally

saved; that all, who sin, if they repent, believe and obey, will be forgiven, renewed, and glorified; and that it is the right or wrong use of free will which makes men differ both here and hereafter. Yet but few of the present Arminians can be properly so called, it being generally asserted by them, that all are born in sin, are children of wrath, and deserve everlasting damnation; and that none have any grace till they seek it. The consequence of which is, children are neither fit to die nor to live; and yet they say, that all, who die in infancy, are saved; and that all, who live and sin, deserve to suffer for it. But if all are not saved, after they are born, from original sin, the one sort before they die, and the other before they are answerable for their actions, the dead cannot ascend to heaven, nor the living justly suffer for their sin. And it is absolutely certain the scripture is silent respecting such a salvation from original sin. But who, while in their senses will, or with honesty can, depend on what they have no scripture authority for? And, indeed, the affirming that children are born sinful, contradicts St. Paul's doctrine (Rom. v. 18, 19.) of their being made *righteous*, and *justified* by Jesus Christ, in opposition to their being made *sinners*, and *condemned* by Adam. The men then, who thus militate against a clear declaration, are either inexcusably ignorant of its meaning, or designedly deny it. It is also to separate what the apostle has joined, to believe that all men fell seminally in Adam, but did not rise so in Christ, there being equal evidence for both. But many Arminians do so by saying, that men have no grace till they "seek it." What then can prevent the perishing of those, who die before they can seek it? And if there be in the living a "natural blindness," by what can they seek it? Where there is no principle, there can be no practice. Thus, by asserting the seminal sinfulness of children, and denying their seminal salvation, they manifest no method for the saving of those who die, nor capacity in those who live, for serving the Lord, or seeking salvation. To shew the absurdity of which, I shall annex the following particulars:

Original sin was the act of Adam and Eve in eating the forbidden fruit: But as Adam was the head and representative of the human race, it was not his sin only, but theirs also; *for by one man's disobedience many* (οἱ πολλοί, the multitudes of men) *were made sinners.* Yet this was only accord-  
ing

ing to their capacity, viz. that as Adam and Eve were personal sinners, so their seed were seminal ones. However they thereby incurred guilt; *for by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation.*—And that their minds were made immoral is manifest from the *life of Christ being the light of men; a light which enlightens every man that cometh into the world.* But this property of a divine principle, as coming from Christ, had been unnecessary, if the light of their created condition had continued. Temporal death also took place as soon as they sinned, as thereby they were deprived of the privilege of eating of the tree of life, which would have given them a right to a transformation of their animal and mortal nature, into that which is spiritual and immortal, without passing through death and the resurrection. And that they were subjected to eternal sufferings, the nature of their soul, which was immortal, evidences; for what but its ceasing to be, or the forgiveness of their sin, could have saved them from it? Neither of which was implied in the sentence.

Now to this I oppose what was done to deliver all men from it. The ground of which, was the promise of the seed of the woman to break the serpent's head. Yet this promise was unconditional, did not require faith in Adam's offspring to free them from Original Sin; but, rather, as they became sinners in a seminal way, so saints also; *for by the obedience of one shall many (οι πολλοι, the multitudes of men) be made righteous.* Here then is a salvation which all men are partakers of, prior to their personal existence; without any condition performed by themselves.

Hence then as their sinful state implied guilt, a depraved mind, temporal death, and subjection to eternal sufferings; so their righteous condition contained pardon, a pure mind, a right to the resurrection of the body, and to the happiness of heaven. These, it is evident, they either had in possession or reversion. In the first case, they possessed guilt and impurity, and were subject to death and damnation; and, in the second, they had pardon and purity, and a right to the rest. And that the one of these implies as much as the other, is clear from the sense of the words, and the nature and necessity of the things. The words contain, as before observed, an equal sense of a contrary kind, and the things are such as none can be saved without, a removal of guilt, and a re-

newal of nature being absolutely necessary as a qualification for the kingdom of God. And the time of their being given must be early, inasmuch as many die as soon as they are born. Nor is there any intimation, in the bible, that this is done either at or after their birth; no mention is made that the Almighty, by a divine operation, saves dying children from a sinful soul, in order to save them from sinking into hell.— Rather the state of children, as such, separate from any supposed immediate supernatural influence, is considered by Christ as characteristic of a converted man, and a qualification for heaven: *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.* I conclude then, that what was done for one was done for all; and that the time of its being done was when *the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life*; which, it is highly probable, was when Christ commenced the mediator of men.

I shall now give a specimen of those scriptures which have been produced to prove that all men derive a corrupt nature from Adam: The first of which is, *Adam begat a son in his own likeness.* Gen. v. 6.

This, by some, is supposed to signify that sinful Adam begat a sinful son. Adam had now lived 130 years; but whether he was a saint or a sinner, who can say? But if it could be said, it would signify nothing, for the condition of his son, in a religious respect, did not depend on his own, inasmuch as he was not then the representative of mankind, that office ceasing with him as soon as Christ became the surety of sinners. Hence it necessarily follows, that what his son was, he was in consequence of what Christ, the second Adam and representative of mankind, had done for him: And that was the being made righteous, as it signifies a salvation from Original Sin.—And it is generally believed that Adam, prior to his begetting Seth, was a believer of the promise made in paradise; and, if so, then he was not a sinner, but a saint. And it is also supposed that Seth was a son of God, he being one of those, who first began to call on the name of the Lord, and from whom descended such as were stiled *the sons of God*. If then both the father and the son were good, how could Adam be a sinful father, and Seth a sinful son? Whatever then Adam's begetting a son in his own likeness signifies, it cannot, for the reasons already assigned, signify their sinfulness. It may respect their outward form and features; or

signify

signify a faintness in regard of moral goodness of mind, both as the effect of what Christ has done, and as the fruit of the immediate parent. Christ has redeemed all men by price, and so purified them as to make them righteous. And that this was done in Adam, in whom all men existed, and in whom they all became sinful, is indisputable. Human nature then being renewed in the root of it, holy souls as naturally flow from it as unholy ones would have done, if it had not been renewed. This then is one cause of parents producing good children. A second is, (if it has any influence in the case) that good parents more probably produce good than bad children. Nor is this disproved by the following similitude, viz “that the seed of an apple-tree, grafted on a crab stock, produces common crabs.” For this is not so, as some produce exactly like themselves; and none are so bad as the crab stock produces. But if we allow it (for argument sake) to be so, the cases are not equal; for man, since the fall, cannot with propriety be compared to a crab stock, inasmuch as he was cured by Christ, who became the life and light of all men. To impute then to men in Christ things only applicable to beings out of him is preposterous. And that none are out of him in a seminal sense is certain, all being made righteous by him as they were made unrighteous by Adam. Hence it necessarily follows, that, if any are out of him, it is in consequence of their own conduct. This illustration then casts no light on the subject; and so, for any thing it signifies, all men, thro’ Christ, come into the world morally good. And if sound was not taken for sense, this scripture would not be supposed to signify the contrary. But when error, or want of understanding, has made men militate against the truth, shadows are substituted for substances to support them.

The second passage is, *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.* Job xiv. 4. Now some suppose the sense of this to be, that, Adam being unclean, all, who descend from him, are so also. But if St. Paul understood his own subject, Christ, the second Adam, has so far freed all men from the moral effects of the fall as to fit them for heaven; for of such as children are when born into the world, he says, his kingdom consisteth.—But some, to support the contrary supposition, say, that, according to St. Paul, justification only, through Christ, came upon all men,  
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and that, in consequence, their hearts continued unholy. Then I may as confidently say, that condemnation only, by Adam, came upon all men, and so their hearts remained holy; for one of these contrary terms implies as much in the one case as the other does in the other. But they became as well unholy as guilty through Adam, and were sanctified as well as justified through Christ, these never being separate (if both be necessary) in their subjects, either in a personal or seminal state. And, indeed, justification without sanctification is insignificant, as it neither saves from a sinful soul, nor qualifies to serve the Lord, nor prepares for heaven.— This text then no more proves that children are born with satanical souls than the former. And while our Lord compares the condition of a converted man to the state of a child, and considers that state as a qualification for heaven; I dare not so contradict him as to say, it is a sinful one.

The third is, *That which is born of the flesh is flesh.* John iii. 6. This, some suppose, signifies to be born sinful. But the context shews the contrary. Our Lord said, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* To which Nicodemus replied, *How can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?* In answer to which, our Saviour said, *Except a man be born of water, and of the spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.* But Nicodemus speaks only of a bodily birth, which he supposed a man could not have a second time. And our Lord's answer, in effect, is, that if it could be so, it would signify nothing, seeing that that which is born of the flesh or body is but flesh or body, and not that spiritual birth which carnal minds require. Thus the birth of the body is opposed to the birth of the soul. And other opposition, in this passage, there is none. And it is strange how any other ever was thought of. But when a system wants support, any appearance of proof is pressed into the service of it.

But though this passage affords no proof of minds originally depraved, yet some suppose that a sinful soul, wheresoever it is, is a proof of it. Now such do not see that free agents, in a state of probation, however free from a sinful nature, have a liberty of choosing good or evil, and thereby of continuing or corrupting their good disposition. Thus angels and

Adam,



Adam, who were holy in heart, prior to practice, corrupted themselves. So tho' all children are saved from Original Sin, and thereby prepared for the paradise of God; yet when understanding, agency, and accountableness take place, it is as easy for them, as it was for angels and Adam, to sin and corrupt their souls. And the abuse of free agency is the first and principal scriptural cause of all evils; for condemnation for sin always supposes men need not have sinned; it makes no allowance for actual, as being the effect of Original Sin, but charges sinners with being the authors of their own actions, and condemns them accordingly. But with what justice could the Lord do this, if a soul, in the image of satan, was the first cause of their conduct? It would be as unjust as for a King to condemn a man to die for not walking, when it was not his fault that he had no feet. Thus sin supposes grace.—I grant, indeed, that unbelief is also considered as a cause of condemnation; but then it is only of a secondary sort, viz. for rejecting that salvation which sin renders necessary. But if sin was not an evil and damnable thing, that salvation would not be necessary; and therefore the neglect of it not evil and dangerous. If then a right practice suppose a right principle, and if the Lord require the first, it infers that all, of whom it is required, are in possession of the second. So it necessarily follows, that at whatever time, and in whatever manner and degree, the Lord requires his creatures to serve him, it supposes them capable of complying therewith; in which, if they fail, that is their offence, and for which they are justly condemned.

The fourth scripture is, *And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.* Eph. ii. 3. Adam's original nature, here, is out of the question. Nor does that state of nature into which he fell make any part of its meaning; as none continued in that condition after the new covenant commenced. This is clear from St. Paul's parallel already mentioned: *That as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.* These are of equal extent in respect of persons and things. If then by condemnation, for Adam's sin, we lost the favour and image of God and a right to immortality; by justification, through Christ, they are all regained. Nor would less qualify those for glory, who die in their infancy, nor prepare the living for  
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personal obedience, nor render the disobedient condemnable. And, agreeably to this, it is said, that the Gentiles did by *nature the things contained in the law*. By that nature which was consequent on being delivered from Original Sin, they comported, in practice, with the Lord's moral commands. And this, I judge, is the natural state of all men. To which, by some, is opposed this passage, *By nature the children of wrath*. Now this respects the Jews and Gentiles mentioned in the preceding part of the chapter. The Gentiles had *walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air*, and the Jews had *fulfilled the desires of the flesh and of the mind: and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others*, as the Gentiles. Now this state of nature cannot be that by which the Gentiles did the things contained in the law. Rather that nature, by a wrong use of their free-agency in walking according to the course of this world, &c. was corrupted, and thereby they became the children of wrath. And this judgment is supported by Paul, where he mentions what they did, and the effect of it: *And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins, v. 1.* Trespasses and sins were the cause, and death the consequence. Now death signifies condemnation, inasmuch as all, who sin, are condemned to eternal death. And condemnation and wrath are the same; for *the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*. And as trespasses and sins, committed by themselves, were the cause of this death, condemnation, or wrath; *by nature the children of wrath* cannot signify the state they were born in, but the condition they had brought themselves into by actual disobedience; which, being contrary to their quickened condition, stiled, in the scripture, a state of grace, is, by way of opposition, called a state of nature. And this is all that is to be understood by it; which affords no proof of minds originally depraved.

If then the meaning of words and the nature of things are to be regarded, the Arminians, by asserting that children are born sinful, err: That by affirming they die well, when they have nothing to build their belief upon of their being saved from original depravity after they are born and before they die, they speak inconsistently, and build without a foundation. And, if living children have a sinful nature, they cannot act well, nor be condemned for acting ill; which  
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destroys moral free agency, makes them unaccountable for their conduct, and as incapable of seeking as of serving the Lord ; contradicts what Christ has done to deliver them from original sin, deprives them of all moral power to receive divine instructions, and incapacitates them from remembering their creator, and being trained up in the way they should go. Great absurdities.

Now these, viz. Moralists, Calvinists, and Arminians, O ye people, are your Teachers ; and I have, for your advantage, shewn you some of their errors and defects. And, if you love your souls, you will guard against their bad effects ; for, if you miscarry in the momentous matter of Salvation, you will be miserable for ever. — But what have you already profited by your preachers ? What is the state of your soul ? Are you sure of your acceptance with God, by the forgiveness of sins, thro' faith in Christ Jesus ? Does the spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are his children ? Have you, in the holiness of your heart, an earnest of heaven ? Are you free from the fear of death, and the dread of hell ? Do you possess the peace of God, joy in the Holy Ghost, a lively hope of, and a longing for heaven ? Is every sin against God, yourself, and all men disagreeable, and service, in all these respects, delightful to you ? Now, if it is not thus, with what propriety can you be called christians ? None but such answer that character ; for *if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his*, but is the son, servant, and heir of Satan. Nor think that these things are not necessary ; seeing, except you never sinned, corrupted your soul, nor lost your right to heaven, you must have them or go to hell. As soon would a man, condemned to be hanged, escape death without the king's mercy, as a sinner against God escape damnation, if he die unforgiven ; as, if not, sin would be nothing, suffering have no place, and the greatest evils might be done without danger. But the soul that sins shall die. How then has your life been spent ? Did you so remember your creator in early life, as to labour in all things to please him ? Rather did you not forget him, live without his fear, spend your time foolishly, and not answer the end for which you were born ? And, if so, you voluntarily erred at the entrance into active and accountable life, did not begin with the Lord and his service, but with Satan and sin. And a wrong beginning prepares for, leads to, and generally terminates wrong.

Alas, how unwise and wicked to enter early at *the wide gate*, the beginning of sin, *into the broad*, the way of all wickedness, *which leads to the destruction* of soul and body; and will, without repentance and pardon, end in eternal punishment. Did not some of you soon take God's name in vain by irreverently mixing it with every senseless, trifling, and sinful conversation? Yea, probably, you cursed men, yourself, animals, and things inanimate by it, wishing him to damn or destroy them. How criminal your conduct, and how cursed your condition, for *he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain!* Have you kept holy the Sabbath by doing no needless works, avoiding all games, sports, pastimes, and by being exercised in the private and public duties of religion to honour the Lord, edify yourself, and assist others? If not, if you made it a day of worldly gain, or idle diversions, you defeated the design of it, provoked God, corrupted yourself, and became obnoxious to wrath and punishment. Did you honour your father and mother by reverencing their persons, obeying their lawful commands, gratefully receiving their favours, and by making them suitable returns, in service, for them? If you did not, but mocked, despised, or cursed them, were disobedient, unthankful, and did not repay them, according to your power, for all their pains with you, you sinned against God, them, yourself, incurred the Lord's displeasure, and became subject, as the effect of your folly, to suffer hell fire. Have you been guilty of murder, destroying the life of another without the authority of the law, or by a malicious and cruel violence, or in any other way, except in war or self-defence? Have you so hated any as to wish them dead or damned? Alas, if you have, you murdered their bodies or souls, for *he that hateth his brother is a murderer.* Have you committed adultery by desire, design, or deed? If you have, remember what is written, *whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.* Have you stolen, taken another person's property by violence, or without his knowledge, or consent, or by over reaching, or unfair dealing, or in any other way wherein you would not have been so served yourself? Have you borne false witness against your neighbour in judgment, or by reporting untruths to his prejudice? Have you been content with your own things, not coveting, wishing, or desiring to have any thing that was another's? Have you been a drunkard, a glutton,  
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proud, passionate, a lover of the world, a liar, or any thing that you ought not to have been? If you have, God is judge, and will be to sinners a consuming fire. You have not escaped his notice, nor can you his sentence, and sufferings from him, if you die in your sins. Whether then you are a young or an old, a little or great sinner, dying impenitent and unpardoned, you perish for ever. Sinners, this is your case. The wicked must be turned into hell. The Lord, who cannot lie, has said it. Be sure of it then. He will do you justice. You would not serve him. You chose Satan for your master, sin for your service, and sufferings, without ease and end, must be your reward. What will you do? Will you sin on, and suffer hell fire? Do you hate to be reformed? Will you defy the Lord? Care you not what will be the end of sinning? Can you endure damnation? What, dwell with Devils, live in fire, be suffocated with brimstone, wracked in conscience, weep, wail, and gnash your teeth for ever! O dreadful state! Consider your case then, and know what will be the consequence, if you continue in sin. And oh! if you saw your sins, the nearness of death, the last day, the lake of fire, and the fiends that attend you, what loud lamentation would you make! The earth would ring with your cries. Each would imitate the damned in signs of distress, and say, where ever I am is hell, myself am hell! And why do you not? Has sin darkened your sight? Does no danger appear? What, can you eat, drink, dress, walk, and talk without any concern for your soul? Yea, jest, sport, play, sing songs, &c. with all the signs of a senseless gaiety, when, as a sinner, a neglecter of salvation, God is angry with you, condemns you to be damned, and may, the next moment, slay, and send you to hell? Alas, sin has deceived, blinded, hardened, and fitted you for hell, filled you with a false confidence, made you fearless in danger, and bold on the brink of endless burnings! Awake, awake, (for death and hell are near!) and see, in the sufferings of others, how great your danger is; see how sin turned Angels into Devils and damned them for ever; cast Adam out of Paradise and cursed the world; overflowed the earth with a destructive flood; brought fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorah; destroyed three and twenty thousand Jews in one day; and damns all, who die in it. O dreadful! Know then how great and near your danger is.

Alas,

Alas, a sudden death may soon separate you from all temporal, spiritual, and eternal good, and plunge you into intense and everlasting torments! And mark, as a matter of the greatest moment, that by which you will be punished; for fire, which is a figure of it, penetrates all bodies, impregnates them with its properties, produces the most painful sensations, and, continuing to act upon, keeps them in that condition. Similar to which, the fire of God's wrath will act upon, enter, and go thro' sinners, make their pains intolerable, and maintain the intenseness of their torments for ever. This is the damnation of hell. And oh! who can dwell with devouring fire? Alas, how the wretches will roar! Distracted with pain, they will writhe, wring their hands, and bellow out their horrid cries. Every person will have his portion of pungent pain, and all the accursed crew unite in weeping and wailing. Nor will their pain ever come to a period; for as their substance and sense will remain, so will their sufferings also. O! eternity, eternity, what wilt thou do to sinners? Must they have no ease? Wilt thou never say, it is enough? No. O God, how great is thy wrath! Who can endure it? Who would offend thee? For what pleasure of sin would any be plunged into perdition? This, O! sinner, will be a part, and but a part of thy punishment, for there *the worm*, an accusing conscience *dyeth not*. And some, under this avenging rod, have pined away with grief, others have lost their senses, and many destroyed themselves. And if the power of conscience be so great here; what will it be there? In hell it will act as God's agent in condemning, and the sinner, in consequence, will condemn himself, for there he will do nothing against, but all for the truth. And thus, lying under the lashes of his own guilty heart, he will pore upon his past actions, with that he had been wiser, fret, curse, tear, and torment himself; like a wild bull in a net, he will roar, rage, foam, and be for ever miserable, for the worm dyeth not.

Now, sinners, I have set before you the intense and eternal torments of the damned. What will you do? It lies at your option. You may sin and die, or turn and live. The Lord, who knows, and pities your case, compassionately cries, turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die? Why will ye leave the world in sin, meet an angry God; and suffer for ever? Alas, what can you profit thereby? What say you then? Will you  
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yet sin? Will you suffer for ever? Suffer! what? Do you know? Or must eternity tell? Cannot words convince you? Will only the damnation of hell do it? Terrible came of conviction! Can ye endure it? Think what it is. Look before you leap. Eternity is long, and there is a lake of fire. Plunge not into it. Stop, or one step more may ruin you for ever.—And now, if you were dying, and knew your doom, what would you do? O how your soul would start, fear, tremble! Reluctant to forsake its old habitation, it would cling close to it. But, ah! when forced off, hounds, like beasts of prey, would sicken upon it, hasten it to its appointed place, fill it with fire and brimstone, and mock it for its madness in coming to a place of punishment, when it might have gone to a palace of pleasure: And yet this would be but the beginning of greater evils; for when the great day comes, the trumpet will sound, the dead hear, arise, and come to judgment; the Judge will try, convict, and condemn them. Then they will stand aghast, their hearts break, breasts heave, limbs shake, eyes run, and the whole man, convulsed with anguish, will wait the awful word, *go ye cursed into everlasting fire!*

But, to prevent so great an evil, remember how it is written: *When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.* Now, what sin will you not forsake? Is any worth retaining? Can you profit as much by any as by pardon, peace, and heaven? Alas, sin brings trouble of mind, breaks the peace of families, neighbours, and nations; ruins credit, constitutions, and estates; and, pursued till death, destroys soul and body for ever. If then you would not be contemptible in the eyes of an holy God, nor unworthy the sight of angels, nor unfit to associate with saints, nor be eternally damned; quit bad customs, shake off sinful companions, live a new life, associate with the serious, bear persecution, despise the shame of being religious, be ambitious to become sons and heirs of God, to have angels ministering to you, to be capable of doing good, to be rich in good works, to have a good conscience in consequence, to lay up treasure above, to die in peace, to leave a good testimony behind, to rise to a glorious reward, and to enjoy it for ever. These are excellent things, and infinitely more than worthy of the highest ambition and most ardent pursuit of Emperors, Kings, Nobles,

Nobles, &c. And yet the poor among men may have them. Pursue then, pursue them with an ardour arguing that you prize them above all that is perishable. To this purpose, carefully call to mind your mispent life. But, if you will not do it in order to salvation, the Lord, at death and the last day, will do it for your condemnation. Nor be afraid of seeing your sin and danger. You had better see them here, than feel their tormenting effects for ever hereafter. Had you been so wise as to begin and continue in well-doing, you would have had a good conscience, and confidence of being finally saved, if faithful to the end. But folly made you forget and offend the Lord. However, you are yet out of hell. Have mercy then on yourself by confessing and forsaking your sins. Let nothing hinder you from this. Nor delay, lest you die soon and suddenly. And when sin is forsaken, know, it is for Christ's sake that you are to be forgiven, and be purified by the Spirit. And that you may not fail of finding them, you must heartily believe in him as the Saviour, and earnestly and perseveringly pray to God till you prevail for salvation, and have a clear sense of it in your soul.

And let those, who experience, in the witness, fruit, and earnest of the Spirit, the evidence of their acceptance with God, of being his sons, and heirs of heaven, rejoice in being so highly favoured. And, to promote spiritual prosperity, let them *go on to perfection*; which, in a weak state of moral principle, as it respects present salvation, a preparation for serving the Lord, and a qualification for his kingdom, is absolutely necessary, inasmuch as none of these excellent ends can be answered without it. And, moreover, so far as any neglect a proper prosecution of it, as it is certain they will not grow in grace, so it is highly probable their evidence of acceptance, &c. will be impaired, and spiritual strength decreased. For though it is possible for those, whose pursuit of it is imperfect, to continue, in effect, in the same condition, by sometimes gaining and sometimes losing; yet the apparent reason why so few retain what they receive, is, they do not sufficiently seek to encrease it. And also from this it is that apostates; and unprofitable persons abound, and so few make that proficiency, in holiness of heart and life, which they have time, means, and opportunities for. And this exhibits, in a clear light, the necessity of being earnest and active in religious things, remissness being the  
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ruin thereof. Such an use then, to prevent this evil, of man's inward principles and outward powers, of internal operations and external ordinances, must be made as is necessary to withdraw the heart from earthly, and fix it continually on heavenly things, in order to retain, increase, and complete its conformity to the holiness of God, fully prepare it to serve him, and to be glorified with him. And being thus prepared for these inestimable things, to prevent apostacy, unprofitableness, and every other evil, and to promote, in the highest degree, the praise of God, the profit of men, and your own spiritual prosperity, the testimony of a good conscience, religious credit, and eternal crown, the preparation must be carefully preserved, and faithfully employed in the several parts of the Lord's service. But, to prevent mistakes, observe, that, in the highest state of grace, the tempers and affections of the soul are not destroyed, but only renewed; and therefore are not inconsistent with it. And being natural, necessary, and calculated to answer profitable purposes; they must, as occasions require, be exercised upon their respective objects, and properly ordered therein, to make them answer their intended ends. The animal senses and appetites must also be kept in due subordination to the soul, that it be not ensnared by them. Neither take temptations for sin, that you may not cast away your confidence, without cause. Temptations, if resisted and overcome, go off and leave no guilt on the conscience: But sin is succeeded with guilt: Judge of them then by their effects, and conclude accordingly. And that you may answer, in the most excellent manner, the ends of your existence, act, in all that concerns you, with understanding, exactness, constancy, and energy, in the full use of all your time and talents, that the Lord may be abundantly glorified by you, your neighbours receive all possible advantage, and yourself be preserved to eternal life, and crowned with accumulated glory in consequence.

I add a few things respecting children. And as justification unto life is come upon all, it is a duty incumbent on them to remember their Creator in the days of their youth; to act as under his eye, and to his honour. And 'altho' but little of this is seen; yet neither the nature of the body, nor the condition of the soul, is the proper cause of it. The air, earth, water and fire, of which the body consists, contain  
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neither natural nor moral evil, either as simple ingredients or as a mixed composition. Yea, the predominancy of one element above another, in different bodies, which makes them light, or heavy, phlegmatic, or fiery, causes no real difference, in as much as each consists with a moral principle and practice. The appetites and senses likewise are innocent in themselves, and in their use, when rightly used. Whence then arise the evil of them? This is wholly from their misuse. And forasmuch as children are generally under the government of others, the right or wrong use of them depends, in a great degree, on their wisdom and care. When then they are permitted to indulge themselves in eating, drinking, sleeping, &c. it grows into habit, becomes delightful, and makes a principal part of their care and comfort. And when too much abridged, their appetites are irritated, and their hearts hurt. A medium then is best calculated for continuance, and for answering every profitable purpose.

And in respect of their outward senses, much depends on a proper restraint. To be ignorant of evil is the easiest way of being innocent. Children then should be kept both from the knowledge and practice of every thing that tends to attract and corrupt their hearts, which every kind of game does. Now the beginning of this is the effect of their infant ignorance, independent of their moral disposition; for, being incapable of judging of the nature and tendency of things, that with which they soonest converse and become familiar, makes the first impression on, and gains the earliest possession of their hearts. And tho' these, while in their infant state, are no cause of condemnation; yet are they the instrumental cause of moral corruption. The contracting then such habits in early life as give a bias to the mind, which determines its future proceedings, is extremely prejudicial: It is like the wrong set of a young tree, which grows crooked in consequence. Hence it is, that, generally, evil is succeeded with evil; that this bias prepares them for a succession of similar things; and that the principal difference betwixt their first and last and intermediate objects of pursuit is, their being adapted to different degrees of reason and states of life. Now is it not highly probable, that all this would be prevented by keeping them ignorant of, or restraining them from, the exercise of every such thing? And as none, who wish well to their children, will permit them to err at their entrance into  
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life; neither will they set them an evil example. Example is the child's alphabet; and, generally, the first lesson it learns. If then the parents sin, how are the children to escape the contagion of it? It is more than probable they will imitate them; and that will render the parents accountable for their children's sins.

Another method of moral corruption is their dress. And many parents, to please themselves, cloath their children with things more for ornament than use. Yet, weak as children's understanding is, their eye is easily attracted by, and their fancy fired with outside ornaments; which gradually induce them to affect the best things, the most fanciful colour, and fashionable form. Hence they soon devote their mind, time, and talents to them, which necessarily assimilates the soul into a sameness, in respect of idea, disposition, and desire, with them; by which the conversation becomes deeply tainted with, and turns chiefly upon, the article of dress: which shews the hold it has taken of the heart; for out of the abundance of it the mouth speaketh.

Neither is the method of religious instruction better calculated to co-operate with the grace of God, to make them practically pious. Yea, rather, as managed by most, it has, I fear, a contrary effect. And, as an instance of this, whether teaching them forms of prayer, to be repeated at certain times, the meaning of which they know not, is not to teach them to speak without knowledge, and, in effect, to mock the Most High? And as hereby they contract a habit of senselessly supplicating the Lord, it is substituted in the place of praying according to their condition. And early prejudices having a prevailing influence in forming future life; that, I judge, is one reason why so many afterwards pray like parrots, and to no better purpose. And it seems to be the same in respect of all other means, whether public or private, where the letter and not the sense of them is taught; for as hereby they do not distinguish the form from the power, nor the means from the end, but confound them together, or put the one for the other; so prayers are said, sermons heard, sacraments received, scriptures read, &c. with the same spirit with which they swear, lie, get drunk, whore, play at cards, and do any other evil. And thus they reconcile religion and every sort of sin together; concluding that they are religious, because they use the means of it.—Now these and other things

things so corrupt the minds of most, that when reason renders them capable of considering the works, word, nature, and attributes of God, and of discerning good and evil ; they have contracted habits which set their hearts upon sinful things. And that these are the cause is highly probable ; for what attachment would any have to things with which they never conversed ? None. Of what concern then is it to prevent those habits, by keeping them from the occasion of them ! Surely of the greatest to every child of man !

But they must be instructed also, must be taught the nature of the new covenant, viz. That God made Adam the head of the human race, and ordained, that what was done by him, as their representative, should be done by them ; and therefore, by *the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation*. But that the sin and guilt of it might not continue, he ordained his son Jesus Christ to be the mediator of the new covenant, to deliver them from both ; and so, *by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life*. Hence grace is given to all. But tho' this grace prepares for religious duties, yet, to assist their reason in them, and to exercise their moral powers on proper objects, they must be taught that the Lord's eye is ever upon them. This will make them have awful apprehensions of him. And to encrease their ideas, his wisdom, greatness, and goodness, as manifested in the works of creation and providence, must be pointed out. Moreover, to make them careful, they should be shewn that they are accountable to God for all their thoughts, words, and works, and that he also will judge them accordingly. This will give them right notions of his holiness and justice. His mercy too must be manifested, that, if they offend, they may know how to find forgiveness. To this purpose, shew them that Jesus died as well for actual, as for Original Sin ; and therefore, if they repent and believe, they will be pardoned. And that they may be exercised in prayer, their want of mercy when they have done amiss, and the help of the Holy Ghost in duties and difficulties, must be discovered. In a word, they should be taught both what to believe and do in all that concerns them. How much then does it concern all, who have the charge of children, to do their duty.

## AN APPENDIX.

**A**S effects cannot be without causes, so causes are accountable for effects. The ignorance then of religion, immoral conduct, improper preaching to sinners, with their fatal fruits, which mark the character of myriads of ministers, are the effects of their foolishness, perverseness, and errors, and for which, according to the rule of God's righteous government, they are accountable to, and punishable of him. And being a mean of the moral, and thereby immortal murder of men's minds; they are, as ministers, to be abhorred as hell, and their utter extinction, with the substitution of serious ones, would be of infinite service to many. But the difficulty attending this important particular, makes it more an object of desire than hope. Yet as a successful method, in its effects, would be superlatively glorious; so an unsuccessful one, for its excellent design, would be more glorious than silence. And in attempting to effect so profitable a particular, I will, as I can, (in a few words) exhibit the reasons why improper persons commence ministers, and point out the way to prevent it.

But how may we solve so paradoxical a difficulty as that of carnal men, whose disposition, designs, and deeds, are at enmity with God, (a striking contrast! a burlesque on religion!) entering, with pains, expence, and pleasure, into an office so repugnant to their principles? The predominance and powerful efforts of their animal nature, (which, by corrupting and captivating the rational and moral powers, has gained the ascendant over and governs them) is a sufficient solution of this; for, agreeably thereto, their fleshly minds fix on *temporal profit, ease, and honour*, and make them, with many, the sole motive for entering into a ministry which promises what they so solicitously seek. That this is their motive is also manifest from their continuance therein; for when the service, as some ministers have said, is similar to that of a Galley-slave; the prospect of its pecuniary profits, prevails with them, notwithstanding its irksomeness, to persist in it. And when the labour of the office is light, yet the moral principle and precept of it, being opposed by their immoral minds and manners, must, if their souls are not  
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feared, render it an unpleasant performance. Evident then it is, that their attachment to it is the effect of its temporal profits, &c.

Another reason why some assume the sacred office is, that, though contrary to the primitive pattern, the whole service is read; and therefore superior abilities, natural and acquired, and assistance from the divine Spirit, by this unscriptural method, are made unnecessary, as, without powers of their own to conceive and deliver a rational and religious discourse, or compose one in writing, or any help from the Holy Ghost; they may by this serry substitute, if they can but read what others have written, make modern ministers. And as, when the church was emerging from popery, homilies were written to be read by ignorant preachers; so some, since then, to assist such, have composed sermons suitable to the external circumstances of every season of the year, (though little to the purpose of internal and practical religion) which they can procure, and, like the earth in its annual course, may yearly run round, as long as they live. And while some in fact do so, others, from a deficiency in numbers, give a more contracted course of them.

But the Church, in the present age, principally through the ignorance, carelessness, and wickedness of the preachers, is less devout and divine than she was in the darkest age of popery; for her then defect, in the knowledge of divine things, was in some sort supplied by, at the worst, a superstitious veneration for them. But now men in general, and the national church in particular, neither knowingly nor superstitiously regarded them, piety to God, good-will to men, and care for their own souls being lost in prophaneness, selfishness, and sinfulness: Evils for which, when God cometh to judgment, both preachers and people must be punished.

But do Legislatures act for the interest of religion and virtue in annexing, to the office of the ministry, such a bait to bad, delusive, and destructive men to enter into it? The reverse of this, it is certain, is the result of it; and therefore they, who thus solicit the sons of Satan to the service of God, must answer for the evils of it. Nor is it to be hoped that Legislatures will be more solicitous for other men's salvation than for their own. Charity begins at home. If then governors, who should guard the people's religion and virtue, encourage what is inconsistent with, and destructive of them,

how should they zealously propagate them? But many pernicious things, Plays and Horſe-courſes in particular, are promoted by the K—g, L—ds, and C—ns. And though ſome plays contain historical truths, ſhreds of morality, ſtrokes of wit, good ſenſe, &c. yet it is not to improve in theſe that ſo many attend them, but to ſee a glaring ſight, to hear unhallowed ſounds, to feed the fancy with the images of outward ornaments, to excite and to be excited to ſenſual deſigns and deeds, to be made merry with, and to laugh at ludicrous and ridiculous things uttered by artful, immoral, and intereſted mortals, whoſe buſineſs it is to pleaſe the vitiated appetites of their audiences, and thereby procure for themſelves exceſſive ſums of money, which thoſe, who are unwise and wicked enough to give, muſt answer to the Almighty for; when, alas! they will find they have paid dear for the deluſive ideas of thoſe light, trifling, obſcene, and deſtructive things with which the plays are plentifully ſtored.

What effect plays have upon men's religion and morals, needs little elucidation; none, I ſuppoſe, having the folly to affirm, that any are prompted thereby to praife God for his excellencies, to be grateful for his benefits, to ſupplicate him for aſſiſtance, to fear, reverence, love, and delight in him, to relieve men's temporal wants, reprove ſinners, inſtruct the ignorant, and to have an holy ambition excited in themſelves to excel in all that promotes a good conſcience and an eternal crown. Are theſe the product of play-houſes? alas, it is infinite odds againſt one inſtance being found, in their annals, of theſe fruits! But if plays do not promote, do they not deſtroy piety? This can only be answered by argument, no inſtance, ancient or modern, being of any perſon freely frequenting plays, who could, with propriety, be called a pious one. But their tendency will determine it. How contrary then to the condition of one ſorrowing for ſin, or rejoicing in ſalvation from it, would that part of a play be, "which keeps the houſe in a continual roar?" Laughter of this kind and degree would be as diſſimilar to, and deſtructive of Godly ſorrow or joy, as abundance of water caſt upon burning coals. And the ſpirit and practice of plays (generally the product of prophane perſons) from their contrariety to the holy principle and practice of piety, muſt, if received, neceſſarily deſtroy them. A preſumptive proof of which is, that

either pious persons do not attend them, or soon become impious by so doing, as none but impious ones are their constant attendants. A farther, and demonstrative, evidence of the incompatibleness of piety and plays is from their general prevalence; for, instead of assisting each other, as play-house people become pious, plays, with them, proportionable perish; and as pious people become play-house ones, their piety in the same degree declines. Real piety then, and a fondness for plays, compose an impossible character.— Indeed many, who frequent the play-house, are found at the church, and in the outward exercise of piety and virtue. And so are many sinners, of which play-house people are a part; yet, notwithstanding, the thoughts, ways, and sacrifice of the wicked, the scripture says, are an abomination to the Lord, and they themselves are of the devil. So though sinners, like their master Satan, can so far transform themselves into saints as to associate with them; yet the saints, while they act as such, cannot so deform themselves into sinners as to be found at a play-house. In a word, the spirit of the plays with which this country is cursed, so corrupts the spirits of men, and indisposes them from acting in the knowledge, fear, and love of God, in divine good-will to men, and to their own eternal advantage, that play-houses must be forsaken for solemn assemblies, and plays for the bible and good books before the followers of players be saved from their sins, and serve the Lord: without which they must weep in endless wee.

With respect to horse-coursing, as none can sincerely say, that they intend to please God, to profit their own souls, and to edify others thereby; and as this act of impiety renders all their other actions impious (for none can serve two masters;) so, by consequence, no horse courser is a christian. And if his Majesty does not personally participate of the diversion, yet being a contributor to it, may, in the judgment of God, who observes all accessories to sin, be found, when he makes inquisition, an instance in which his honour and the edification of men were not designed; and, in the solemn day of decision, for the evils it has done, be punished accordingly. And if his Majesty should make glorifying God and doing good to men (which ought to be inseparable from every action) a mirror whereby to behold a horse-course, where immense multitudes of men, women, and children are collected,



lected, from all quarters, to the loss of time, neglect of business, perversion of goodness, and practice of evil; such a scene, one should suppose, would rather excite to a suppression than a support of it. And the order of things evidences that a national reformation should commence with the K — g in a personal one, as the head to guide the whole body. The best national reformers, in ancient days, were such pious princes as Hezekiah and Josiah. An abolition then, of all things tending to immorality, by the K — g's withdrawing his presence, support, and protection, and by enacting and executing laws against them, cannot be omitted without incurring the displeasure of God. Moreover, to facilitate a reformation, all the ministers of immorality, whether in church or state, should be removed. But this cannot be, in the church, while the temptation to such remains so enticing, the entrance so easy, and the exercise so compatible with their carnal condition. Nothing can effect it but a revolution in the church; large benefits must be taken away, a stricter form of admittance enacted, and an extemporary instead of a reading ministry ordained, that only those who seek, by the Lord's assistance, the salvation of souls, may enter. And without a disinterested, a diligent, and a divinely assisted ministry, a reformation, though possible, (every man, besides self-exertion, being otherwise, both inwardly and outwardly, taught of God) will not proceed with that facility which a powerful ministry prompts to.— And if such a ministry, through the remissness of his M---ty, &c. does not obtain, it may be charged as a criminal cause of the sin and loss of many souls.

In the mean time, every man should consider, that he is accountable to God for his works; and that he must, and may both soon and suddenly, enter into an awful eternity. And if he has committed sins, corrupted his soul, &c. the remembrance of them should be grievous, till, by faith in Christ, he has obtained pardon, peace, and purity, as a preparation for living a righteous life. And surely a life, whether it be by a soul feminally or personally purified, spent sincerely, earnestly, and constantly in making God's glory the end of all actions, and in doing all possible good to men, has infinite advantages over its contrary, in preventing useless expences, preserving the human constitution, promoting purity and peace of mind, pleasing God, profiting men, free-

ing from the fear of death, heightening the hope of heaven, making dissolution desirable, and increasing the eternal reward; of which the heart-felt happiness, resulting from a right principle and practice, is an earnest and evidence, being an anticipation of the seraphic delight, which a pure spirit, clothed with an aërial, a luminous, and an agile body, mixing with angels, and basking in the beams of divine light, love, and joy, to endless ages, will enjoy. But the wicked mispend their portion, destroy their bodies, corrupt their souls, offend God, hurt men, make death terrible, lose all right to heaven, lay up treasure in hell, and prepare for the punishment, which will make them perfectly, perpetually, and eternally miserable. How mad then are they, who live to no better purpose than this!

The difficulty with which the Calvinists admit a conviction of their errors, it is probable, principally proceeds from the safety they promise, and the liberty they allow them, and not from a certainty that their doctrine is sound. Yet, contrary to calvinism, the covenant of grace, in the first instance of it, includes all, who sinned in Adam, *Justification unto life being come upon all*, Rom. 5. 18. Nor is it less extensive, in the design of it, respecting salvation from personal sin; for that restriction of it, which some suppose, is a wrong sense of the words elect and reprobate. All the Israelites were styled elect, and all other nations reprobates. But all the Israelites were not saved, nor all others lost, there being good and bad among both. In like manner all, who commenced christians, were called elect, and all the rest reprobates. Yet many among the christians were wicked and lost, and among others some might be sincere and saved.—These general names then did not signify the moral and final state of all, who were called by them, but were national characters, including all sorts.

Another error is, that men cannot judge, chuse, and act, or omit them, as they please. But without this liberty, it must be allowed, they are incapable of virtue or vice, of rewards or punishments, and of happiness or misery, as the effect of their conduct and conscience. But men are accountable for their conduct, and according to it their conscience and future condition will be. To deny their liberty then is to make them unaccountable, unconscious, and incapable

capable of a reward for their works. Yet the calvinists do this by making men's salvation unconditional. Hence they not only deny all moral freedom flowing from their first justification, (Rom. 5. 18.) but when that, by sinning, is diminished, and the Lord works in men to assist them to recover it, they do not allow that the elect have a liberty to refuse it and be lost, nor that the reprobates can recover it and be saved. But as the scripture does not make the conversion of children, after they are born, a qualification *to remember their creator*, and to be *trained up in the way they should go*; these things suppose them to be morally capable as the consequence of their seminal conversion; and consequently they can, as the effect thereof, chuse moral good or evil. And when personal sin renders personal conversion necessary, wicked men may turn from, or continue in their wickedness. Moral free-will then is not only consistent with men's seminal state of conversion, but also with the case of sinners, while the day of grace endures. But the use of it, in obedience, in the first case, and in repenting, believing, seeking &c. in the second, is absolutely necessary to salvation; and the want of that use, in both states, is the only reason why men are not saved. Thus the error, which applies to the eternal state of a few what is spoken of the external privileges of nations, is increased by representing the salvation of that few as not depending on any thing they do, it being secured to them by an unconditional decree: which makes many solicitous to support it, as thereby they can reconcile any sin to the favour, service, and kingdom of God.

But, contrary to this, Christ has redeemed and saved all men from original sin; and, as a consequence, condemns all who sin, commands all sinners to repent, and promises salvation to all who do; therefore they need not sin, nor neglect salvation from it. What errors then are they guilty of, who say, the Lord does not give saving grace to all men, and that those, to whom it is given, can be preserved from any sin, (as is evident from the case of David, &c.) but what they voluntarily restrain themselves from by a free, full, constant, and continued obedience to the end of life. How then, O ye predestinarian preachers! have you imposed upon your people, by teaching an election which makes nothing depend on their part; for though you preach good works, yet as your doctrine allows evil ones without the danger of  
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being damned, many, no doubt, for that reason, do them. And ye Predestinarian hearers, how have you been beguiled by your teachers, soothed into carelessness and sin, by a belief of your security through the decree of God! And though they may suffer for deceiving you, yet that will not free you from suffering; for as the deceiver and the deceived share in the sin, so will they in the suffering. Neither deceive yourselves by supposing (if you have sinned, &c.) that any thing will suffice for you but being pardoned and purified by the spirit of God, through faith in Christ Jesus; the having a witness of them, and thereby an earnest of heaven, in your heart; and living in all your future time, in the full use of all your graces and gifts, spiritual and temporal, to the glory of God, the good of men, and to the preserving of your own peace and purity, and laying up treasure above.

The Arminian system, which excludes the absurd and satirical doctrine of a probation, and the licentious and delusive one of election, is not only the most agreeable to our ideas of the goodness and justice of God, but also the letter and sense of the scripture on its side, both declaring that *Jesus died for all men*, and that *God would have all men to be saved*. But, like many other good things, it has suffered by the errors of its advocates, many of whom, by denying the seminal salvation of all men, render it (doctrinally) ineffectual unto all in that respect, there being no other way of salvation, from that sin, prescribed in the scriptures. But, though they deny seminal salvation, yet they say, that deceased children are saved from original sin, although they can neither tell how nor when. Living children they suppose, as appears by their imputing all their actual sins to it, retain their original depravity. And thus, by their ignorance, or obstinacy, Paul's comparison, betwixt what the two Adams did in seminal destroying and saving men, is denied, and uncertainty respecting children's final salvation introduced, as those, who would believe that their dead children are not damned, have nothing to found their faith upon; and the supposed sinfulness of living ones makes many believe that they cannot receive, and therefore they do not give them religious instructions; or, if they do, it is that they are born sinful, naturally commit sin, and cannot do good: which directly tend to prevent their opposing evil, striving to do good, and charging

ing themselves as the voluntary cause of their own evil conduct. But if they were taught that Christ has saved them from the evils which came upon them through Adam, and that, in consequence, it is a duty incumbent upon them to remember their creator, and to devote themselves to his service, it might be a mean of making them move aright all their future days. And being, through their infant ignorance, devoid of ideas, the sooner good ones, by instructions, are formed in them, evil ones will be prevented. And as, as understanding increases, suitable truths were inculcated upon them, they might grow in wisdom, and by good works, in favour with God and men, as Christ also did. And, indeed, so solicitous should parents and instructors be, as never to cool in their care, and labour to preserve them from evil, to teach them their duty, to instigate them to do it, and to fortify them against seducers from it. To this purpose such company, conversation, dress, branches of learning, ways of living, and whatever else that concerns them should be chosen with the greatest care, to prevent their receiving evil impressions, and to preserve and assist their good ones; for such is man's condition, that though his mind is spiritual, yet it being seated in the body, and surrounded with objects of sense, he naturally receives, through the animal senses, the images of what he converses with by them. And he would as necessarily retain them, if he had not a power, as a free-agent, to efface or preserve them at pleasure: Which, it seems, few will be at the pains rightly to employ in judging accurately concerning, in making a proper choice of, and in faithfully using to efface evil, and to preserve good images. And from this cause it is, that most persons are possessed of, and governed by the ideas of such things, however unreasonable, or irreligious, as most frequently affect them: And therefore the acquiring, especially at public schools, what is called a polite education, seldom fails of depraving the moral principle, of creating an aversion to divine things, and a disposition for diabolical ones.—A full fortune (but, who will believe it?) is likewise a dangerous snare to all, who would keep their bodies in proper subjection to their souls, and serve the Lord in the best use of both. A general instance of both is clearly seen in this, that, as the world has grown polite and rich, it has lost its religious simplicity, sincerity, and subjection to God, and is become proud, hypocritical, and disobedient to a great degree. But,

But, alas! what will such do when nothing of those vanities remain, but the evils which they have produced? Politeneis, or earthly possessions, or both, at the hour of death, with a soul estranged from God, fraught with immoral affections, loaded with guilt for its sins, distracted with the forebodings of future infelicity, and destitute of all hope of heaven, will shew the emptiness of all earthly things, and make them a joyless portion to their possessors. O what are all such things to that divine simplicity, sincerity, holiness, unshaken confidence in God, and high hope of heaven, which are in some, and ought to be in all, as the happy effect of an early and continued devotion to divine things! Happy then are they who begin, continue, and end in doing the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven!—Let then the moralists, the calvinists, and the arminians, ministers and people, conspire to cast away all that is contrary to truth in doctrine and practice, and conform to it in both in the highest degree, that God, the giver of all good things, and object of adoration, may be glorified of all; that mutual edification and assistance, among men, may every where abound; and that this world may be a school of holy instructions and exercises, as a preparative for services acceptable to God, and delightful to men, in the endless ages of glory and blessedness above. But those, who will not contribute to these things by a full exertion of all their power, may find, for their unfaithfulness, that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an holy and just God, for he is a consuming fire to offenders. Yet though this is the greatest object of terror, and by all, who are exposed to it, the most to be feared; how few, among many, notwithstanding, are sufficiently affected by it! By most it is treated as a trifle; therefore to be ignorant of religion they account no disparagement, to be merry amidst danger no folly, to live wicked lives no sign of belonging to Satan, to love the world like an animal no proof of being at enmity with God, to be impenitent no mark of a mad-man, to neglect salvation no instance of inexcusableness, by which myriads of men and women must feel the effects of God as a consuming fire for ever.

But how long, O ye unwise, will you love your folly, and for the sake of trifles or trash, deprive yourselves, by disobeying natural, spiritual, and divine light, of what is infinitely better than all the earth? The light of creation and providence points out, in a conspicuous manner, the wisdom,

greatness, and goodness of God. The sun by day, and the moon and stars by night, shine to shew you the wondrous works of the Lord, and to transact your own. The earth, on which live, by a swift circular motion, incessantly labours to serve you. Creatures too, of various kinds, and numberless, cover the earth for ornament and use. The sea, rivers, and pools, from which the sun, by attraction, fills the clouds to water the ground, affords multitudes of fishes for human food. The air, which surrounds you, by pressing upon your lungs, promotes the circulation of the blood, and preserves animal life. Fire, which incorporates with every particle of matter, is the principal promoter of animal and vegetable growth, especially as assisted by the co-operation of the sun. Now these are evidences of the Lord, and they all conspire to discover him to, and imprint ideas of his essence and attributes on your hearts, and excite you to serve him. And thus from the book of nature, which is ever open, you may see how much, for these reasons, you are indebted to, and ought to please him. The superior light of revelation likewise shines, and shews, for the abundance of spiritual blessings also, your duty, the way to do it, the evil of disobedience, condemnation for, and the way of salvation from it. The sun of righteousness too, the brightest light, shines upon your minds, to assist them in seeing what concerns your salvation, service, and satisfaction. But a sense of sin, of the want of salvation, and the way to find it, which obtains with all, how short lived with most! Opposition from without, and disobedience from within, chase away, like a frightened hart, that concern, which foolish men watch not over as misers do their money. But curst, doubly curst will they be, who preserve it not, by the greatest care, and at the expence of all other things, when they or it must be forsaken. Riches, honours, pleasures, what are they compared to pardon, peace, and heavenly joys? Next to nothing. Woe then to these, who suffer them to prevail against their salvation and the service of God! How great the evil! What can recompence them for it? All the world cannot. And what will they have in hell? Fire and brimstone ever burning. O the extreme, the lamentable madness of men then thus to barter the best for the worst of things! This is the forest evil under the sun. For were they but safe, respecting the future world, sufferings here, in the service of God, would signify nothing. But,  
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alas, when life, by their living in sin, serves only to prepare them for endless suffering, their state is dreadful indeed! But be not so cruel to yourselves, after deserving to be damn'd, as to neglect salvation. Plunge not into perdition by persisting in sin. Death may be at the door. How dangerous then to disobey! This day may be your last. Have you then any time to lose? Alas, by delaying to seek salvation one day, you may be lost for ever! Make haste then, time flies, death is near, and delays are dangerous. To quicken your pace, consider the length of eternity, and the intenseness of its torments; never will you be nearer the end, nor will there be any mitigation of your misery, for the fire will ever burn, and the worm will never die. O dreadful! How will you endure it? Can you do it? Do you dare to be damn'd? What! feed upon flames for ever for your follies! Forbear. Be not so mad. Once in, never more out. O sinners, would you so serve the Lord for sparing and blessing you! Thus requite the Saviour for suffering for you! Make this return for the help of the Holy Ghost! Alas, it is evil for good, cruelty for kindness, and resistance for assistance. What ingratitude! How unjust and ungenerous! O what enemies to God and yourselves!—But let your past folly suffice. Now let wisdom be your guide. Reflect on your former life, observe your present state, and consider what your future will be. And if they all be evil; repent, reform, and pray till you prevail for pardon, purity, and an holy hope of heaven. Nor can any thing prevent this but yourselves; for though *many shall seek to enter in, by improper methods, and shall not be able*; yet when Jesus says *agonize ye, strive as in an agony*, salvation is sure to those who do so. And so he prayed. But your case calls more loudly for relief than his. See then that you do it. If you were condemned to be hanged, how earnest would you be to have it reversed? You, as guilty sinners, are condemned to be damned. Can you be easy under it? Will you be easy in hell? No; there you will call for water to cool you. Let a sense of your danger then make you ardently solicit salvation. Instantly enter upon it, and never sleep nor slumber, if possible, till you see it in your souls. And then only will you begin to answer the end of living, by loving the Lord, and your neighbour as yourselves. To this then let all aspire, that, by living well, you may live with the Lord for ever.

NICHOLAS MANNERS.